

Somewhere Out There Act 19 - Ghost Beach

By Bartan Tirix

The breaths were louder than normal, almost snores as it heavily purred against his chest. Slowly waking up in the furred one as his mind went nearly blank. Half recognizing the shape of that snout and horns, the large claws that wrapped around his lower half. Of course, his own white ones around that thick neck, taking a few moments before starting to move it around and notice some slight changes. The scales themselves a bit more thicker and scratched, the small horns along the back of his neck had a few chips in them, along with a couple more scars that have been long since healed up.

It was more than enough for those brown eyes to open and look at the drake sleeping on his chest. Definitely brown, but a bit more faded as if slowly turning grey in the edging areas. Those chestplates nearly tarnishing, and several spikes off his fluttering tail were missing. All it took was some smaller movement for Bryce to start waking up. "Brush it off like you're usually told to, but I don't think that's normal." A black panther lying on the other half of the bed stated, almost smirking. "Or at least, not how I remember."

"I would have to agree, even the room..." A light brown one started, looking at the wallpaper and grasping the bear's attention towards it. What looked like several years of water damage finally took its toll. Staining it, even after being replaced time and time again. Even a crack on the window that wasn't there before. "I mean, it looks like the same place, but..."

"But..." Bartan responded in a whisper, finally waking the sleeping dragon on him. Getting the drake to groan loudly and stretch while nuzzling that furred chest. Leading up to the white one's snout and giving it a kiss, as those golden eyes opened. Now seeing one of them slightly faded after a scar scratched it, sinking the bear's heart and making Bryce exhale a breath of defeat.

"Damn... Again?" No response. "You don't remember anything, do you?" A faint noise in a question as the brown one took a deep breath, lying his head back down on the living pillow. "I'll explain later, bear. Mornings are not my forte." He grumbled, taking another breath. "Not anymore."

"...Everything looks older."

"Except for you." Bryce responded sadly. "I suppose you were right about being immortal, but..." A few pets across those damaged horns. "...I really hoped it worked longer this time."

"Longer?" A slow nod.

"I think he's calling you forgetful." The black panther snorted, getting the bear's attention, but not for long. "Something you're a little too familiar with, aren't you?"

"...Bryce?" A mumble as he took a deep breath, coughing a little bit but nothing serious.

"Alright, alright. We'll do this again, because I love you." A sad look from those brown eyes. "Your memories keep resetting on you. I'm not sure how, Remy and the noodle half explained it to me several times, but it's something to do with that portal."

"Portal...?"

"You remember it. You always do." A nod from the white one. "But you took too many trips through it or something, it effected your brain and your memories. You keep forgetting about every few days what happened after Harrak started living in Anna's place for a while." Another deep breath that turned into a yawn. "What else do you remember?"

"...Lorem being in heat."

"Which time?" The two chuckled. "Fun times, I don't think I've ever squeezed in someone so small." A double take from Bartan. "Yes, I'm serious. With your magic juices I was able to. Had a hell of a time getting him off though." Another chuckle from the large one. "We did it though, and he was fine."

"Was...?" A sigh that time.

"...Bear, a lot has happened. And everytime I tell you, you get depressed. So please, for this one time... They're alive, okay?" A sad look from those brown eyes, as Bryce's were trying to hide. Feeling the gaze move off him and over towards the 'empty' side of the bed. "He's fine. As in, actually fine. Just doesn't live here anymore."

"No?" A half a head shake from the drake. "Where...?"

"About three cities to the west. Way out there, but he's happy. We even took a trip over there a few years ago to see him and his wyrmlings." That made Bartan smile. "After ours, we vowed no more though, so no funny ideas."

"We...?" A slow nod from the brown one, as he pointed towards the nightstand behind him. Letting the bear's gaze overlook a picture of them two with Li Long.

"After Zhong's..." Another heavy breath from the drake. "We took him in. At first it was only until we could find his mother, but Li grew to like us. I guess he felt safe." He almost felt the furred one's heart sink. "Stop, please. I know it's hard to hear, but... You've already done this several dozen times, furball." A breath, and the bear nodded.

"I still say it's a little off..." The black one stated, looking into the bear's eyes with his sly look. "Something to do with the portal? Come on. I mean, it's not like you can't count how many times you've been through it." He said, sarcastically.

"What are they saying?" Bryce grumbled, getting a look from the bear as he tossed that scarred muzzle. "Yes, you've told me about them. Granted, about ten years into our relationship, but you

eventually told me." A paw motion to go on.

"...They don't believe it."

"The black one, right? Or the Orange?"

"...Black. Rixxix."

"Yeah, after all this time I still can't remember their names. De, Ri, and Ry-something." A grumble as the dragon started to get up. "I gotta drain, then we'll find something to do today." A nuzzle and a long kiss from the drake as they shared a moment together, letting the white one come to terms that he was definitely real. He was definitely Bryce, before pulling back and heading towards the restroom doorway. Letting Bartan once again witness the many scars and faded scales of the large one before disappearing into the next room.

"Still think there's nothing off about all this?" Those brown discs glared at Rixxix for a moment, mostly at his coy attitude. "I'm sure you're buying that same excuse of 'I already explained everything a dozen times to you.' Brings back memories, doesn't it?" A near growl from the white one as he flipped the blankets over the panther while getting up. Hearing that toilet flush and the sink turn on before meeting up with the dragon's back. Watching him lap at the water a bit while stepping behind him, getting a smirk from that scarred muzzle before gazing at his own reflection. Watching it fade as they looked at it.

"...I hate this." Bryce almost whispered, letting his gaze almost fall. "I know it sounds so awful, but to see the look in your eyes... Seeing your husband age while you stay as fluffy as ever." A few pets of comfort from those white paws. "At times I look at this just to try and empathize, wondering what happened to that dragon that you met in his prime. Though, a prime that lasted another forty years." He half joked. Almost watching with his scales as they brushed across every unfamiliar mark. "Each one tells a story, and not a happy one. It was a stupid idea to move there in the first place, no matter how good the pay was." A deep breath from the drake as he looked into the brown eyes of the reflection. "But I thought that maybe if I could get you away from that damn portal..."

"I would stop forgetting..." A slow nod.

"...It worked, for a while. Seemed to be weeks at a time between resets. Sometimes you think you're sleeping or living with someone else, especially during those days that I had to work all night." A dark chuckle. "I can't tell you how many times I've lost you in the streets. Found you back in that town, getting closer to the portal like it was calling you."

"But it was dismantled, right?"

"Yes. But that never stopped you from going there. It got to the point where I had to keep an emergency fund to help track you down. Even attempted to install a chip in the back of your neck or that perfect ass of yours." Another pair of chuckles. "I decided against it though. Too expensive, and I heard they break so easily. Knowing your body, it would've just kicked that chip's ass until it couldn't function."

The drake started to move to face the bear. "I know this is hard for you, Bartan. It was never easy, but please... Just this once, keep from asking too many questions. Keep me from reopening old wounds." A breath and a the furred one nodded.

"...Why are you staying with me?" A snout toss from that scarred muzzle.

"Seriously, what did I just ask?" The larger one grumbled, trying to make it sound like a joke. "...I love you, bear. That's why."

"But..."

"I know... Your father was like this as well. You told me how you took care of him, the dozens of stories about his condition..." Bryce took a deep breath, trying to hold himself together. "You're not nearly as bad as him, by the sounds of it. But... I can't..." Another deep breath from the two as they embraced. "Please bear, just no more questions about that, okay?" A slow nod.

"...How big can you get now?" That time the dragon chuckled.

"Hey. Hey, wake up!" The male half hissed at her in a whisper, shocking her body awake with his familiar touch, but it's strange atmosphere felt off. A few odd white lights overhead and a room made entirely out of metal. Large crates surrounded them as they hid from a wailing noise. "But keep it down!"

"What...?" Those golden eyes gazed around, trying to find out where they were. "Where...?"

"We're on a ship." A noise in question. "If you really feel the ground, it kinda feels like we're floating, but it's too smooth to be on water." A heavy breath through his black muzzle. "We're likely in the air. We've been abducted." Harrak half grumbled, looking out towards the small 'alley' between their hiding spot. "Most of them were captured, and..." An exhale of heat. "They know we've escaped. They've locked down the ship and searching for us at the moment."

"Why...?"

"Because I don't take kindly to waking up in the face of aliens in suits." He snorted, making her half smile.

"Aliens?"

"When you're as old as I am, everything that doesn't look like a dragon is an alien." Another snort as he took another breath. "I need you to hide here while I take care of them."

"Take care...?" Hear heart started to hurt, now feeling the weight of the threat. "They're...?"

"Hostile? Well, now they are, yes." He grumbled. "This place seems to be safe until I do so. It might take a few hours, but..." A gesture behind her. "I managed to find you some water, it's not much so make it last. But don't leave this room until I return, okay?" The smaller wyrm shook her head.

"Don't leave me." Vara whimpered. "Please... Not alone..."

"Hey..." He wrapped his arms around her pink form, holding it tightly. "You will be safe here. I'm planning to weld the door shut." A puzzled look from her, and the black one tossed his snout. "As in melt the metal together. They won't be able to get inside." A sad look from the female, and he gave her a few licks on the muzzle. "I can't take you with me. If I get taken out, you get captured. If I get flanked, or if a shot misses me..."

"...I understand."

"I won't be long. Just enough to do damage to their offense to even the playing field." A half puzzled look, quarter sad and last bit smiling, making the black one roll those purple eyes once again.

"You talk so funny."

"I'm old, get used to it." He snorted, sharing a kiss before parting. "I'll be back. I promise."

"I know you will." A solid nod from him as Harrak started towards the door. Stopping just before and hissing into his paw in a thick stress, letting the soundwaves start to warp a glass-like dagger in his black hand. Sharing one last look before nodding at her.

"Use it if you have to." The female faintly nodded in response, as he left with the weapon. Letting the door screech loudly as its perimeter melted together.

The drake chuckled through the restroom, nudging the furball and giving him another lick. "Big enough when you don't go overboard. Maybe I can show you..." He purred, sharing a kiss. "But I'll have to pick up a few uppers. I can't keep it up like I used to, no matter how wonderful your paw skills are." That actually made the bear blush a bit as they shared another kiss. "Did you want to come with?"

"To the general store?" A nod, and Bartan looked out the doorway to their bedroom.

"It's usually between outside or discussing things with your Clan." A look of almost concern from those brown eyes as that scarred muzzle tossed. "You told me, just about everything. And you can talk to them about it all you want." Another nudge. "Whatever makes you comfortable." The white one nodded faintly, looking out the door again.

"...I think I'll talk to them then. If you don't want me to keep asking questions."

"A lot has changed since then." Bryce mumbled, holding the bear for a few moments before heading out. "At least I don't have to work today."

"Are you seriously still employed?"

"Not really. Mostly retired, but once in a while the station calls me for my experience. Rarely anything dangerous, but it has happened once in a while." A worried look from Bartan again. "Need I remind you that I *don't* have to work today?"

"I know, but..." A paw traced over several new scars and scratches across the large body. "You don't need anymore."

"Most of these were nothing threatening. I'm harder to take out than I look." That draconic smirk nearly fluttered the furball's heart. "I won't be long. Just don't try throwing cutlery at them again."

"Throwing...?"

"You tried it once. As well as threw a spoon at me to see if I was real or not." An overdramatic snout toss from that scarred muzzle as Bryce turned around to leave. Playfully tapping the bear in the side with that thick tail. "Big surprise, I was. This is what nearly took out my eye." The drake smirked, indicated it was a joke.

"Then what...?"

"Exploding glass from a burning building. I can still see out of it, but it's..." He grumbled. "I'll be back soon, bear. Don't run off on me again until then."

"...Alright."

"Shower all you like. Just remember to pull down on the tap after you're done. Still never got a plumber in here to fix that damn leak."

The metal door groaned as it warped against the massive heat of that red paw. Melting it together with side walls, not only around the handle and lock, but the entire way around. If he fell, she would be safe until Harrak was able to regain consciousness. That's all that mattered to him; that Vara was safe. And as it stood right now, no one was getting through this door. And when it came time for him to return, he would just rip it open.

But in order to keep her safe, and ensure safety, the now black dragon would have to be more careful. Gazing at the glass-looking knife once again and hoping it would last for a while before getting unstable. If worse came to worse, he could always make another, regardless of how crude they seemed to come out in his younger states. Quietly moving around the room and passing a mirror that nearly spooked him a bit, he gazed upon his near 5 foot self after making sure the locker room was cleared.

The scars were still there, sure. What was almost expected, no matter how often he was rehatched, but after seeing a few of their crewmembers, the black one never stuck out more. Shifting his scales to that of a gold, his reflection soon disappeared. Letting him start to move under the observation of eyes. Passing through the next room quietly, he spotted a few soldiers leaving it to scout another. Leaving one behind to check out the one Harrak just left.

The invisible dragon just held his breath, watching as the soldier passed by as he scouted looking down the ironsights of his ranged weapon. Gazing upon the empty room, until something caught his attention. Looking directly at Harrak's location for a moment and getting the smaller one to curse before rolling towards the side without so much as a sound. The barrel of the weapon trying to search for him, but unable to completely detect it until the clear one managed to grasp the rifle.

It shot a few bullets, yes, but no sound came from it. Not even the soldier's shouts could be heard before she was pulled forward and felt the cold glass enter her throat. Instantly sending out warnings through her body as the warmth started to wrap around the hidden weapon. Revealing it after it cut through and left the suit to fall on the floor. Seeing nothing more than the blood flick off and stick to the ground as the door ahead opened and another barrel looked around.

A loud curse got the attention of others before the gold wyrm got close enough to silence it. Backing away as they checked up on their fallen comrade. Hearing another two enter as Harrak went around the lockers and remained out of sight. Attempting to make out the conversation, but not understanding their language in the slightest. Making him want to snort at the very thought of yet another form of gibberish he couldn't understand.

Through the doorway to the next room, he sent a series of sounds in the mimic of pawsteps escaping. Instantly getting the attention of two out of three. One staying with the dying soldier, and sending one over to check it out. Moving around the unobserved side to get to the third from behind and sticking the clear dagger into the back of their neck after silencing the area.

The one tending to the first fallen realized he couldn't hear himself speak, and looked over to witness the kill, as well as the floating dagger covered in red. Attempting to step back and aim at it, his helmet suddenly started to get tight around his head. Dropping his weapon and signaling a surrender as if he understood what was happening, the younger one didn't risk it. Breaking the skull from the sheer pressure before feeling a vibration from the glass weapon.

As the scout for the other room started to return, the clear weapon was suddenly thrown at her. Getting stuck in the heavy armor, and forcing her to take cover before removing it and trying to make out its shape. Leaving a small wound, but nothing fatal. However, the veil of silence was suddenly lifted

and the high pitch ringing of the glass weapon was heard. Exploding and sending harsh shrapnel throughout the room, leaving the soldier to bleed out.

However, she survived enough to press a code within her chestpiece. Changing the siren going off through the building into a more serious alert. Getting HARRAK to curse a bit. Almost as if they knew what they were dealing with. Almost as if they were prepared for all this. Making him snort at the idea of it, and carry on.

"I'll see you in a bit." The brown drake smiled, sharing a hug with the furball before he left through the opened front door. "Don't get lost on me, you hear?"

"Alright." The bear replied, almost getting a wink from those golden eyes before he left. Leaving the white one to close the door and take a breath. Catching the black panther with the corner of those brown discs. Once again hiding behind the opened door.

"You can't be serious." Rixix smirked at him, almost looking through the doorway at Bryce. "You don't believe those excuses."

"So I'm supposed to distrust him?"

"You know better than this, bear. You always have." A bit of a serious stare from the white one as the Tirix started to walk behind his legs. "You don't really trust him, it's plain as day that there's something off about all this."

"Humor me."

"Telling you that there's something wrong with your brain? A believable excuse he came up with that the portal had something to do with all this?"

"If he's telling the truth, he didn't come up with that theory." Bartan grumbled, walking into the kitchen and starting the dishes while the orange panther came around.

"It's very easy to trust someone who's known you for so long." Deago stated, looking between the two and the brown panther that joined the group as well. "And you know what it's like to be with someone that has had memory problems."

"He has had experience with such things, yes, but in a different perspective." Ryoko added.

"Meaning he can empathize with Bryce on this." The black one tossed his snout.

"Of *course*, and that's just the perfect reason to submit to the drake's every word?"

"What are you getting at, Rixxix?" The orange one growled at him.

"I can't be the only one who sees this." A near devious smirk at the brown tirix, who only looked a bit uncomfortable.

"Spit it out." The bear grumbled, only to see that black smile and look towards Ryoko once again. "What is it?" He sighed in defeat.

"...Bartan, this is a trap."

"Define that."

"You're being imprisoned, dear bear." The black one chuckled. "All the tales of bad things happening over the years. Him telling you that it hurts to explain things over and over-"

"Well, that was really annoying when I did it-"

"And the constant reminder of 'don't run off' isn't throwing out any warning flags?" Rixxix' red eyes just stared into the white ones, smirking at him as his mind started piecing things together. "I see gears turning."

"He's just being protective of him. Bryce has always been that way."

"Which is the perfect excuse, wouldn't you say Deago?"

"Excuse for what?" Another devious smirk and the black one left, leaving the three to share looks.

"You can figure it out, just look around." A glance back at the group. "Maybe *outside* the box... Or, *Cage*, in this case." Another series of looks, as those brown eyes looked towards a curtained window.

"Don't escape." Deago nearly ordered.

"You cannot be serious." Ryoko whispered to the orange one, almost getting a stare of dominance. "If he is being encaged, he should at least look for escape routes."

"And if this is all just a misunderstanding? It's only going to cause Bryce stress." The orange Tirix shared a look with the bear. "He must be exhausted by all of this, if he's telling the truth."

"And if he isn't?"

"And if he is?" Deago asked thickly, but took a breath. "You have good instincts about danger, you don't feel that way right now."

"That doesn't mean he isn't in danger-"

"But it's awfully calming to be in this place, yes?" The brown one sighed in defeat again and nodded. "You're not being threatened, Bartan. Trust him. If you don't, you might lose him." A long stare, and the white one looked away. Waiting for a few moments before going the window. "Bartan!" A draw of the curtain caused all three of them to look outside at the neighborhood. One that didn't look a day older.

"...How many years did Bryce say it's been?" Ryoko mumbled, getting the three to share a look.

"I swear, it's like the mail hasn't been here for an *entire week*." Rixxix complained in the other room, getting the three to look around until the doorbell rang. Several times in a row, as if it were frustrated. Getting the three to carefully walk around and observe who was outside. A white wyrm with blue tattoos along its back in almost swirls.

"Alright, alright! You win, damnit." The dragon grumbled. "Open the door, we'll talk. Okay?"

That siren was getting on his nerves as the black wyrm traveled through the halls. Seeing and hearing groups of several soldiers travel together looking in nearly all directions, as if they understood what they were dealing with. Harrak would ask 'How Exactly?' but this isn't the first time he's come across a form of law enforcement that dealt specifically with magics of some kind.

That's the strange thing though, if they usually did learn how to deal with such a thing, they also used it to some extent. Or even just had ways to nullify and silence the powers. Perhaps his was just too strong? Regardless, how they identified the dragon's powers so quickly let him piece together exactly why they were abducted. A sort of screening of species, scanning them to see if they will become a threat and cull them off at the roots.

A heavy and angry sigh left him as he passed from room to room, looking for a way to their security setup. If that was what they were truly after, then he just gave Vara a sentence. Was this all because of what Anna started to research within the dragon's blood? Or was that just a case of dumb coincidence? Regardless, Harrak passed through a large door towards a loading bay, one with many crates and a large window towards the side of the ship. Able to see the tip of an engine from the far side, as well as the clouds at a distance. His suspicions were correct.

Then, there was the scent. It's been everywhere in the ship, yes, but not with the thick smog of threat along with it. Still invisible, the black one carefully studied his surroundings: Pure metal flooring for a good grip, dozens of heavy crates that seemed to be made out of metal as well, great for cover. And a large opened space inbetween for any ranged weapon to have an advantage.

This was an ambush.

"Come on, furball. Open up." The white dragon outside grumbled, sitting on the porch and almost frustrated. He was definitely a lot bigger than the other wyrms around, unable to stand up straight without hitting his horns on the awning.

"This is unexpected." The brown tirix tilted his head at the door from the inside.

"And one of the very few times so far that Bartan hasn't opened the door first thing when there was a dragon outside." Rixxix smirked. "I wonder how long he'll go before making a move?" Deago glared at the black one for a moment. "You're absolutely right. I should be taking bets first."

"Need I remind you that I'm a dragon and you taste very good with ketchup?" The large one outside snorted. "Like a simple door is going to really stop me. I'm being very polite right now. Very patient with you thus far, not getting a response-"

"What the god damn hell are you doing!?" A familiar voice was heard outside in the front yard, getting the white scaled one to jump in surprise and slam his head into the roofing. Growling loudly while tending to it as a pink runner came up from behind and punched him in the arm. Making him whimper a bit. "This wasn't part of the plan!"

"The plan was falling apart after you left! What do you expect?" Anna glared at the wyrm. "Look, we tried it your way, now we're trying it *mine*. Deal with it!" A snout toss from the female.

"I swear, if Reality finds out, she's going to skin you alive with a potato peeler, and I'm going to watch with satisfaction."

"Wonderful, now leave and let me reason with him! Odds are you're only going to confuse the simple minded."

"Reality...?" Bartan whispered, looking over at the orange one.

"He just called you Simple Minded, and you're going to let him get away with that?" The black one grumbled, but was ignored.

"They're Forces. Fate and Death." A half a shrug and a nod in response from Deago, then another from Ryoko. The bear started opening the door soon after, and getting Rixxix to toss his snout.

"Death is literally sitting at your door, and you're genius plan is to open it. Forget Simple, Insane is more accurate-"

"You're Death." Bartan said a bit sternly after swinging opened the door, seeing the large one toss his muzzle.

"Oh, goodie. This is a wonderful first conversation already." He snorted. "One for the books. Yes, I'm Death, and you're already met Fate I believe." A half gesture behind him to an almost flustered Remy who shyly waved. "Let alone nearly seduced it."

"You're really not going to drop that, are you?"

"You wanted to reason with a horny polar bear first, yet you were the one somehow caught off-guard by that advancement." The dragon grumbled, looking behind with those purple eyes. "Let alone, didn't plan for those things he's been talking the first time we attempted this." A whimper from Remy.

"Wait, first time?" The large one's sight came back and nodded, tapping his horns on the awing again, and making him grumble. Carefully stepping backwards into the yard and stretching his neck and wings out for a moment.

"Just give me a minute. I really really hate cramped spaces." A flutter of those wings and a swing of that tail, as a shiver made his scales click loudly. A deep breath before sitting back down and nodding at the furball. "Yes. We attempted this earlier, and well... It didn't go so well."

"So you've been trying to keep me here? Why." Bartan asked thickly, taking a step outside as the two gestured the town. Letting those brown eyes scan the area and realize how empty it was. "...What happened? Where is everyone?"

"Look." The larger one started. "I'm telling you these things for you to trust us, alright?" The bear's eyes just glared at him almost harshly. "...Okay, it is a lot harder to do this when he's staring at you like that."

"Told you." Bryce snorted.

"Yeah, yeah." Another half a snout toss. "They... *Disappeared*."

"...Disappeared." It was barely a question.

"They vanished." A long stare. "Look, I know it's my responsibility as a Farce of Death-

"Force." A double take from the white dragon. "You said Farce."

"At this point, I want to say this is all a farce." The black panther grumbled, following the bear outside and sitting at the porch.

"Whatever! That damn portal has this place messed up. My... 'Reapers' haven't been able to take those who passed, it's like they're attached to threads or strings within the fabric of reality-

"Fabric." Lorem corrected him again, getting another glare. "Fabric isn't a word. And sounds rather pornographic-

"I swear I will eat you." He growled, looking back at the bear who was keeping those brown discs

on him. "And he still hasn't blunk, please blink-"

"Blinked-"

"Please! Just... Blink for me! It's driving me bonkers." A breath from the bear as he covered his own eyes. "Thank you."

"Where are they?"

"We..." The large one took a frustrated breath. "We don't know. They're 'here' but not..."

"What does that mean exactly?" Ryoko whispered, getting a round ear to flick.

"Those 'threads' I mentioned earlier, they're still tied. To this location, specifically. For some reason though, they disappeared from our... 'Systems'. Our..." The large one grumbled a bit.

"Forms of tracking-"

"Forms of tracking." He answered quickly after Lorem again, getting the small blue one to sigh and cover his yellow eyes with a paw.

"Why were you tracking them to begin with?"

"Because we couldn't reap them." A round ear flicked and Death tossed his snout. "Look... This happened before. I thought I put a stop to it back then, but I was clearly mistaken." A deep breath from the white dragon. "I need your help."

The room was eerily quiet as the black one attempted to scan out where everyone was placed. Spotting a couple from reflective surfaces behind cover, almost waiting for orders to fire upon him and take the threat down. Seeing how either could understand each other, there was no reasoning with them. No forms or gestures of surrender, the black one only had one order: protect Vara. And he would do that no matter what the cost.

Changing his scales to a silver-ish grey got several of them to start firing upon Harrak, a few bullets chipped at his protective scales while several more tore through his wings before he ripped the floorplates up to shield himself. Growling at the sting the projectiles caused, he drove a paw within the metal scrap underneath and gave a couple of forceful tugs. Ripping out a makeshift heavy blade that seemed thickly plated, and swinging it upward behind the metal barricade he created. Sending a large fissure of the floor towards the soldier's side, extending that barricade and dividing them with a warped wall of metal.

It surprised the troops as they were cut off from one another, cursing loudly and shouting orders while taking cover. Barely spotting one trying to reposition himself to get a visual on the target, but all he seen was a bright spark and a loud snap behind him. Spinning around and firing, but the now purple dragon was too close. Ramming into his chest and forcing the taller suit to stumble back before getting batted heavily with the dull side of the stocky blade. Having a much harder knockback with a blast of wind behind it than expected, throwing the soldier into some of the heavier shipping containers. Barely catching the dragon change to silver once again and almost motion slamming a door before seeing another container crush the soldier.

Meanwhile, a troop from the other side of the room managed to climb up and fire at the dragon from afar, getting a few hits in before Harrak used the wide weapon as a shield, but nothing fatal. When the closest soldier attempted to join in the harassment and pin the wyrm down, he growled before changing back to a purple. Exploding into a loud spark that arked towards the closest suit, stunning it's systems for a moment. Just long enough for the dragon to sweep the heavy blade under the back of the soldier's legs, tripping him and slashing down with one fluid motion.

The cut seemed to have a lot more force to it, instantly cleaving the soldier in half while creating another fissure from the metal floor. One that seeped and erupted under the shipping containers that the higher troop used for a tactical advantage. Forcing the one who injured the dragon before to lose balance as those containers toppled to their sides.

Nearly expended, the stocky blade started to ring and vibrate. Warning Harrak of the dangers of using it too long. While finally having a moment to breath, he threw the weapon above where that last soldier landed and caught it in the air with his Atonement. Grasping the metal object and throwing it down into the middle of several containers. Taking cover a ways before hearing it begin to pull in all metal objects around it before exploding into a shower of shrapnel and bladed fissures that nearly totaled the room. Even getting several metal shards stuck in his scales as they pierced through the thick metal of a few crates, sending warnings of stings and injuries through his body.

The dragon grumbled, hissing as he pulled out a few of them in inconvenient places like his joints. Like they were more of a nuisance rather than an injury, regardless if they were drawing blood. With a few breath, his ears flickered from the movement from a large door. Hearing it open up and preparing to launch an upset container to block them off, a small device was thrown towards him. Detonating in a bright light and heavy sound almost immediately as it stunned the black one. Getting him to growl loudly at it, and attempt to shake the deafness off. Struggling to turn his body into mist so he could escape, but it was like such things were being distorted.

Before his sight returned, he was pinned to the ground and surrounded. A heavy weight of one of them likely kneeling down on him with a barrel to his ear. Disturbing his breaths enough to make it harder to recover and shake off the stun, while they communicated, likely on the damage done and the captivity of one missing inmate. Making the wyrm angry, near furious at the very thoughts of them finding her and doing the same thing. Growling loudly, he managed to get a hold of one color: Red. His first, and easiest to understand. Barely spotting the ship's wing outside the window, he started to growl

loudly as it became easier and easier for him to shake off the after-effects of that weapon.

A few of them shouted at him, likely telling the creature to calm down and surrender. Pressing that rifle barrel against his head, and realize those purple eyes were not staring at one of them, but outside. A loud roar, and a massive intake of flames entered the large metal wing before exploding it into a shower of shrapnel and fire. Instantly getting the ship to lose a set of engines and rock harshly before spinning out of control. Throwing everyone, the dragon included, against the wall with an incoming series of shipping containers following the momentum. Shattering the transparent wall after several of them ran into it, and bursting outwards in a massive vacuum that got a few soldiers.

With a bit of dumb luck and an adrenaline spike, Harrak managed to twist himself enough to escape the rain of metal cargo, and endure until that hole was half plugged up. Spotting a few suits struggling against the massive momentum and gravity change as the ship was going down, the red one got reckless. Creating a bow with the metal from the cargo and flames, he took aim at the window nearby them and launched an explosive arrow towards that window. Cracking it heavily and hearing the soldiers nearby curse and shout in denial.

Another shot wasn't anywhere near the same place, feeling the ship start to move a bit more attempting to correct itself, but the wyrm didn't stop. One last shot with the weapon before they touched ground, making it hard to tell exactly what broke the window and started letting a mix of snow, ice and painful water inside.

"You need **my** help...?" The bear repeated, getting a few shy nods from the two dragons.

"Yes. You're the one that the portal chose, so I need your help with this." A half bemused, half puzzled look from the furred one as the white wyrm swallowed loudly. "...Y'know, usually when people meet me the first time, they're a lot more..."

"Afraid-?"

"Afraid." Lorem sighed again. "But I'm telling you the truth." A look at Fate for a moment, and those purple eyes returned to Bartan. "No more games, no more tricks or plans. We just need this to be fixed."

"...I need more information." The furred one stated after a bit of silence.

"Likely, and likewise." The Forces shared a look before the larger one took a breath. "Can you stall her for me?"

"No." 'Anna' snorted.

"Can you convince her from ripping out my spine and whipping me with it?"

"...Maybe." The runner grumbled, sighing and tossing that pink snout. "Fine. But you owe me."

"Put it on my tab-"

"Your *tab* has been full for the last three decades. **Eight** times over, I might add!" She hissed, getting the larger dragon to curl his neck. A loud grumble as those green eyes stared at the bear for a moment. "I can't say don't trust him, but... Don't expect any favors to be returned." Another snort, and she walked off. Getting a bit of an awkward silence before the wyrm beckoned Bartan to follow him into town.

"Come on. I need something." No response, but those brown eyes were just looking towards Fate for a while, seeing her wave shyly before moving behind a tree and disappearing. "I'm serious, I really need your help-"

"I don't doubt that, and I will. It's just..." A noise in question from the larger one. "How long have you known her?"

"Her?" He followed the bear's sight towards where the Force left. "...Who are you seeing from it?"

"Them." A gesture towards the town as Bartan took a breath. "The people here. Why?"

"That's just how Enigmas work." Death snorted.

"What do you see?"

"My brother." He grumbled. "Always with the alphamalism too, needing to run everything-"

"Well, they are Fate-"

"That doesn't automatically make them correct." Another snort, as he took a breath. "...They're shapeshifters. Almost spirit-like, but use the images and personalities of those who you want to see. Well, usually."

"That you want to see...?" A glance back towards the home.

"Some can be forced, but it's hard for it to do that." A grumble as they walked down the street, the dragon searching for something down every strip. "That drake of yours being older, for example. Took it quite a bit of time to get everything down and stable, though a few errors were quite amusing. Especially when it was attempting to prepare for your... Desires?"

"And it's never done it before." It was barely a question, but those large wings just shrugged. "If you're looking for the portal, it's that way-"

"Nope!" Death half grumbled. "I honestly don't want to see that damn thing again, and I also

don't want to think about you and my **brother** getting jiggy-with-it." He snorted, getting the bear to smile as those purple eyes lit up. "There!" He started moving faster towards Zhong's store and entering. Taking something near the register before exiting and putting a small package in his entire maw. Chewing and purring loudly. "I haven't had this in ages...!"

"You're paying for that, right?"

"Like he's really going to miss a few packs of gum." He snorted, shifting something around in his mouth for a bit before spitting out the package label and all the small foils in one clump.

"Gum...?" The bear whispered, getting an epiphany. "...You're Marcus." A double take from the dragon and an almost stunned look for several moments. "Izumi's Mentor...?"

"You know Zuzu?" A chuckle at the name got the dragon to blush a bit. "Forget you heard that. But you know Izumi?"

"Yeah, she helped me a lot during that damn portal incident." A sigh of relief from the large one.

"That will make things a lot easier then. Where is she?" A bit of a sad stare from those brown eyes, making Marcus take a breath. "Where was she last seen?"

"...Morgue maybe? I know where she was killed." Another heavy breath and those wings drooped nearly to the ground. Getting the furred one to take a few steps closer and put a paw on that scaled shoulder. "You must've expected it by now-"

"I know... I know." Another breath as he began chewing again. "She did everything to save us, y'know? Sacrificed everything, including her own species." A faint nod from Bartan. "I never hated them more than when she told me what their real intent was."

"The humans?" A nod, and a near angry exhale through the wyrm's muzzle. "I mean, I was skeptical about the stories, only hearing one side of it. But it wasn't until I became a Force of Death-"

"Farce of Death." A large snout toss and growl from Marcus as the bear chuckled.

"Do I have to get Fate back here to force you to forget that?" He snorted.

"I really don't think she could-"

"It could. Calling my brother by a female pronoun doesn't fit well for me. You need to identify an enigma as an it to be safe, bear."

"...You sure? I for one wouldn't mind if Bryce was more feminine." A groan from the large one. "We did talk about dressing him up in a maid outfit at one point-"

"Moving on to our next point: No." The furred one's head tilted.

"No?"

"No, you will not be seducing me, nor playing around with my giblets. Understood?" A thick stare from those purple eyes.

"...You do realize playing hard to get is only going to make me want you more-"

"Shut up!" The dragon hissed, getting the bear to laugh as they moved on.

The young one woke up both stunned and in pain, as nearly her entire side felt bruised. Her wing hurt quite a bit, but it was only sore thankfully. Able to move it with ease and just a bit of pain. As for everything else, just stiff from her body's warnings, nothing more. Though as her hearing came around, she started hearing a sharp siren that was aching those frilled ears.

The pink wyrm looked around, not recognizing the place she was in, but several towers were stuck to the ceiling. Looking like they were strapped to it. A few moments of study, and it came back to her. She used to be up there, hiding from something that she couldn't picture. But the term Aliens came to mind for some reason.

(This has to be one of those sciency movies...) She grumbled in thought, suddenly feeling the sharp coldness of water that made her yelp. Hearing the flow coming from the wall, likely a vent of sorts. Making her whimper as she struggled to find a way out. Barely making out what almost looked like a door, but sealed shut. Then it came back to her in full.

Harrak. Stating that they were... Abducted? By Aliens? And he told Vara to stay here and hide until he came around. Making sure it was safe. A glance at the vent that was flowing in water and she half whimpered and grumbled at the same time. Hardly a safe place anylonger, he would have to understand. With a deep breath, she placed those paws on the door and concentrated.

It was much harder to move than when they practiced, but the metal of the door started to bend and break open outwards, only to start flowing water there too. Making her yelp at the sudden sharpness of cold. Grunting through it, she split the door opened widely and endured the massive intake of water for a few moments before swimming out. Doing her best to function within what felt like swimming in billions of sharp knives.

Passing through a few doors and climbing onto what seemed to be a large metal crate, she scampered up and held herself closely. Doing her best to heat the wyrm's own core without burning herself, then working on her surroundings to ensure the dragon didn't catch hypothermia. A few breaths, and Vara found herself looking up at the ceiling and whimpering loudly.

The 'floor' was ripped apart several times over, with the metal plating being warped into sharp fissures that morphed into near trenches. Several bodies were attached to such things, no longer moving within their protective gear. Almost reminding her of walkers, while the ship's cargo was scattered everywhere. Such destruction was unreal to her, leaving the small one stunned as she took it all in.

"...It's official now. My boyfriend is a maniac." She almost quipped out loud, spotting the transparent wall that was letting water in, but seemed to come to a halt. Barely seeing an ocean down below, getting those scales to click loudly in a uncomfortable shiver. If the cargo was strapped to the ceiling...

Yep. Maniac fits. But where is he? Down below? Is he stuck somewhere underwater or inside a container? Or did something else do all this? Her attention turned towards an opened wall towards the other end of the massive room, one that was torn opened almost purposefully above the waterline. It was a near signature of Harrak's work, well, compared to the rest of the damage in the room. And the pink one really didn't feel like swimming again.

At least her wings were still functioning. Carefully gliding from crate to crate, avoiding the sharp stalactites of warped metal as she made her way into the makeshift door within the wall. Letting her avoid most of the water, besides a few pawsteps and entire a dark hallway. One that was only dimly lit with red warnings along the floor. "Harrak...?" She half called as she carefully made her way through the hallway. "Are you here-?"

Some sharp explosions came from afar, making her whimper and almost hide on the floor as she tried to make out what they were. She could barely recall them, like some sort of dream. Only remembering the sharp pains that came after such noises. Mostly in her chest and neck, along with the faint whimpers of something white.

The strange memory made her feel cold, though that could've been the air. Swallowing loudly, the wyrm took it step by step. Eventually coming across a hallway down that was nearly filled with water. At least there was another place to head out. Moving towards it, something caught her eye within the water. Getting Vara to double take and stare at it for a few precious moments.

Yellow. Like a banana within some kind of metal container. Large, and almost... Spotted green? Was that the wyvern at the orphanage? "...Adine..." The pink one whimpered, taking a closer look at the pod that seemed to be alone down there. Like they were being moved when the ship was going down.

Many memories of them together flowed through her mind in a matter of seconds, tugging at her heartstrings to the point where she couldn't leave her down there. Not like this. Taking a deep breath, and warming the waters a bit, the wyrmling dove inside. Almost growling against the painful cold as she quickly swam up to the pod. Warping the metal around the glass to break it and pull the yellow one out. Dragging her up to the surface and catching her breath for a few moments before warming herself back up.

A few tests, and the wyvern was still alive at least. Needing to help her cough that water out of her system before attempting to wake her up, but not getting a response. Visions of her mother being helpless like this nearly broke the wyrm's heart, but she needed to find help. Granted, before that, Vara helped heat up Adine's core body temperature a little, unable to tell when things were going to be too much for the adult. "I hope that does it until I can find someone." She whimpered at the yellow one. "Stay alive until I find help, Adine. Please..." A near whimper in response made her smirk a bit before scampering off down the hallway.

The streets were completely empty, only occupied by the bear, Death, and the occasional bag that seemed to be dropped in mid-transport. Garden and lawn tools were left unput-away and neglected, as the grass started to claim them for their own. Every structure once called Home, now vacant of any life or care, sending shivers through the furred one's body. Like he was walking through the aftermath of some strange warzone, escorting the very ghost of the town itself as if it were completely lost on what made it whole. "It's heavy, isn't it?" The dragon asked, getting a nod from Bartan and the two took a deep breath. "I know... It doesn't get easier either."

"I know." The bear mumbled as they continued to walk. Shaking his head and attempting to get his mind off of the death of his home. "So, where does your story start?" Those purple eyes looked at him, almost emotionless at first. Understanding how the Force continued to walk forward from such things.

"How much do you know about me? Let's start with that."

"Well... I met Izumi during that portal incident." A nod in understanding. "But it took several times for her to start to trust me enough to share the truth."

"And that being?" Marcus asked a bit sternly.

"...That you guys started out as biological weapons for the humans to use. A sort of trump card to overrule their now wasteland of world." The large one looked away and took a breath. "That was the plan, anyway. But She got... Attached. Ended up killing the crew who only treated your kind as objects or tools of war... Or at least attempted to." A faint nod, even though those purple eyes couldn't be seen. Eventually slowing the dragon to a stop. "She didn't quite get all of them, but you ended up saving her in the end." A heavy breath from the Force that time, covering his face with a wing. Bartan then put a paw on his arm while staying on the other side of the barrier.

"...I expected it, y'know. Told myself that she would be gone by the time I returned here,

foolishly thinking I could convince myself not to feel anything from damn truism..." A few rubs from that paw and the bear went in for a full hug, making sure not to look towards Marcus' eyes during it. "I'm alright-"

"No, you're not-" A sudden squeeze from the dragon made the furball yelp a bit in surprise from the sudden hug. Trying to hold back his strength and not break the smaller one, but he almost couldn't resist. Spending several minutes leaking a few tears and just holding onto the soft one in the middle of the street. Eventually spitting out his gum and taking a few breaths before starting to let go. "...About the only time someone would be thankful that this town is empty."

"Yeah... Yeah." The large one took a breath, wiping his eyes before completely letting go. "...Sorry about that."

"Don't be. Everyone needs to do it." A faint nod from that scaled muzzle, still staring off into space. "So what happened after you saved her?" Another deep breath from the dragon and he nodded again.

"Well... Humanity on the other side of the portal was still a large threat. They were able to open it from their side, and vice versa if needed."

"So you needed to somehow disable the portal? Because if they found out that the crew died..."

"They would likely send in several squads to clean up anything leftover. Well, that was the worst case scenario, and a chance Zuzu didn't want to take. So, we ended up messing with the system to the portal."

"The same system...?" A nod from the Force as they started walking again.

"But it was different back then, able to observe and report back on any progress. Mostly if there was some other life outside the base of operations that somehow got in or took over. When it found out..."

"You had to find a way to stop it."

"And I needed to interact with the portal in the process, whereas they were linked. One morning, we were working on it and Zuzu went to make us coffee. Something messed up, be it a set of wires I accidentally put in the wrong place or what, I still never really figured out. But it shocked me into unconsciousness." He half grumbled loudly. "Apparently I looked like I was taking a nap, but she returned with a smirk on her face. Calling my name to wake me up." A heavy breath as Marcus looked away. "...I must've drank that stale coffee eight thousand times... And loved every one of them."

"So that was your reset point?" A few nods from the white one. "How long did it last?"

"You mean until I reset again?" A noise in confirmation from the bear as the large one too a breath of thought. "Depended, really. Sometimes a few weeks, sometimes a few days. Usually cut short when I died, then somehow 'woke back up.' If that makes any sense."

"-Makes complete sense." Bartan grumbled from experience. "Granted, mine was usually when I re-entered the portal."

"Yeahhh, I tried that and got shot down on the spot." A chuckle from the bear. "Seriously, humans and their tales of dragons. Do they all have to be so... Antagonistic?"

"You're talking about humans. *Anything* non-human is Antagonistic to them." The bear grumbled. "I should actually rephrase that: anything that's not like **Them** is the antagonist."

"You said it, brother." The dragon snorted. "But nearly everytime it was like a countdown until the army stormed in. Only for them to execute every one of us still around. Then back to that smirk and bad coffee." A deep breath from the large one. "I learned everything I could from her during those years, or what felt like it. I ended up completely reprograming and editing the System to our favor to start hiding our progress, and..." A breath from the dragon.

"You ended up learning more than Izumi could know." A few silent nods. "Which is around the time you started teaching her."

"...Yeah. I must've torn that portal apart a thousand times-"

"How often did a piece of it fall on you?"

"I'm not telling." Marcus snorted, getting a chuckle from the bear. "But I finally found out how to make it work in our favor. Stopping it from functioning, at least what I thought was permanently. Clearly I was wrong." Another snort.

"Humanity is desperate, they find a way everytime."

"Well, eventually that desperation has to end." The dragon growled a bit. "But in order to ensure it... I had to leave. I ended up disappearing from her to form my own lab... I at least said goodbye, and told her that I might be back, but..." Another heavy breath and that paw returned on his large shoulder. "I'm alright." A nod from Bartan.

"So by other lab you mean..." A moment of realization from those brown eyes. "Those devices... Alternate uses of energy, what we used to divert that meteor?"

"Is that what you used it for?" The wyrm grumbled. "That was supposed to be for when her lab's systems failed, or if the next few generations needed to be powered somehow before they discovered their own form of reusable energy." Another breath. "...But something happened, the details are still a little fuzzy to me. regardless... I died. For real this time too."

"...You were unable to be reaped though, because of what the portal did to you..."

"But I could become a reaper. And from there-"

"The Force of Death." A slow nod from Marcus. "So why do you need me?" A bit of a serious look from the dragon.

"I need to find something I left here, in case this damn event repeated. I gave it to Zuzu before I left, but never told her what it was for." A snout toss from the large one. "Well, not in person. I ended up writing it down, but it likely got lost among the thousands of other documents I left behind." A near growl from Marcus. "I had so much unfinished business, only to trip over my own tail and knock over something large that basically flattened me... I think."

"Sounds like something Remy would do."

"Still, in order to find that, I need to find her. And you know where she might be, even spiritually." A nod from the bear. "Now... What was all this Jazz about a meteor?" Bartan chuckled at him.

The black one limped through the hallway, staggering a little more with every step as his body nearly demanded rest. Granted, he could understand why, knowing the signs nearly by heart now. Drowsiness and a pressure in his head, a small bleed from his muzzle, his instincts coaxing him to just stop and sleep. Though having a hard time to feel the pain of the concussion over the pain of his shattered side and wing, dragging on the ground because he couldn't find a way to strap it up.

But all he had to do was find her food and water. Maybe some medical supplies in case she was hurt. Though, he was concerned that maybe Vara suffered some damage through that crash, but if he didn't find something soon, Harrak would turn back regardless. Likely throw a shard of metal in his brain so he could recover in a few hours.

First thing was first: make sure that pink wyrm was safe. Safe, comfortable, and that most threats were eliminated. He assured to himself in heavy whispers as he climbed over every divide within the dark hallway, that she was able to handle herself. Even if she had to create a dome of metal around herself to keep her safe, and abandon the black dragon. He would find a way to escape again.

Those fantasies were interrupted by heavy footsteps behind him, granted everything sounded heavy to the black one. Barely making out a humanoid suit in the distance through the blinking red lights, getting Harrak to growl under his breath. Hearing it step closer whenever it was dark, as if being cautious of its surroundings. Perhaps the soldier didn't know he was here? Perhaps the darkness was hiding the wyrm? That, or he somehow cloaked himself out of instinct, but he wasn't in his gold atonement.

A heavy groan from the walker as it wailed through the halls, chilling the dragon and making his scales click. Something was definitely off, from its movements to its speech. Staggering through the hall in a quicker bursts of speed, and then Harrak seen it. A thick black bulge latching on the side of the soldier's neck wound, almost growling when it searched the darkness. Staring right at the wyrm lying close to the ground.

Cursing, Harrak turned his scales silver and caused the metal wall to spear out and attempt to snare the soldier in the leg. Barely missing, but getting its tail at least, halting it enough for the dragon to run in a more level ground. A few pulls, and he heard the appendage rip off as the creature roared in rage. Charging at the smaller one and ramming through every bar divide he parted with behind him, eventually catching up to the juvenile dragon and slamming him against the wall.

Hissing at the pain, the humanoid grabbed Harrak by the neck and slammed his back against the same wall. Not expecting the spike to come out of it and cut through the black bulge, finally getting a painful reaction out of the creature, just not enough to put it down. Choking the young wyrm tightly, and nearly shattering his collarbone before feeling that spike morph into a blade and decapitate the soldier. Finally removing it's motor control of the host and releasing that tight grip after a few moments.

A few heavy breaths, and the silver one sent a blunt ram of metal to throw the corpse down the hallway in anger. Growling his own against the pain on his body and pride, another creature rammed into him from the side. Sending the small one down the hallway and landing on one of the divides, stunning his body and ignoring those warnings to move as the second soldier came closer in a loud roar. Slamming a heavy fist that almost felt swollen from dense muscle against the wyrm's back. Hearing his spine crack loudly and the silver one to growl in pain. Barely making out more heavy footsteps behind the soldier, and sending up a series of bars to hold it back. Bad enough dealing with one of these damn things.

Nearly catching the fist with another spike from the floor, one that was forced to pass through his wing membrane for accuracy, Harrak heard the third creature ram through the metal bars with ease, but nearly trample the second soldier. Ramming it off into the hallway a bit, and past the wyrm. Hearing them fight while a smaller creature came through the broken bars. "Are you okay!?" To hear a language he could actually understand actually stunned the silver one from his rage for a few moments, studying the purple eastern dragon that was a bit smaller than he was.

Then a look at the one that was fighting the soldier; Feral, long tail with something at the end of it. A dozen little 'wings' along its back that pretty much looked useless as such... The Chief of police? A loud snarl from Harrak as he changed his scales once again, nearly matching the same shade as Ipsum and getting the smaller dragon to yelp in surprise before he roared loudly into his paw. Creating a glass-looking maul with electrical sparks jumping off of it, then disappearing in a node of that same lightning before reappearing near Bryce's head.

The earth dragon took a half a step back, barely seeing Harrak in mid-swing and slamming the large hammer directly on the soldier's head. Nearly shaking the entire ship with the impact and stunning the dragons around at the massive spark and light it created. Like a flash-bang grenade, the drake was

stunned for a bit until his eyes adjusted once again. Making out the corrupted soldier with its upper half missing, as well as the wyrm and his weapon laying on the ground. "Overkill, don't you think?" Bryce snorted, while the smallest one was still stunned at what he just witnessed.

"It deserved it." Harrak growled, grunting against his body, but not moving. "Taath... You might want to do us a favor."

"What?"

"Take that hammer and toss it down the hallway." A noise in question, and the hammer started ringing. "Do it, not much time left." The black one grumbled, and the earth dragon cautiously grabbed it with his jaws. Feeling a strange current along his tongue, like licking a large battery. "Toss it." He did so, soon getting a wall of metal to divide the dragons and the weapon before hearing it explode loudly on the other side. Feeling two sets of yellow eyes stare at the wyrm for a bit before hearing him grumble. "They function, just unstable." He snorted.

"Are you okay?"

"Other than the concussion, I'm fine." He snorted at the eastern one, almost sarcastically.

"Well... You haven't moved since..." An upset burp from Ipsum as he tried not to look at the corpse.

"I..." An annoyed sigh from Harrak. "I can't move. Odds are that maul ended up shattering my forepaws and likely did a number on my spine."

"You're...?"

"And that's just the *beginning* of my day." Another sarcastic snort. "Sherriff-"

"Chief." Bryce snorted, seeing that black snout kind of toss.

"Whatever, do me a solid and break my neck or something, will you?"

"W-what?"

"You're joking." The drake grumbled. "What if we need you for something?"

"It's not like I'm much help like this." Half a hiss. "All you need to do is survive for three hours-"

"Which is not a risk I'm willing to take-"

"Three hours...?" The purple one asked, getting a look from Bryce and an attempted one from the black.

"...Did you not tell him?"

"I didn't tell anyone anything, I thought that was part of the deal." A long silence as the drake

stared at Harrak. Not actually making eye contact. "Don't you give me that look, kid. You wanted things to be kept secret." A growl from the smaller one. "Do you know where we are?"

"Spaceship." The wyrm answered, both rather quickly and with irritation.

"A crashed one, right?" A noise in confirmation for Ipsum. "One that was... Brought down." No answer from the black one.

"**Harrrrak...**" A slight whimper from the wyrm as Bryce nearly growled. Seeing him become gold, then disappear from their sights. "You realize you can't move."

"Doesn't mean you need to see me." He snorted, getting the drake to toss his snout.

"What?" The eastern dragon looked back and forth between the 'two'. "What are you calling him out on?"

*"I... **May** have brought the ship down."*