

Wrong Side Of Heaven Act 4 - False Freedom

By Bartan Tirix

Chapter 0

The black one landed as softly as he could on the grass. Still being able to see a faint imprint of where he had a little scrap with the white creature in the dirt nearby. The thought of it irked him to no end, and the constant grip on the raising spines was only making it worse. "Come on, now. We've stopped moving, you're safe to let go." He grumbled, trying to make it sound like a joke to the blonde woman riding him, but he really hated to leave. Right when he found a lead to his liberation. It was making him angry, just the thought of leaving her behind, not knowing what might happen to her.

As she carefully let go, the dragon laid down, raising some of the earth for her to step on and carefully dismount safely. "Thank you." She said sadly, stroking the side of his neck. Noticing him almost trying to look away from her, seeing a mix of sorrow and anger in his eyes. "You'll come back, don't worry." He exhaled loudly through his nostrils as a response, telling Tia that he really didn't believe her.

"...You don't know him like I do." He grumbled. Finally looking at her and almost chuckling. "Your mane is a complete mess." Immediately, the girl started tending to it. Trying to flatten the straw colored hair before anyone else seen her. "I can never understand why you would care so much about your appearance."

"We were just taught to in the church." She scratched under his jaw after her hair was straightened out. Feeling the same thing he was through the touch, as well as the feeling of being half watched. Stopping and taking a few steps around him, she seen the large white creature just waiting patiently on the other side of the road. "You probably shouldn't keep him waiting too much longer." Another sigh in reply, but Atlas got up. Circling around the woman and walking beside her at the human's pace.

"...Any homework you want me to do while I'm away?" He tried to joke, then realized that she might not have understood exactly what he meant. His suspicions were correct, getting the black one to toss his snout and make Tia giggle at him. "It means, any take-home assignments. Anything you want me to attempt, as a teacher to a student."

"Student?" She teased, getting his ears to blush. Though she really couldn't make it out in the dusk too well.

"Don't let it go to your head." He grumbled.

The woman thought for a moment. "He said that this was one of your past homes?" Though the dragon didn't reply, he did flick an ear towards her. "Was there someone you once loved there?"

He stopped and looked at her, ears flat against his head as he exhaled. "...Not really. But he grew attached to me. Until he... Decided to do something stupid."

"And you never really forgave him for it." The dragon dropped his gaze, closing his eyes. He didn't answer, but he didn't have to. "Why not?"

"Tia..." He muttered.

"Alright. But just think about it a bit, okay? Maybe the possibility of reconsidering and analyzing what happened. Think of his intentions for doing whatever it was, and maybe..."

Atlas grumbled, but didn't really say anything as he approached Bartan. "Back, are you?" The white beast ask the black one. He just looked at the woman with purple eyes, and she placed a soft hand on his muzzle, nodding. "For the record, Atlas, I'm-"

"Don't. Say. It. The damage has already been done." The bear lowered his ears, but nodded faintly. Opening a storm to the dragon's destination. With another deep breath, Atlas studied Tia one last time. Reaching her eyes and her smile, she met it with a trusting gaze.

"Don't look at me like that." She playfully scolded the large one. "We will meet again, right Bartan?" Making the white one look back and forth between the two and nodding. "I'll see you again, Atlas. Don't keep thinking otherwise." He murmured something the blonde couldn't make out, and she pressed on his neck a bit. Pushing him forward. "Go on. They're waiting for you. Goodbye for now, Atlas."

"...Goodbye Tia." And the dragon passed her, walking towards the strange bubble in front of him. As he glanced at the white one, he muttered under his breath. "Damn bear." And entered the portal.

The storm rippled around like a liquid and disappeared as soon as the end of the dragon's tail was submerged inside. Releasing a faint flash in the shape of a circle that pulsed and faded away. There was nothing but silence for a few moments, and the Oracle could no longer feel the Black one around. "Tia..." Bartan muttered, looking at the woman sadly. "I'll do what I can-"

"I know you will. But... I have a favor to ask you." He took a step closer to her and gave the blonde a puzzled look. "He... Should learn how to respect people. Earlier today I found out that he really... Doesn't." Her memory returned to the stilts on Atlas' wings, the ones that Sam spent an entire day sanding to make them feel comfortable and smooth. Once the dragon recovered, he took them off and snapped them in two. Discarding them.

Bartan then looked at her with understanding. "What would you like me to do?"

"I still want him back here, but... Can you maybe send him elsewhere in the world? Perhaps where he might be able to help others?"

"You do realize that he cannot understand the common languages here."

"I do, and that means he will have to rely on someone else to find me. I'm not the only Oracle in this country." She chuckled. "I just want him to..."

"Learn something. I understand. Again, I'll do what I can." He nodded while walking to her side and turned about. Laying down and forming a set of ethereal stairs for her to climb on. "You shouldn't be walking back alone." Tia smiled at him and took the stairs. Stepping onto the beast was like stepping onto a large fluffy pillow that was oddly comfortable.

"Just..." She trailed off, causing him to rise and attempt to look at her once again. "Just don't make it too long, please?" Another nod, as the Counterweight walked towards the village.

Chapter 1

The mountain top was cold. Merciless really, with the high winds that seemed to pierce through his armored scales. He could feel parts of himself starting to freeze. From the second half of his obsidian tail, to his ears and muzzle. Even the blood that was slowly oozing inbetween his purple eyes. Coming from a recent wound that still made him dizzy.

The atmosphere had a strange scentless smell to it. It was hard to breathe, yes, but not that he really cared. This cold reminded him of a nuclear winter he once witnessed. Everywhere was nothing but white snow and thick clouds. Unable to see the stars or the sun for centuries.

He remembered it well, it was a period in his life that he would describe as one of his best to be honest. There was nothing left to that desolate world besides snow. Covering and shaping what was once a global civilization. Turning into a comforting loneliness that he desperately needed. Away from those who reminded him of failure. Away from those who only looked at him with either Fear or Pity. Empathy perhaps, but he couldn't blame her at the time.

Perhaps that's why the dragon was here. Even if the cold and the winds were going to freeze the membranes of his wings solid. He had other means of getting back home, all he needed to do was be creative. But he just wanted to be alone again. It was easier for the black one to think clearly without any distractions. Though the Oracles could not read minds, they could often tell how he was feeling. What he was thinking. And right now, he was too proud to say he was afraid of them.

But was he? Though he's felt the vice grips of both of them before on his most sensitive of areas, he can't say he was afraid of them, per say. It was what the future held for them, maybe? What the future held for him? The thought of it terrified him to death. Just willing to do anything but go through the pain of that again. So much so that he wanted to return to that wall he was slamming his head against for twenty minutes.

Though it was different this time. His last one was a manipulation of his instincts. That damn female snuck into his living quarters at the time, while in heat. Constantly throwing that musk and pinning him down until his mind was set. That's the only reason why he was labeled a Father to begin with. Stuck raising a wyrmling and with a dragon that he really didn't love. That he was still trying to get over, to this very day.

His son hated him. That was no secret. But he could not blame the little one. The father was just bitter the entire time. Always giving the impression that the son was nothing more than a chain around the black one's ankle. One that was also tied to that hatchling's mother. It ruined children for him, even if he was never fond of their idiocy to begin with.

I suppose that's what worried him. That's why he was up here, trying to freeze his own fear numb so he could finally think. So he could look that woman in the eye once again, speak once again. Perhaps maybe find a way out of this. A means of escape.

The thought of just leaving crossed his mind before. He wanted to run, start again a new life without being tied down. Run into another set of quirky characters and just pick them apart, piece by piece. Maybe spend a few years just hibernating and forgetting that this ever happened. Maybe he could attempt to even destroy his own memory once again. But that one hardly did the job to begin with.

With a shivering sigh, he cursed. The thought of that damn red-headed idiot ruined his entire plan to leave to begin with. Before he even found out that he put an egg into the Blonde one. Once again, he just buried his head into the snow and screamed. Slamming it into the ice a few times. Call himself stupid and forgetful. Somehow not remembering the fact that humans don't have mating seasons, and they can be fertilized at any time. He never really understood how they worked. But this as never happened before. Granted, he could only count the amount of human women he's slept with on a single paw. At least talking Full Penetration wise. Others had some fun with him, and he had some fun with others. But nothing like this.

His body spazzed out a bit, trying to get some warmth and warning him once again that it could not function well in such weather. As much as he really didn't want to leave, he didn't want the choice to be

out of his hands. That worried him, to be honest. He usually accepted such a thing to be taken out of his responsibility. To fall unconscious here and be frozen for a few hundred years would normally be okay with him. So, why was he stuck on this choice?

Attempting to spread out his wings told him that it was too cold to fly. Instead, he turned himself into a mist, and burrowed through the snow. Tunneling to a large cave at the very bottom of the mountain. Reforming himself, the dragon could smell smoke. The faint smell of a small fire burning within it. Walking closer to it, he seen the light in the distance, as well as a human sitting near it. Glaring into the dark, trying to make out the black one. As Haytre stepped into the light, casually.

The two stared at each other for a few moments until the dragon felt a bit of a breeze come through the cave. Odds are there was some other exit to it, allowing the air to circulate. "You won't keep that fire going like that." The dragon muttered. Still not getting a reaction out of the man. Even after turning Bronze and sealing the exit he came from. Then making a large flu for the fire. "Step back." Another mutter, and the man did after a few moments. Though surprised at the response, Haytre did his best not to look it. Instead, creating more fire wood and making a bigger fire for the two. Then some warm plants to lay on.

Laying down and giving out a heavy breath, the now black one stared into the fire. "A good twenty thousand people on this planet. Maybe more. And I somehow found the one that could actually understand me." It got the man's attention. Though still silent, he was taking off his mittens and undoing a few of the makeshift buttons on his jacket. It looked homemade, just various animal furs that were sown into a warm coat. Not even any pockets, but he wore a belt that held several things. "You're not an Oracle, are you?"

The man studied the dragon's body. Shaking his head slightly. "No." He said in a bit of a raspy voice. "Not anymore."

"So you're just some Eskimo that got away from the city life then?"

"...And you're a creature that's supposed to be extinct."

The dragon sighed through his nostrils. "You're half right. I'm not supposed to be here. And because I am, I feel like I'm screwing everything up. Again." The man studied the large one again. Brushing his black, almost greasy hair out of his eyes.

"You seem... Lost." The gemmed eyes caught his brown ones.

"I've been... Debating a choice. Whether or not to just leave, regardless of my actions have... Left a mark, so to speak."

"And you've come to the mountains to ask for the spirits help?"

"You could argue that. I'm searching for an answer." A bit of silence between the two. "Usually I'd rather just leave it until something brings it out of my paws. Or I just... Leave. I've made this choice a million times... But, I'm not sure what's so different about this one."

"Every choice is different." The man drank something out of a small canteen, then offered some to the Black one. A small sniff, and he could tell it was an exotic form of rum.

"...It doesn't make you warmer. If anything, it makes your body colder." The man nodded, still shaking and offering the drink to the dragon. With a sigh, Haytre took it and gave it a taste. It half burned on his tongue, like a cooling frost against warm flesh. Giving him the numbing feeling like he just got his tongue stuck on a metal pipe by licking it. Snapping his jaws a few times and feeling the liquid rundown his long neck, the black one grumbled a bit, almost in pleasure. "I was never the one to like drinks."

"It will make you think clearer." The man said, accepting the canteen back. "Every choice is different. You say you've been through a thousand, but every choice mattered."

"I said Million. You have no idea how old I actually am. I have no clue how old I actually am." It made the human chuckle at the dragon's snort. Hearing the words himself even made the dragon feel a little lighter. Relaxed. So much so that he laid on his back for a while.

"Still, you've made the choice. What's so different about this one?"

"To be honest?" The black one muttered, getting a nod from the man. "There's... A kid involved." He admitted awkwardly.

"And how do you feel about this child?"

"He's... It's not hatched yet." As the large one cleared his throat, expecting almost a stink eye from the man, there was no change in his reaction. Taking another taste out of the canteen. "I never liked hatchlings. I never enjoyed wyrmlings, I honestly hated them. How is this kid going to be any different?"

"It would be yours, would it not?"

"Mine...?" A heavy sigh. "The last one I had was mine as well. And I was a terrible father. I wasn't abusive. Maybe a bit violent, but never towards him or his mother... I just... Hated it." The man motioned for him to go on. "She tricked me into having it. I guess I never got over that. If I had the choice myself, I would've never had that wyrmling hatched to begin with."

"And this new one?" The dragon looked at him. "Was it your choice?"

"...No. I wasn't... I didn't mean for it to happen. I didn't even consider it happening." Another sigh as he looked back up towards the ceiling of the cave. "I just... Forgot."

"What about the female?" The dragon paused for a moment, a small but sad smile growing over his muzzle. "She makes you happy."

A glance at the man, and Haytre sighed again. "You can understand why this is so hard then."

"No." The black one double taked. "If you love her, than there should be no issue."

The large one pointed at himself. "Terrible father? You really think I should try again?" He snorted sarcastically.

"Yes." A glare at the man. "The first time is always hard. And it will be for your female, correct?" A gleam of realization shown in the purple eyes. "A terrible father is better than no father at all. Though it might not seem like it in your eyes right now, you will be thankful for this decision." Once again, the dragon's eyes trailed to the fire. Though he was still afraid, he felt more at ease.

Slightly nodding after a bit of silence, he returned gazes to the man. "What do you want?" A noise in question from him. "I... Can do anything for you, except bring back the dead. What would you like in return for this?"

"You've given me a warm place to stay for the night, and a soft bed. It is enough-"

"No. It's not." The dragon leaned in closer to him. "Anything at all. Just name it."

"I don't need anything." He said softly, placing a hand on the black muzzle. "It's alright."

A warm exhaled, and the dragon completely got up. Sitting in front of the man, and lifting a paw for a handshake. "...Atlas."

"Trent."

"Trent. At the end of every month, I will find you. I will track down your location if I have to, and I will repay you with whatever you can think of." The man chuckled. "If you want a castle, I can make it. If you want your own private island, I can make it. If you want a large flaming greatsword... Well, I can give you an endless supply. They just don't last too long." Another chuckle.

"It's quite alright, Atlas. I look forward to your visits." Trent smiled at him. "For now, let's just get some rest."

He hated traveling in the storm. Their wagon's tarp always had leaks and holes throughout it, and the constant rain the past few days really wasn't helping it recover. Even after Eddison's patchwork back at

the camp wasn't enough to completely fix the damn thing. He's tried so for weeks, only to have some more of the tarp to tear away, or losing some of the precious reels of thread and string they could find.

Instead, he just had to cover up once again. Place a half dry blanket over his head and hope that the water didn't dampen it so much that it gave him a headcold. If he couldn't go on raids, then he would not be of any use to the other bandits. And if he wasn't any use... They would make use out of him.

It wouldn't be the first time they offered one of their own just for something to eat. It was just how things were at these times. Fenrick hated it, and often wished for something else in life. But that was the thing about this world of his; Wishes never came true.

Exhaling once again, he turned over. Only to feel the slight jab into his ribs. Quietly, he moved the hard lump around the hidden pocket of his worn jacket. The idea of the stolen gem raced his heart. If the other bandits ever found out about it, it would be the end of Fen. Maybe lucky enough to be exiled from them, but that really wasn't an option around these parts. To be forced out would mean more travels in the wet seasons. Perhaps even stumbling into a dragon's territory.

The rearing of the horse startled the young man, and a few others in the back with him. As the driver tried to calm it down, the wagon began to push a bit backwards. A few more neighs from the animal, and bandits began to dismount the wagon. Entering the slight rain in the sharp darkness. Though something told the young man to stay inside, he followed them anyway.

It only took a few moments to get his dark hair wet in the rain. Though he should've gotten something to cover his head up, he was distracted by a strange shine in the darkness. "What's wrong with her?" One of the bandits asked the driver.

"I dunno. She just won't go forward. Doesn't help that I can't see ten feet in front of me in this place."

The first one grumbled, pointing to another. "You, grab a lamp from the back. Make sure it's hooded as well. Maybe the rain washed the road away or something." As one of them did what he was told. As Fenrick tried to take a few steps forward, carefully feeling the dirt in front of him and watching his step, he ran into something solid. Something about as high as his chest.

As the light of the lantern began to shine in the distance, it reflected a large black pipe across the road. "What the hell is that?" Another man asked, getting closer to it as Fen felt the object through the wet rain. It wasn't metal, that's for sure. A bit cold, yes, but it felt more like large scales than a pipe. And it was solid.

"It's a..." He whispered at them, following the large appendage towards the forest near the road. Being able to make out a large gap in the trees. "It's a downed dragon."

The others looked at him with a bit of disbelief, but as the light drew closer, they began to make it out in the far darkness. The still rear paws, the distant wing still arched up. And then the head, resting on a

few trees that collapsed due to its massive weight. "...We should leave." One of them said.

"What? Yer crazy! Where there's a dead dragon, there's a hoard just waiting to be-"

"Where there's a dead dragon, there's another that claimed it's life! As well as its bounty. If we try to search for it, we'll end up finding the one that did this-" A loud grumble came from the darkness towards the black beast, making everyone remain quiet. "Let's get out of here... Perhaps it's closer than we thought." As the man turned about to run to the wagon, he seen a tall thin line shine just before he ran into it. Causing him to halt where he stood for a few moments.

As the others looked at him, they noticed a very thin, red, vertical line quickly becoming visible. "Boss...?" One of them asked, as the man remained completely still. The one with the lantern began to circle around him, noticing a very tall blade just behind the Boss. One that he ran into and soon the man's body began to separate in two. "We need to g-" The light suddenly dropped after a loud skewering sound. Fen just barely caught the reflection of a large rock spike through the bandit's chest before the lamp broke and the rain put out the fire.

He couldn't make out what exactly was happening, between the others screaming and the growls of a large beast. The faint quakes in the ground, the sound of water freezing instantly, even the horse rearing up again and suddenly going silent. For a while, all the young man heard was his own heartbeat and breaths, while he made his way to the wagon. Feeling the wheel, and hearing something move behind him. "Please...!" He whimpered. "I-I didn't do anything! Spare me!"

A low growl came from directly in front of Fen's face. A few torches of flames ignited and lit up the black beast's draconic head, just a few feet away from the man and towering over him. "...Why?" It grumbled in a deep voice. One that almost sounded dry. "How would I benefit with you alive?"

"I-I could give you something! Anything in the wagon is yours, just take it!"

"That doesn't answer my question. I could just take it after disposing of you."

"W-what about-" He dug through his coat frantically and pulled out a small sapphire. Holding it up to the light so the purple eyed creature could see it. "I took it from our last pillage without them noticing. I was going to use it to start a new-" A soft growl came from the creature, as Fen just now noticed how attracted it was to the gem. As the young one started to move it a bit side to side, the dragon snapped out of it.

"You're not very bright, are you?" It snorted as the beast moved closer with a raised paw.

"I know where more is!" It caused the creature to stop and stare at him for a few moments. "I-If you let me live, I can show you where they are!" The dragon didn't move and just stared at him. "Please..."

Eventually it set down its paw and leaned in very close to him. "...Where." It demanded in a growl.

Chapter 2

The sun had already risen when he landed back at his Island. Still getting used to the differences in temperature, his black scales seemed to absorb the sun's rays in desperation. Making the dragon feel almost too hot and uncomfortable. Getting him a bit antsy as it was.

His gaze eventually met with the message on the trees. One that the Doctor had left to taunt the dragon with the words: "TOO BAD!" Painted in black on the bark. With a loud growl, the dragon turned red and sprayed a torrent of flames across the message. Trying to sear the entire side of the tree black, but only somehow making the message display "HUGGBEES" Instantly getting Red one to hiss loudly and spray several torrents until there was nothing left but black on the trees.

"Atlas?" A woman's voice got his attention and nearly made his heart skip a beat. Seeing that it was Elexus instead of Tia made him exhale in relief. "What are you doing?" She asked, carrying an empty bucket.

"N-nothing. Just..." He said awkwardly, returning to his natural black form.

"Did those trees just say Huggbees?" The dragon paused, almost expecting to hear some people cheer the word, but after some silence, he cleared his throat.

"Yes. It was a message left behind by the Doctor yesterday." He grumbled, walking towards the Oracle and resting his snout in her hand.

"What does it mean?"

"Forget it. It's just nonsense he was babbling about." The dragon grumbled, escorting the woman to a nearby well with fresh water. Nearly pushing her forward and away from the castle.

"I didn't really get to see him too much. Tia seemed to really like that man."

"She found him entertaining. I honestly cannot understand how." The large one snorted, getting the young woman to giggle at him.

"Who was he?"

"A damn Nuisance." Elexus chuckled. "One that you'd be thankful never meeting again."

"You say that about all your friends." She teased, getting a harsh glare from the dragon only made her smile more. But then it began to fade to a sad one. Letting his glare fall, he still looked at her in question. "You left again during the night. We were worried."

The black one tossed his head. "I left a note." He grumbled, getting a concerned hand on his side and causing him to stop walking. As he took a breath, he half looked away. "I... Couldn't sleep. So I just..."

"I just don't want you to get into more trouble. And I don't want you to..." The dragon nodded, still staring into space. It wasn't until she moved in front of his sight that he broke out of his small trance. "Are you okay?" The brown haired woman put a hand under his chin. "You've been acting funny since you got back last night. Did the villagers do something to you?"

"N-no. I'm fine, Elexus." He muttered, getting a less than satisfied look from her. "I said I'm fine." The black one grumbled, beginning to walk again. "You've been hanging around Tia too long."

"Why do you say that?"

"Stones." He snorted, getting the woman to chuckle. "You're getting braver around me."

"That's because I'm learning what's best for you. Let alone how to squeeze information out of you." A low growl came from his throat as he sat down near the well. "Don't be like that, Atlas. It's better to have people look out for you."

"Says you. You're not the one getting manipulated." He snorted. Looking around the tropical forest area. Though he did make the walkway rather clear with white stone, the same color as the castle, the dirt around seemed to be a golden brown. It was very soft, kinda like sand but without tracking a mess. Though often dry, due to the sunny weather, it was not in any danger of fires. At least not while the dragon was around.

"Where were you anyway?" The woman's question snapped Atlas out of thought once again. Looking at her for a few moments, and then towards the blackened trees they left behind.

"It's been over a week since I last seen him... I thought, maybe I could..."

"I thought he bothered you-"

"He does." A loud grumble came from the large one, making her giggle at his interruption and expression. "But Tia..."

Another chuckle came from Elexus, as she started back to the castle. "You'll do anything for that girl, won't you?" It made the black one halt during his turn about. Thinking why he would go to such lengths to her, but the answer was quite clear. So much so, that it ached his heart. "I didn't mean it like that." The woman tapped his haunch.

Before he replied, the call of the Blonde woman came from a distance. Seeing her around the building's front door, waving patiently and getting the other Oracle to do the same. His heart sank when he seen that woman's smile, beating a bit faster as well while fear began to pump adrenaline through the dragon's veins. As the two women began walking towards each other, the black one remained rather far behind. His mind kept racing through his options, and his instincts told him to just run away. Fly away from what the blonde one was carrying inside her. To the point where he nearly had to root himself to the ground to prevent him from leaving.

(All I have to do is talk to her.) Atlas tried to calm himself. (Just communicate. It's Tia; she'll understand anything I have to say. Anything I have to be...) He didn't want to say it. Let anyone, including himself, know that he was afraid. It made the large one feel so weak. And lately, it felt like he couldn't hide it. "He's back, is he?" Tia asked the brown one, as they stopped to chat for a moment.

"Yes, but he's been acting a bit odd. Maybe you can pry it out of him." A faint chuckle could be picked up, as the dragon flicked his ear but kept his sights to the ocean in the distance.

"I'll see what I can do. The good thing is that he's back. Let's just hope he didn't cause any more damage."

"Yeah. By the way, what's a Huggbees?" It got the blonde one to laugh out loud and motion to just let it go. It even got the dragon to groan in the distance and lower his head in frustration. "I'll see you inside."

"Okay." Then there was nothing but a series of silent footsteps and the dragon's heart beating loudly. His scales seemed to almost raise, trying to feel the presence of her as Tia walked around to his side. His breaths began to get faster and a bit deeper, but the woman remained calm. Pretending like she didn't notice anything wrong. "I'll be back. Don't worry, I'm not taking out anymore kingdoms." She quoted the note the Kveldulf found in the kitchen. "Really? Not even a direction you might have gone to?"

"I..." Haytre sighed heavily, getting the woman to chuckle. Still not able to look in her eyes. "...You look better this morning."

"I feel better." She pet his arm, but he withdrew it rather quickly. Not before she felt a small spark of something. "Is everything alright?" She asked, rather calmly. Getting the large one to look at her lower body, then behind him away. Ensuring that the two were alone and out of earshot.

"I'm..." He swallowed loudly, taking a few breaths while leaning his muzzle down towards her. "Tia, I'm terrified about this." He whispered, feeling the woman's hands on his snout.

"Me too." He made a slight noise in question. "I'm not really sure how things are going to end up. If it's going to be an actual dragon, or is it going to be some hybrid... How I'm going to push out something your size." He whimpered awkwardly at that, making her chuckle. "You're not the only one losing sleep over this."

"I just... Don't think I can do this again." The black one murmured, feeling rather relaxed and calmed all at once. He took a step back to lay down, and push the woman onto his arm, leaning against his bicep. "You remember what I told you about N'arrexus?"

Tia let out a giggle, petting him on the neck. "I remember you said he was a handful." Another giggle of laughter at the slow tossing of his snout.

"Please Tia. Don't sugar coat it." Atlas snorted loudly. "He was a house-broken, aggressive, egotistical, narcissistic, bi-polar, scampering Apocalypse." After about a full minute of laughing, even the dragon started to chuckle a bit. "I'm glad you're so flabbergasted about this." He grumbled, trying to look offended. Though it did give him a small chin scratching.

"You've only told me horrible stories relating to our children. But you've told me over and over that wyrmlings are much worse."

"That's because they are." Another groan. "But... That's not the only reason..." He trailed off, taking a few breaths. "Tia. That mother that laid N'arr's egg... She forced me into it. I didn't even want kids, let alone that one. And that place... I was stuck there. Chained to that nest, metaphorically speaking." The woman looked at him with sad eyes. "It's a long story. One I really don't want to tell."

"Alright." She whispered. Still stroking his neck as she heard him out.

"But... I've died a good million times by now. I've never gone through more pain, more fear in my entire life than those few hundred years. I hated it so much, and I never wanted to be free more than when I was nailed there..."

There was a long silence between the two. Nothing more than the waves at a far distance and a slight breeze through the trees could be heard until Tia spoke up. "...Haytre... You don't have to stay here-"

The black one wrapped his other paw around her. Holding her with it and his neck almost too tightly. "No!" He whispered, almost hissing. "Tia, you cannot give me that option! If you do, I will take it..." For a

few moments, he just held her there. Hoping that the woman could not see that he was shedding a tear. After a bit, he eased up. "Tia... The biggest difference between now and then is the way I felt about the female. I was forced into it before, and though this one was not... Intentional. I... I love you, Tia. I don't want to be away from you. But if you give my instincts a choice..." He didn't finish. And being in constant contact with the large one, the Oracle could feel what he was. The dragon's fear of involuntary commitment was a real thing. Not to the point of a phobia, but it was real to him.

"Okay." She pet his neck for a bit, then pushed his paw away gently so she could get up. Knowing that he really didn't want to be seen in the eyes, Tia led his muzzle to his front. Whispering "It's okay" several times until he opened those purple gems. Still stroking his snout softly, she took a few steps back, to the point where her hands were completely out of reach and rested on both knees. "Haytre." She gently said with a smile. "I command you to stay with me and raise this child. You will learn to love it, as I love you. And I will help you to rid of your fears of such things. Show you the more enjoyable side to children." With her command already said, she reached over and placed a hand between his nostrils. "I'll be beside you the entire time. I know how to care for children, and you know the stages of a wyrmling quite well, if I understand." He rolled his eyes, and she chuckled. "You won't be in this alone, Haytre. We'll be together. And when we are, you have nothing to fear."

The dragon sighed, slightly chuckling. "You say that now. Wait until it starts using your bed as a toilet. Let alone everything else as a toilet." He snorted, getting the woman to giggle.

"It can't be that bad." Tia gave the snout a tight embrace. "You don't have to be alone in this. We'll always have each other."

There was nothing but the sound of rain on the dragon's wings and the grassy fields where the two were walking through. Though the bandit was soaking wet, cold, and still afraid for his life, he carried on. Trying his best to stay under the large beast to stay out of the rain. Though one minor slip, and the black one might just as well step on him.

But it wasn't slipping that got him, it was half stepping in a small hole. He fell to his knees and the ankle stung sharply. Doing his best to scamper out of the way of the rear paw coming down and halting. The near dawn was just light enough for Fenrick to see the dragon's head look below and growl. "What are you doing?"

"I-I just tripped." He said, trying to get up and feeling the pain of stepping on that foot echo through his leg.

"I meant under me." The black one grumbled.

"Just trying to get out of the rain." The young man lowered his head a bit, then a bit more at the dragon's stare. "I-I wasn't trying anything! I swear!"

"If you're going to shiv me in the belly, I'll tell you now it won't work. I've already tried." The large one resumed his pace. Hitting the man with the underside of his tail as he passed him. Causing Fen to fall once again and try to keep up. Another low growl came from the beast after a few moments, irritated by the drop in speed from the human.

"I-I'm sorry, my lord. Can we stop here for a bit of rest-?"

"Rest won't give me what I want out of you." He snorted. "You can rest when you're dead. Or when you tell me where this treasure is. Which one?" The man didn't answer, but took a few breaths while on his knees. After a bit of studying, the dragon growled. Stomping the ground and getting Fen's heart to pause. Expecting the beast was going to murder him right there, but after a few moments, there was silence. "Pick them up."

He looked through the darkness, barely making out what almost looked like sticks shaped oddly. In the distance, the beast tossed his snout, and several flames appeared, lighting up a set of crutches for him, made out of wood and leaves. "For... Me?"

"Yes. Now let's get moving. Once you show me where this treasure lies, then we can rest."

"But it's not for another day's walk from here..."

The dragon glared at his direction while keeping his pace. Though the man had stated such a thing before, humans tend to exaggerate. The cool winds were beginning to annoy him, as well as the rain. Perhaps flying over the storm would be a better choice overall then. Much faster as well. With a loud snort he turned around. "Hang onto those." He grumbled.

"W-what?"

"You want rest, and I want my reward for sparing your life. So we're doing this the faster way. Besides, you won't last a day in this. Not without getting even slower, now hang onto those crutches. I'm not making you any more." Fen didn't argue, but still yelped when he felt the large black paw grab a hold of his body and take to the skies.

They flew for an hour. Though being carried by a claw was not only uncomfortable for both of them, it made the younger one almost ill several times. Eventually passing out and waking up after landing on cold wet grass. Coughing, his head pounded. Knowing then he caught a cold from being wet for too long. "Where is it?" The large beast demanded from the sick man.

Trying to study where he was took a bit more effort than he thought. Pointing off to a semi-small

mountain close by and coughing. "There. In the mountain."

"Inside?" The black one mumbled. Studying it for a while at a distance until the coughs broke his concentration. Overlooking the man, he snorted. "Once we get inside, then you can get warmed up. Depending how much is actually there, I might even make you a soup to help your illness."

"Please... Just a few minutes of warmth of a fire. That's all I ask before we start again." The bandit begged, only to have the dragon tower directly over him and growl. Then something in the sky flew overhead, getting his eyes to widen and covering his body with his arms as a large carpet of flames was sprayed over them. The black one taking most of the hit and shielding the bandit unpurposely.

A loud growl came from the black dragon, while a yellow one landed in the distance. From the look in its purple eyes, Fen couldn't tell if the one he had been following was actually in pain, or just irked. "How tedious." It grumbled, looking at the yellow one. "It'll take more than a bit of fire to take me out!"

"That was a warning shot! You're in my..." The yellow one trailed off, seeing a bit of fear in its eyes, as the bandit got up and crawled out of the way of the two. "No...! You died! How...?" The black one tilted its head slightly. "Black scales, purple eyes... You're definitely the one I put down last night."

"How?" It was a bit of an odd question, sending both beings witnessing it into puzzled looks. "How did you kill me? I barely remember anything." It grumbled, rather calmly.

"I impaled you in the chest with a broken tree-"

"What kind of tree?" Again with the confused look as the black one tossed his snout. "I'm trying to keep a mental record of this. Now, what kind of tree?"

"I don't know... Berch?" Another toss of the black one's snout.

"No wonder it didn't work, I've already tried that. And no, flames won't work either. But if you have taken my life once, it would just be the same courtesy for me to take yours." As the air in front of the black one began to freeze, it roared into its forepaw. Constructing a stocky greatsword out of the sonic energy and frost and slamming it on the ground beside him. Sending chunks of dirt and grass in the air, half frozen. "Since I gave this insect a chance to make itself useful, I suppose I'll give you one as well. Apologize, and I won't tear you apart."

The yellow one took a step back. "What Sorcery-!?"

"That's not an apology." It snorted, taking to the air and charging the other dragon.

Chapter 3

Daylight finally reached his eyes. Sending rays through the high windows and inbetween the iron bars that began to warm his black scales. It was only a matter of time when their patrol would once again reach the dragon and abduct his body for their amusement. But unknown to them, he found a means of escape.

Listening for patrols once again, he studied the cell with his now orange paws. Feeling it rock back and forth a bit with every little movement within it. It was strange of them to build such a thing without a ceiling, but it was his means of escape so he did not complain. All he needed to do was be able to climb over it. But the bars were rather sleek, gripping them would not be enough.

He started to use the rocking to his advantage. Moving back and forth with the jail to tip it further and further sideways. With one more large push on the side of the bars, it nearly got the cell to fall over. But enough for him to jump on it and throw himself out of captivity.

The landing on the rock floor was a bit rough, but nothing he hasn't shaken off before. Snapping his jaws a few times to make sure no more fangs became loose, he made his way to the large patch of red grass. On the stone, his claws would tap loudly, but on this grass, he was silent. A hunter. One trying to find freedom from the entire dungeon.

The quickest way out was the windows high above. But they were almost too high for him to risk anything as it were. If he did manage to get on the sill, odds are the drop on the other side could be deadly. Though the air of freedom did consort him, it would have to wait until another means of escape could be found.

Through the large doorway led to a very large hall. Keeping his pace on the red grass to keep quiet, he knew this place well. Where he's been nearly his entire life, and escorted through it time and time again. Knowing the encampment like the back of his red paw. Except for that door. The large one that often

smelled funny. He thought to believe it was some sort of torture chamber, for often enough in his sleep he could hear the cries and roars of others within it.

Carefully he made his way through hall and room. Listening closely for the footsteps of others, until he heard a patrol. Quickly hiding in the leafless forest, between the thin trees and the faint tunnel they made. Following the footsteps through the wall, his heart began to beat faster and his scales tinted to a grey. Seeing the footwear of one of the maidens nearly caused it to stop for a moment as it took a few steps forward and placed something onto the tunnel that was aiding the dragon in hiding. It seemed like ages before the creature withdrew from the room and giving him a breath of relief. But one of worry as well, for there was always at least one patrol. The sighting of this one just made it two.

He'd have to deal with that when the time came. The red one carefully exited the forest and pondered which direction to take. Following the maiden might lead to an exit, but at a high risk of getting caught. Instead, he looked down at the red grass. The carelessness of the larger behemoth often resulted in damage to the walkway. And the more damage often meant the more worn the path. Odds are following this would lead outside, where the large behemoth spent its time.

Once again being careful, the orange dragon began moving quickly down the halls. Listening closely for the patrol, as well as any other guard. The white beasts were often around here somewhere, and with his luck, guarding the front door. But during this time of day, they were often asleep. If he could sneak past them without getting noticed, he was home free.

He could almost smell the fresh air once again, through the captivating smell of baked goods. Darn Maiden! Perhaps it realized that he was out of his cell? And therefore is attempting to bait him into a trap? His will was fading, but he did his best to not cave into those seductions. He continued, but the aroma was getting him to be reckless.

With the main door in sight, he decided to bolt for it. Trying to remain on the carpet, but sprinting started to make too much noise. He realized it too late, and as soon as he got into the sunlight-! "Got you!" A slight pinch at the end of his tail threw him to a halt, as the white beasts' paw outmatched him.

Hissing loudly, the small brown one struggled to break free from its grip. "Lemme Go!" He demanded, trying to gnaw at the white paw. "I'm almost free!"

"How did you get out? Let alone past Elexus?" One of the heads questioned while the other chuckled.

"I excapeed." The little one growled, trying to do any damage to the massive paw. Eventually it just whined and sat down in defeat. Turning a dark blue and dropping his ears. "I juss wanted to play outside again."

The two heads looked at each other. "It has rained for three days." Feyris said, getting the other to nod.

"Alright, we'll take you to your parents. They've had the entire morning to themselves, but after you're going in for a snack." The hatchling's face lit up as its entire body turned into a glossy red.

"It smells like Elexus has made some of your favorites." The Kveldulf released their hold on the dragon, escorting it down to the beach a ways. "Let's go. They should be down by the pier." The two chuckled at his sudden burst of energy as he started hopping down the stairs. Getting the little one's wings to flap a bit out of instinct, but unable to fly just yet. In the distance, the white beast could see the large black one, and the woman who gave him a wave. As well as greeted the hatchling with open arms.

"David!" Tia gave him a big smile as he dove into his mother's arms.

"Nearly a year of this, yet you insist on calling him that." The large one grumbled. Though enjoying his shade from the veranda. "It's supposed to be pronounced as Dia'vidd." He snorted, getting the woman to smile at him.

"How's David this morning?" She asked, just to irritate the father and hear him grumble as he flopped his head on the beach grass. Seeing just a bit of sand from nearby fly through the air.

"Aboreable!" The little one chirped, getting the other two to chuckle. Then a loud growl came from the little brass one's belly.

"It sounds like you're something else." The large one nudged him.

"Do you want something to eat?"

Dia shook his head rapidly. "Nooo! I wanna play outside!" He whimpered.

"Dia, if you don't eat you won't grow. You'll need your strength later." The now dark blue hatchling scampered over and stepped on the black dragon's paw. Giving him very large and sad eyes and making the large one toss his snout. "Fine, one game. Then you eat. How about that?" Within a moment, his glossy scales turned from blue to red as he chirped again. Giving the large one a tight hug around the forepaw.

"What game would you like to play?" Tia asked him, stroking his messy main before he started circling around them with a voltage. Eventually he slid to a stop and sat in the sand pondering. Playing around in the dry beige grains reminded him of one of his favorites.

"Stamp!" He yipped several times, once again running up to his father.

"Okay, okay. We'll play that again. But I should send a warning to Elexus first." As the larger one rose up, he turned into a bronze shade. Sending a large shockwave through the ground and rattling a few things in the kitchen.

"Glad I didn't decide to go with a soufflé today." The brown haired woman joked, as she began placing several things in containers and drawers. Even tending to a few things in the ovens before moving under a doorway.

"That should be long enough." Atlas said, seeing a bright grin on his son's face as the little red one began spinning in circles with impatience. As the large one rested on his haunches, he began to lightly tap the ground with his paws. Sending waves after waves through the ground and making the sand raise and move a bit. All while Dia hopped in place, giggling at the vibrations.

Smiling brightly, Tia began to clap to the beat of the small quakes. As well as sing a small song to it that the little one was very familiar with. "Stamp on the ground. Jump, jump, jump, jump. Move it all around, dance with the sound. Stamp on the ground. Jump, jump, jump, jump. Move it all around, jumping all around." She couldn't carry on, the vibrations even giving her tickles and giggles as well. While the little one started spinning with his jumps. Laughing loudly.

Even the large dragon was smiling at it. For eons, he was afraid of such things. Such happiness. All because of a bad experience. Though it was hard for him to stay, it was moments like this that made it worth it. But being the pessimist that he was, all moments like this came to an end when something goes wrong. It rather kept him on edge to think what it might end up being, looking out for any little movement that could possibly threaten his new world. His new family.

And there it was. As the large dragon eased up to a stop, the quakes kept echoing through the ground. Keeping his paws raised, he looked at Tia who had the brightest smile on his face. But faded when she looked at Atlas. As if to ask "What's wrong?" until her eyes reached down to his forepaws. Now still.

As the two looked at the little one, still giggling and jumping around, his closed eyes eventually opened and met the concerned look of his parents. Jumping to a stop, and so did the shockwaves. "What's wrong?" He asked, turning a dark green as he often did when he was in trouble. Lowering his head, ears, and wings, flattening his tail on the ground.

As the two adults looked at each other for a moment, Tia smiled sadly at the little one. "Nothing, David. Go visit Elexus for something to eat. We'll play afterwards. I promise." She pet him a bit, before seeing Feyon Feyris at the top of the walkway. Also struck with the mark of concern, but did their best to hide it for the approaching hatchling.

Once they were out of sight, the two sighed. The large one rested his muzzle against the blonde woman's body until it pushed her on her back. She chuckled a bit, but still smiled at him. "It'll be alright." She said, softly stroking the dragon's snout and in between the eyes. Feeling him nod slightly.

"I just worry a bit too much, I guess. He's growing up fast... Too fast." She made a noise in agreement, knowing this worry of his before when he admitted to it. Back when the small one spoke his first full sentence when he was three weeks old. With a sigh through his nostrils, it blew the woman's opened

shirt up a bit. Still being held around the chest with a few buttons. He licked her belly a few times, still getting giggles out of her and studying it once again for himself.

"Do you still see it?" She asked. Still petting him and trying to look at the scar herself.

"Not really."

"You did a good job healing then." He half grumbled at that, still getting the blonde to chuckle.

"I didn't heal you. I just moved the cells a bit with vibrations to cover it up." Another chuckle and a shake of her head. Some of his explanations were still over her head, even to this day. Regardless of how much she tried to pay attention. Another warm sigh through his nostrils. "...I almost lost you that day." He mumbled, trying not to shed a tear again.

"But you didn't." She smiled at him. "You and Elexus saved me."

"Elexus only because you taught her first aid. She's done..."

"Remarkable this past year." He nodded in agreement. Until he saw a rather devious look from the woman. "I think she deserves a special reward-"

"No." Atlas flat-out denied. Sending her into laughter. "I'm not risking that again to another person. Besides, I still don't understand how human women work. And I think one hatchling is enough." He snorted, his now black ears flat against his head while she rolled in the grass laughing. "I'm just glad you two don't have seasons. One small spray into our chamber and I'll be stiff for a year." The woman motioned for him to stop before she lost control. "Fine, fine. You're going to ask me for this anyway, so I might as well do it now." He grumbled, picking her up softly with his jaws and carrying her to an out-house.

He never thought it would be cold up here. Just what seemed to be an hour of walking the trail up the mountain side already ached his joints. Feeling the light sprinkle of rain and what almost looked like sunset. The clouds were getting so dark, as if to mourn the late Yellow one.

Once again, Fen felt afraid of his new master. He never even imagined such power existed. To construct such a fearsome weapon out of thin air was unheard of, unless they were in tales. But even then... It was always devils that created such things.

With a careful study of the black one ahead of him, he almost looked like such creatures in those stories. Even different from the other dragons he had encountered in his life. And with the darkness of

the beast's scales... There was no denying that this creature was a devil. And Fenrick's life now belonged to such a being.

As the young man stumbled, not looking where he was going, he heard the beast grumble in impatience. Fen scampered to get up and still use his crutch. "J-just a bit further, my lord." A loud snort as large one carried on. His ears back and the long spines along the back of his neck spread out and raising slowly.

After a few more minutes, the man spoke up. "Over there, sire." He pointed to a large crack within the mountain's frame and the dragon studied it. Just now realizing how small it was compared to the black one, and expecting him to be unimpressed. "I-I guess the yellow dragon got in a different way, b-but this led right into her lair." As the devil's head slowly turned to look at Fen, that fear in his heart returned. Making his heart beat loudly, until the creature smirked.

As the dragon walked up to the crack, it began to widen and morph into a large tunnel through the rock. It left the younger man breathless. The very earth bent and retreated before him. As the creature walked forward, disappearing into the darkness, the man stepped before the tunnel. Feeling now that the cold and cruel weather outside almost seemed welcoming compared. With a loud swallow, the crippled man walked into the darkness.

It took a little while for Fen to make out a faint light ahead of him. Walking towards it made it much easier to see in the darkness, yet harder at the same time. Still stumbling on his way, he began to see the reflection of the light farther into the distance. The circulation of the air around him began to faintly change as he could faintly see the outline of a large room before the flame in front of the dragon began to grow. Revealing several piles of coins and gems. "Yes." The large one said, almost chuckling. "This is definitely worthy of my time. Here I was beginning to doubt you." Another sly smirk from the beast as the young man lowered his head. "For this, I may even treat your illness. However, the habitat could use some remodeling."

"Habitat?" Fen asked him, seeing the creature's scales turn green. Soon after, the bandit felt the warmth of fresh grass under his bare feet. One again, amazed at such an act, then several torches lighting around the room. "Remarkable, my lord!"

"Hmm... That'll do for now, but perhaps I can do something later." The beast pondered, looking towards the ceiling and seeing a large hole where the previous dragon must've entered. Possibly oblivious to the crack the bandit discovered. Looking back at the tunnel they came through, and then at the man himself, the black one's face went a bit cross. "Are there any more entrances?"

"N-not that I know of. This one is rather new." The dragon's head tilted. "This area is known to have quite a few quakes that can shake and shift the rocky walls. It's why the town near here has been built so far away from the mountains, in fear of landslides."

"I see..." The black one remembered seeing the town he talked about. Staring at the wall towards it,

he pondered in silence. "Your name."

It startled the man. "F-Fenrick." A faint noise in thought came from the dragon's throat. "And yours, my lord?"

He thought he saw the creature hesitated for a moment, but then glared at the bandit. "...Void. You may call me that." Completely turning around and facing the man got his heart racing once again. "Tell me, Fenrick. What do you know of this town and it's... Valuables?"

Chapter 3

He could hear the rumbling of thunder from the castle's gate. Looking way off to the distance at the gathering of dark clouds. Even the winds around seemed to be picking up through the middle of the day. Blowing a refreshing warm breeze that nearly melted his muscles and begged the dragon to just lay in the sun for another day straight.

Of course his body still contained such lazy habits. And as much as he wanted to give into those influences, his mind was still at worry. Sure, he was expecting something to eventually go wrong, but was hoping the peace would last just a bit longer. For now, all he could do was sigh loudly and watch the storm at a distance. "It will be alright." He heard one of the heads say. Though their voices seemed so identical, it was difficult to tell them apart without sight. Rather than take a guess, Atlas just nodded slightly.

"Did you see it then?"

"We witnessed it, yes. And it means very little." They came into the dragon's eyesight with a sad smile.

"Indeed, David is rather talented for his age-"

The large one tossed his snout and groaned loudly. "It's Dia'vidd."

The Kveldulf's smiles went a bit brighter. "It's going to be fine, Atlas. You have nothing to worry about."

"...Maybe you're right. But something terrible is going to happen soon, I know it."

"You worry too much."

"Alot like a parent, really. It's normal to think such things and be worried about a child's future." The left head gave the black one a nudge.

"You have grown up alot, Atlas. Even if you don't think it's possible to grow anymore."

"But if you insist on worrying that something bad will happen, something bad will indeed happen."

A few steps behind them got the attention of all three heads. Seeing Elexus give them all a sad smile, overhearing the conversation. Then the dragon looked at the white beast again. "Worst guard dog ever. Seriously." He muttered. Getting the others to chuckle.

"Mind if I borrow him before he leaves?" The woman asked the Kveldulf, and they nodded. Retreating back into their large home. As the two stared into the distance, the winds began to pick up around them. "Another storm? We seem to get alot of them here."

"This one will go around us. No need to worry."

"As long as we don't place anything valuable near the windows, we should be fine." She chuckled. "Remember that first big one we had?"

He tossed his snout. "Don't remind me. It was basically a flood inside the home. It soaked everything."

"We were just lucky it was all replaceable. Now we have the shutters we can close to help with the storms." He nodded slightly again. Seeing him half in his own world. "He's sleeping. Come on, I'll walk you down to the landing."

The dragon sighed through his nostrils, and slowly began to take the path beside the brown haired woman. "...Do you think I'm worrying too much?"

She looked at him with a smile, often like Tia used to do. Stroking him on the arm, and studying his

feelings. "A bit, yes. But I'm not sure why. What happened?"

Another sigh. "...Dia... He was the one making the shockwaves." Atlas received a rather surprised look from her. "I started them, but he was able to..."

"That was Dia?" Elexus asked, getting the dragon to nod. "Barely even a year old. You've got some competition when he gets older." It made the large one grumble and her giggle. "Relax. Astounding as it is, this isn't a bad thing. As long as you're around to teach him how to control it."

Another toss. "You say that now. We're not even in the wyrmling stages yet. It was bad enough that they're destructive without superpowers, imagine them with." A loud snort as the woman kept laughing at him.

"He's got four parents. Five sets of eyes looking out for him. And besides, whatever he wrecks or destroys; it can all be replaced." She stopped him at the center of the landing and just held his muzzle. "Be careful out there." She said, still feeling him hiding something about these trips that the dragon takes every month.

"I'm surprised that you've grown to accept this..." He trailed off. Giving her a few licks.

"Well... It does worry us that you don't want to tell us, but..." Elexus shrugged. "Tia says that you're hiding it for a reason. And we haven't gotten any word of anything bad happening that could lead to you. You haven't been lying to us, that's a good thing."

"I just..." Atlas remained quiet. Getting the woman to nod at him, and kiss him on the muzzle.

"As long as you realize that if you do anything horrible, we're ripping your ears off one at a time." He whimpered loudly, getting her to laugh again. "Fly safe, and be back soon. Okay?"

"Okay." She gave him one last hug, and then headed back to the castle. Watching her rather intently as she walked up the stairs with Tia's words of 'Reward' echoing in his head. Shaking it a bit violently, he grumbled to himself. "Witch." And took off to the skies.

The little one woke up in darkness. Almost struggling to break free from the sheet of frost that covered him. Somewhere, he could hear the howling of a faint wind blowing through the cave, but he could barely see.

He's never felt this cold before. His body just realizing it now, and shivering entirely. From his delicate

wings, to his glossy tail curling up to his dark green body. He was lost. Somewhere in the darkness within a stone cave. As smooth as the rock was, it too was freezing.

The hatchling called out for them. Any one of them to come and find where he was. But after several minutes, the only thing that answered was the wind. Stinging his face with the few tears he shedded in fear. He had no choice but to move or freeze here, never to be found by his mothers.

His instincts told him to follow the wind. That they should lead him to a way out. If it was blowing, it was coming in from somewhere. Carefully, the little one moved through the darkness. Feeling nothing but a slightly uneven stone floor until he got to a set of large stairs. Climbing up, the air still stung his face. But there was something different, it smelled... Fresher.

Grunting against the pain, he cried out for help again. Every ascending step felt like it was taking more and more effort. And with every one, he emptied his lungs with another sorrowful chirp. Until he got to the top.

It was like the entire world was covered in darkness. No signs of light anywhere, to the point where the hatchling thought maybe it was just a larger cave. But with a bit more study, he sees a few stars in the night sky. Ones his father used to show him during the nights he could not sleep. But these were scattered. Not the ones he remembered.

With a loud whimper, his head sank. He wanted to cry, call out again and again to just not be alone anymore. It scared him to death, whereas there's always been someone there. Even when the others flew off the island, there's always been someone protecting the hatchling.

With a few sobs, he went to cry out again. Only to feel something small pierce the outer membrane of his wings. A small squeal at the pinch was all he could get out before something landed on him and pinned his muzzle with a bandaged paw. He could barely make it out with his light blue eyes. Along with a bandaged muzzle of a black panther that he couldn't even hear breathe. A few more whimpers of fear while the creature remained its pin for several minutes. Eventually feeling a pressure on the back of his scaly neck before passing out.

It was the smell of something wonderful that woke up the young man's stomach first, and then its growling eventually woke him up. Still wrapped in a few burlap sacks and the comforting grass beneath him, Fen tried to study his surroundings while coughing. Piles of gold coins and valuables occupied the room he was in. More than he remembered falling asleep to. "You're awake." The black beast mumbled

from around a corner. Pouring the man a bowl of soup and hobbling out to deliver it to him.

"Y-yes... How long was I asleep for, my lord?" He asked. Thanking the dragon several times for the meal before tasting its wonderful flavor. Hoping there was nothing wrong with the creature staring at him for several moments afterward.

"Nearly the rest of the day." The large one stated, rather lackadaisically before serving himself the rest of the pot. "Good. It was sage that I picked up." He took a few more laps while the man made a noise in question. "I was half concerned that it might've been... Something else." The statement made the man almost whimper a bit. But tried not to let it show when the black one returned to the large room.

"Where did...?" The black one half looked at him gesturing the room. "There were only a few piles when I went to sleep."

Void exhaled through his nostrils, taking a few more laps before answering him. "That town was rather wealthy underneath. Probably hiding it from the previous inhabitant that was here, but not me."

The man swallowed rather loudly. "Are they...?" He was almost afraid to ask him, as he got a deep stare from those dark purple eyes.

"...No. A faint demonstration of my power was all they needed to be convinced. Besides, I wouldn't be receiving anymore gifts from the dead, now would I?"

"I-I suppose not. You're very generous, Lord Void." Fenrick finished his soup quietly and laid down to rest a bit more. "I'm feeling much better now."

"That's good, but you should get a bit more rest. I wouldn't want that cold of yours clouding up your memory and making you useless." The large one stated, finishing the rest of the meal. "But before you do, what place could possibly hold the largest amount of valuables?"

"Largest? As in human kingdoms?" Void shrugged and nodded. "I'd say Fort Ranoik. But Sire, you can't possibly attempt such a thing! It's heavily guarded by-"

"Fenrick, I'm not interested in their defenses. I'm interested in their treasures."

"But no dragon has ever come close to entering such a place! It's fortified and defended against such creatures-"

"Fenrick." His tone was getting stern, getting the man's head to lower. As the dragon stared him down, the young man sighed.

"It's to the northeast of here. You'll notice several large walls built high into the mountains, armed with many siege weapons. In the center of them is the kingdom and all its valuables. Shared among the

city people. Making it much harder to pillage or steal from just one area."

"Hmm..." The large one stared into the direction in thought for a few minutes. "Fair enough. I'll leave in the morning. You're better off staying here and getting well. Remind me to leave some food and drink for you before I head out."

"W-what?" He double taked at the dragon. Then looking for the entrance the two took before, now completely sealed through. Fen was no longer this devil's underling. But his prisoner.

Chapter 4

A small blanket over the crib was placed to keep the sunlight out of his eyes. But not without rocking it just a little. It made Tia smile at the little coo the black one made, as if he could detect every little movement around him. Even when he was sleeping.

It always seemed to happen at this time of day. The warming light would beam in, keeping the little one comfortable. At times, she worried that it might get too hot for him. But the father insisted that his glossy scales could handle such things. They're tougher than they look, even for a hatchling. Scales won't burn, irritate, or cut easily. However, in turn, they were not as smooth or comfortable to the one holding him.

Again, the woman smiled. Remembering the small argument she had with the larger one which just ended in laughter. She admitted that she had no experience with wyrmlings, let alone that Haytre has been one alot during his lifetime. And he admitted (evasively) that David was possibly an entirely

different species. A hybrid, yet he didn't have much human in him by looks.

Another chuckle from the Blonde one while she was tending to some laundry within the room. Trying to make out what the father explained to her once again. Playfully snorting and trying to sound smart. "It's quite simple, really. A dragon's genes are just more dominant. When it came for the chromosomes to battle for a decision, be it a male or a female. More dragon or human. Size and shape, color, etc. The dragon's just conquered over your human ones. It's for the best really, I mean who wouldn't want their child to be the greatest species in existence?" Oh, how she laughed at him. "As long as it has your eyes, I'll be happy."

And that he did. David's eyes were the exact same shade of blue as Tia's. About the only thing that her chromosomes seemed to have victory over, if she understood what Haytre was talking about correctly. But that was enough. Besides, it was for the best. She often wondered how the larger one would feel if David's eyes ended up Amethyst. It would be forever looking into a faint reflection of himself. Perhaps even resulting in a form of depression for him.

Yes, it did work out for the best. And Tia loved the little one like her very own, regardless of what anyone else thought of them. She was just thankful that Elexus and the Feys were supportive. The twins were a bit embarrassed by such a thing, but accepted it after some time alone. Not to mention, they've really grown a liking to the little one. Perhaps he's more of a cub that they would never have.

Another small groan and a bit of ripping from the mattress of the crib told her that the hatchling was getting up. Yawning and snapping his jaws a few times, then greeting the blonde woman with blue eyes, she noticed he wasn't his usual black that he tended to be while he was asleep. But a dark green. "Is everything alright, David?"

He looked at her for a bit and slowly nodded. "Jus a bad dream." He mumbled. As she made a noise of sympathy, she picked him up and held him tightly.

"You always have control over your dreams, Dia. Don't ever be afraid of them. They can't hurt you." She felt him nod, watching his scales fade into a bright pink through a mirror and beginning to purr. "Are you hungry?"

"No. But m' thirsty." She smiled at him, looking into those blue eyes, and the little one smiled back. Giving her a few licks.

"Alright, let's get you something to drink. Your tongue does feel a little dry." She giggled, carrying him through the castle.

Through the large halls, the two got to witness many of the damages the little one got into over the year. From the many scratches on the stone walls from learning how to count, the torn up carpets and large rug that ran through the hall center. Even the wooden dining room table and chairs had little nibble marks when he was teething. Though the father disliked such crude care of craftsmanship (usually his

own), it always made Tia and the others chuckle and smile seeing them. Which in turn provided a more positive outlook for the larger one.

As the two arrived in the large kitchen, the little one struggled to get free. Wanting to climb on the cupboards to see what other messes he could get into. That was one of the major benefits to having two mothers: One of them would always be a step ahead of him. Cleaning up most of the bakery mess, but leaving just a small bowl of grains for him to get his paws into.

And it worked wonders. Dia was always fascinated with the soothing comfort of such things, running his paws through it and making him purr loudly while his mother found him a drink. He loved the noises it made against the bowl, the smell of it. Though the taste of them plain didn't appeal to him. If he could find enough of it, Dia would probably bathe in the stuff. Perhaps even make a bed out of it. He remembered asking his parents about it once, and all they did was laugh.

"Here you go." She set down a small bowl of coconut milk and thin maple syrup. One of his strange favorites. Getting the woman to giggle at his sudden yellow change, then revert back to pink after a few laps. She's never heard of such a creature doing this; constantly changing colors due to his mood. It worried all of them at first, even giving the father the idea of him switching Atonements. Oh how jealous Haytre was when Elexus pointed out that his son mastered all of the forms right from hatching, while it took him still nearly two weeks of being born to get them back.

Once again, the memory made her smile while she got the two some sliced bread and peanut butter. She remembered how angry the large one was, hissing at them until they left the room, then sealing the door for at least an hour. The only one he put up with was Tia, but only because at the time she was still ill...

That thought saddened her a bit. It was weird to be on the receiving end of care for her, let alone brought back to life by someone. Though for years she's done it for others, even felt it through them, it was still somehow different to experience it herself.

"Mom?" Her son broke her out of thought, and drove her attention away from the dirty dishes. "Can we go outside?" He almost whimpered. Probably hearing the storm from before he took a nap.

"Sure thing. How about a walk?" He chirped loudly, turning a bright red. Strange how the smallest things seemed to make him so happy. As the blonde tried to snatch him before he jumped off and hurt himself, but the little one scurried back with a playful yelp. Jumping off anyway and trying to glide. Though he was quite mentally ahead of the average hatchling and child, his body was still in development. And his wings couldn't quite hold him, leaving the little one to fall flat on his chest and forcing Tia to make a face. "Be careful, David." She said, giggling at him shaking his head quickly, then scampering off to the quickest way outside.

Although she was still worried about him breaking a fang, the woman learned that the little one was almost indestructible. It saves her a lot of stress that he's almost always covered in armor. Not to mention

having four other pairs of eyes and ears to look out for the troublemaker. "Got you!" Speak of two of the devils.

A loud yelp came from the castle gate where the little one began hissing and growling again. "Lemmie Go!" The little one whimpered. "Mom said I could go out!"

"Don't worry Feys, I'm right behind him." The woman called. Imagining the arrogant look on the hatchling's face while the two heads chuckled in the distance.

"We suppose we should let you go then." The little one whimpered at him, giving his mother big blue sad eyes, ones matching his scales, when she came through the doorway. As soon as the white paw was released on his tail, he changed to an orange. Waiting for the two heads to turn to the blonde woman and then attacked the paw. Getting all three of them to laugh at him.

"Take it easy, you." Tia said to the little one. Giving the two headed creature a few pets. "Thank you for looking out for him." They just nodded and smiled at her.

"How do you fair today?"

"I'm doing well. I know I've been ill alot this year, but I'm feeling better lately." They nodded, but she seen a bit of sadness in their yellow eyes. "Is Elexus out here?"

"Yes, she went down towards the garden."

"We believe she's watering it, whereas Atlas never got to it before he left." The blonde gave them a bit of a puzzled look, and they shrugged. "It's the end of the month."

"Ah, yes. Off to his search again, is he?" Another faintly sad look, and she quietly sighed. "I know... It's obvious that he isn't searching for the Doctor. He really detested him."

It did make them chuckle a bit. "We just hope he's not..." It just made the lady nod.

"Go on and visit Elexus. We'll keep watch from up here." The two heads nudged the others.

"Alright. Come on Dia. Let's go hunt down Elexus." And the hatchling chirped, turning a bright red and scampered ahead. Getting the Kveldulf to shake their heads and smile.

Through a large path filled with grass and outlined with trees as well as bushes, the little one loved to play and climb through it. Tia remembered being concerned about some plants perhaps being harmful or poisonous in other regions, and mentioning it to the father when they started living here. The next day, he came up to her and said that they were all safe. And when she asked how he knew, he simply stated "I ate them, and I'm not ill. Unless they're harmful when they pass, they should be safe for anyone to eat. That is if the taste of such things doesn't kill you first."

Just another moment in their lives that ended in laughter. And he was correct about them, whereas he never got ill afterwards. Though the idea was a rather foolish one, she was glad to have the answer. It was one less worry for all of them living on the island.

As the hatchling climbed over roots, and broke small twigs of bushes, he couldn't stop purring out of curiosity. Wondering what changed during the rainy days, and stopping to study every little thing that was different. Sniffing the dirt and sand, licking the faint dew off the lower leaves. Giggling at every little critter that seemed to move alerted the brown haired woman down in the gardens of their approach. "I hear someone finally got up."

"Yes, he didn't sleep for too long. But I'm afraid that might be my fault." Elexus greeted the blonde with a smile. "I was thinking about the Genes again."

"Genes?" She questioned, then got a chuckle herself. "Ah, yes. That again. I never understood what he was talking about." Tia shrugged at her, grabbing a pair of gloves and another basket to carry vegetables in. Kneeling beside the other woman, she silently pointed at the hatchling, trying to sneak up and pounce on a small blue bird. Wiggling his haunches he yelped during his attack, alerting the bird to escape before the dragon caught it. Giving him a snout full of dirt and spitting it out.

The two women giggled at him. "Be careful, David. Remember what your father taught you." He looked at the two with perked ears, and then nodded. Eager to try again. "I know I shouldn't be encouraging him to go after the poor animals, but."

"He needs some fun. Besides, he can't really hurt them too much yet." The brown haired woman said. Tia then caught her looking towards the far distance, north of the island.

"Something wrong?"

"...He left again. I just can't imagine what he's doing out there." Elexus sighed.

"I know, I worry about him too. But no one's said anything about a dragon lately. And nothing really bad has happened since Lavendour, besides a few forest fires."

"Even then, Atlas took care of them before they did too much damage, if he was around. Or did his best to restore any damage done." The blonde nodded. "But even then, I wonder..."

"What's wrong?"

"I was talking to the Feys about this last month when he took off. Do you ever get the impression that he's doing these things more because he's being told to, rather than he wants to?"

Tia gave it some thought. "I know I haven't been telling him to do anything. I might mention something, but it's his decision to do it."

"I don't really mean commanding him, but..." Again, the blonde nodded.

"You know what he's like, let alone towards other people. We can't really change his mind about it."

"Unless he got to know them. Or they got to know him better?" Elexus pondered. "Unlikely he'll agree to such a thing."

"Yes, maybe after a few years he'll come around if we mention it. But for now, let's-" A few cries of the hatchling came nearby, towards the beach. Getting the two women to stare at each other rather than towards the direction for a moment. Both getting up and rushing towards him.

Getting through some bushes, Tia spotted Dia scampering towards them. Almost hiding behind her legs. "David? What's wrong?" He pointed out to the little blue bird behind a small rock, a few stones out of place as if they were dropped. The bird lay in the sand, not moving. "It's okay, sweetie." She tried to calm him down, picking him up and stroking his green scales.

As the brown one kneeled down to check on it, she shook her head. "It's..."

"What?" The dragon asked in a whimper. "What's wrong with it?"

"...Dia..." She looked sadly at her son. Another whimper as she carried him back to the garden. Feeling him trying to look back at the bird. "You know when Elexus makes those long sticks of bread, but saves you a smaller one? And you like to try to eat it straight though?" He nodded, looking into her blue eyes. "Well, eventually it comes to an end, where there is no more bread when you finish it... All things eventually come to an end, David. From the trees and grass that grows, to the animals and birds that you see flying around."

The little green one looked back towards the bushes, unable to see the bird or Elexus any longer. "What happened to it?"

"It just... Ends. But it's why we tell you to be careful alot."

"Because I will end as well?" The woman nodded sadly and his ears dropped. He whimpered a bit, not fully understanding what Tia was talking about, but just hugged her for the time being. He knew there was something wrong, even if he could not explain it.

He felt like he was gliding. Being carried through the air by something. Almost like the few times his father took him flying in his arms. Even the air was cold, though there was no wind. However when he

opened his eyes, it was dark. He could make out a pair of legs moving, but not even a foot step. The little one half worried that maybe he was deaf, but could hear himself whimper. Slightly getting the attention of the creature carrying him.

His paws felt completely restrained, with a thin thread holding all four of them together at the ankles. Feeling it almost cut into the scales slightly with every attempt to move. He even felt one around his muzzle, preventing him from speaking while the creature carried him through the darkness.

Ahead he could make out a warm glow inside of a cave. It was faint, but everything else was just black. Getting closer, the little one could almost make out a faint outline of another creature. When it got almost six steps away, it growled almost like a large dog. "About time you came back. Find anything?" He asked, but the creature carrying the little one didn't reply. Walking right by the other and into the small cave.

Within it was a small campfire. Being lit by little wood made the glow from it still hard to really see. Before the little one could look around, the creature carrying him tossed Dia on the floor. Hitting it with a faint oomph and a whimper. "You found a sponge?" Another male asked, slightly surprised and puzzled. His blue eyes now absorbing the bright light of the fire, he slowly began to see through the darkness.

"Looks like a dragon to me. Is this seriously all you could find for food?" Another one grumbled, not getting a reply. "Looks too young to really have any meat on it. Oh, by the way, I know I asked you to find us some food, but feel free to kill it next time."

"Actually..." The other one said, making out almost a rather stocky lizardman.

"Don't tell me." The other grunted loudly. "You want to save the first sight of food we've found in two days?" The lizardman half shrugged at the other one. "Looks like it's Strata-Bacon again tonight."

"It's not that bad."

"Says you. I'm just waiting for the day he takes a bite out of us instead." Another grumble while he got up. As the little dragon whimpered again, trying to move to get a good look at the other, he could half see a red fox-like person in a black coat. Pulling out a small box from his jacket and looking inside.

"Five left?"

"...Yeah. They're tempting."

"They'll last if you make them."

"I know, I know. For now, I'll just tell the dog the bad news." He said, hearing the heavy footsteps of boots walk out of the cave while the lizardman rose and picked up the dragon. Another whimper as it tried to struggle against the bondage.

"Easy little guy. You're safe. It's a wonder you didn't freeze out there." He said, pulling a bit on the threads before they completely came loose around his feet, then his muzzle.

"Where am I? Who are you?" The little one asked, resting on the larger creature's lap and trying to study him. His scales were green, but several brown stripes came from his back. Shirtless, he wore some dark brown baggy cargo pants that were held up by a thick belt. Though it was still dark, his purple eyes seemed to reflect something with the light of the campfire. Something... Different.

"We don't know where we are. I'm guessing you just woke up here?" The little one nodded. "Same as us. One moment we're in another universe, next we're waking up in this desert of a planet. Odd how its atmosphere will sustain us without much plant life or water around, but... We somehow can." The lizard looked at the yellow hatchling, chuckling at his very puzzled, yet curious look. "Stagg." He lifted his offhand towards the dragon in a gesture to shake his paw.

"Dia'vidd." The little one did so, placing a small paw on the large one. "What are you?" Another chuckle.

"It doesn't seem so obvious now, I suppose. Do you know what a stegosaurus is?"

"A what?" The little one's head tilted to the side.

"It's a type of dinosaur." Another tilt to the other direction, making Stagg smile. "You're adorable."

"I know that one." Another chuckle.

"Well, I've been told by quite a few that I look like one of those. Which gave me the nickname of Stagg." The little one studied him for a bit, getting off his lap and closer to the fire. "The one who found you is Sinality." He gestured in front of him, and the little one double took at a very thin, dark feline-like creature in a lot of bandages. It actually didn't seem to be wearing any clothing, besides a few belts. Before the little one could study it more, it left the cave without a word. "She's not very good with people."

"She?" Dia looked back at the green one. "How can you tell?"

"We all... Have a long history." Another puzzled look as the little one's scales clicked together in a shiver. A light exhale through his nostrils, and Stagg sat closer to the fire. Inviting the little one in to keep warm. "I'm not going to lie to you, Dia, we're not the best of friends around here. We've all done things, know people who've done things to others, or just see things differently."

"What do you mean?"

Though 'Hiding' could hardly be used to describe such a large creature lurking behind the large wall of a mountain, the black one was doing his best to. Trying to study the large walls in the distance with his vision. Though it was hard to concentrate with the wind and the extra membranes for flight, he could make out what Fen was talking about.

The wall was indeed large and loaded with siege weapons. Many of them designed for anti-air defenses. Even so, there was a large horn every two hundred feet or so. If one of them wasn't blown, several others were. Alerting the other walls and the kingdom of its attack.

He would've cursed the humans for building such a thing if it wasn't so fun to find a way around it. As much as he did enjoy the 'Storm The Gates Of Hell' approach, there was just no real way it would succeed. Let alone get his 'Persuasion' through and stated before he was either taken out, or they would not agree with such a thing.

As much as he disliked stealth, it would work wonders here. And it would be easier to channel the rock while being closer to the ground. Changing into a shimmering Gold, the dragon let the light pass through him. Making him invisible to the naked eye. And with the cloudless day, it was unlikely that any other trace of him would be seen.

As he took off, Void timed his wing beats. Ensuring there was a large glide across each wall to cull any sort of suspicion that they were to be visited by a dragon. After the fifth wall passed under him, he flew quite far ahead of it before landing softly. Studying the way he came for a few minutes to make sure everything was quiet.

When the coast seemed clear, he did his best to maintain his clear form while Atoning to the Earth. Still feeling the large rock he melted together at a large distance. It would take several minutes of concentration to move the thing underground undetected, but he pulled it off. Next was to rotate it vertically, which nearly left the dragon winded.

A few minutes of rest was all he needed to get this stamina back. Still somehow maintaining his cloak. Now the hard part, one that would probably sound off all the horns along the walls. Even so, it was already too late.

Slamming the ground hard to get a nice terrakinetic grip on the rock, Void started to raise it while

creating a large fissure through the earth. Forcing the large rocky plate upward above ground and into the air. As it began to erupt through the ground, the bronze one's cloak fell. Easing up some of his concentration for now and getting a good look at the disc.

He forged it beneath the ground, and only got a good estimation of it through his senses of vibration and atonement. But looking at it with his own purple eyes, it was a bit smaller than he had hoped. Regardless, it would do the job he had in store for it. A large rocky plate about the size of the kingdom's inner citadel had very few uses, but what he had in store for it would work wonders rather than just threatening the kingdom.

The sounds of the horns went off in the distance, and a few shots of ballistas and catapults could be heard hitting the plate, but it didn't do much damage to it. Nor hit with enough force to really stagger the thing, however heavy it was. Once he got it fully above ground, Void rotated it once again to a flat position. Covering the farm fields he was in with a dark shadow and began walking towards the next gate with it over him.

The guards saw it coming from miles away, and regardless of what they used against either the plate or the diamond-armored dragon, it was useless. Reaching up to the gate himself, the rocky disc was well over it, hovering over half the kingdom and not slowing down with the wielder. As the soldiers shouted and tried to attack the dragon with whatever weapons they could grab, the creature roared at them. "Enough! I wish to speak to your king!"

They went silent for a bit, all readying their weapons once again. "What do you want, beast?"

"Are you ruler of this kingdom? I think not. Open the gates!"

"I'm captain of this line of defense-"

"Then you are not who I want to talk to!"

"It's my job to insure the safety of the people here-"

"And you're doing a very good job of that." The dragon sarcastically stated. Snorting loudly afterwards.

"Leave or we will open fire once again!"

"You do and it will be the end of your entire kingdom!" The diamond one roared, pointing up at the large rocky disc. "You see that? Who do you think is holding that thing up? If you don't let me in, I'll drop that on top of your civilians. If you kill me, everyone you know and love will be crushed in ten seconds! Now Let Me Speak To Your King!" He snarled, creating a silence while a few guards looked at the massive rock.

A few of them whispered to each other, and eventually the dragon got impatient. Letting go of the

rock while it was over the castle's tower just for a moment caused the roof of it to be crushed under its massive weight, and the outside wall of the tower to be cracked loudly. "Okay! Guards, lower your weapons!" And the dragon maintained his control over the disc.

As the large doors began to open, the now black one slowly walked in. Not fearing for his life, regardless of how many blades were pointed at him. Rows of guards forming a makeshift line towards the castle's main gate, trying to keep many of the civilians from the beast's path. It was just as well for the black one, he didn't want to be gawked at but couldn't hide his slight smirk at their fear. Several times, the guards were trying to explain that they had the situation under control, even to their own knights. But even then, the people were afraid.

Void never really understood why they were, but he guessed when they were only limited to one life, one would do anything to survive. Even barricade themselves within several walls from the outside world. They seen it as protection, while the dragon saw it as a prison. But it mattered little to him. Their lives were not what he wanted, nor were they any concern to him.

Many of the guards were still in a calm panic at the castle's gate. Not quite understanding what was going on, but the object that blocked out the sun was enough for them to realize they were in danger. And that mood only worsened when they seen the dragon. "Let us through." The captain tried to remain calm himself, despite what was happening.

"Sir, what if he tries to murder King Hansole? We can't just let him in." One of the guards whispered, getting Void's ear to flick.

"You think I don't know that? We don't have a choice right now. The only thing we can do is stay around this beast and do what we can with our men."

"Sir, I have a plan." Another guard stated, getting the dragon to grumble a bit loudly and making the others nervous. The guards just nodded at each other and the idealist went off ahead.

As curious as the black one was of this plan, he didn't want his to go downhill. But what could they possibly be planning? Surely they could not destroy the rocky disc. They've already tried with siege weapons and barely scratch it. Were they planning to trap the dragon in place, in thoughts that his own life would be in danger as well? But they could not bind mist, if it resorted to that.

Studying the movement of guards ahead within the courtyard, he could see many heavily armor guards with large tower shields beginning to form a blockade. Stacking men about eight across and three high using crates and nearby staging. It almost made the dragon chuckle really, and shake his muzzle as he stopped a ways in front of them. "Seriously?" He lackadaisically asked the captain.

"You wished to speak to our king, not see him." The man smirked, getting the larger one to toss his snout.

"Fair enough. It matters little anyway." Void rested on his haunches while they cautiously escorted sire Hansole outside of the palace. Taking a place safely behind the barricade while the large one just tended to his claws for a bit. "Ah, your majesty. How does your day fair?" The black asked sarcastically.

"Who are you?"

"You may call me Void for now. It's doubtful we'll see each other again after this, providing you cooperate."

"Cooperate?" The man asked from behind the shields, trying to look around them before a few guards suggested otherwise.

"Seriously, you may drop the defense. Your life is not in my interest." A few more whispers from them began to irk the dragon, getting him to grumble before shimmering to a silver. Pulling the shields out of the soldiers hands, and even dragging a few of them who were strapped to the tower ones. Doing so set off several guards to arm their weapons and shout. "Silence! If I wanted to end his life and the lives of all of you here, I would've done so already! You should be respectful that I'm giving you a choice!" The large one roared, silencing the courtyard before looking the King in the eyes.

"What do you want... Void?"

"Forgive me for blocking out your wonderful sunlight, but you see, I want you and all your townsfolk to drop whatever metals they have into the streets. That's all." Hansole looked at him a bit puzzled. "Valuables. Treasures, coins, etc. Anything metal."

"What?" The captain asked, looking back and forth between the beast and his lord. "You can't be serious. You threatened to seek an audience with the king with such a strange task?"

"Why?" The king asked.

"It's a simple task for sparing your life and the lives of every single person here. If you don't cooperate, you'll simply all be crushed beneath the rock. Now tell everyone to do it." The men grunted and grind their teeth, not fully understanding such a thing and looking to their king for an order to just end this creature's life. When Hansole took too long to answer, the black one growled. "It's a simple question: Do you value the lives of your people, or do you value your kingdom's wealth?"

The man swallowed and nodded. Slowly taking his crown off and dropping it to the ground. Making the guards gasp and look at him. "Just spare the lives of my kingdom, please."

"Sire, you can't be serious! He's just one monster-!"

"One that knows our weakness. And one that doesn't seem threatened by his own tactic." A dark smirk came over the dragon at the lord's admission.

"You're a smart man, Hansole." The beast said, slightly moving aside and motioning the king to move forward towards the crowds of people. "I'd say you made the correct choice-" A young guard came out from the side and stabbed the dragon in the neck with a longspear, getting the blade stuck between the plates. The black one lightly grunted, more out of annoyance than anything, and slowly turned to face the younger man.

A small stream of blood came out of the wound as the black one changed to a silver and pulled out the weapon. Throwing it towards the back of the courtyard as the man stumbled backwards a bit in fear. Only getting a harsh stare from those purple eyes before his steel helmet bent inwards drastically, shattering his skull and leaving him lifeless. "The next person who tries anything will be responsible for the deaths of every human in this land. Do I make myself clear?" Void roared, looking over the entire army within the courtyard before returning his eyes to the King. Once again motioning him to move forward, but this time more aggressively and impatiently.

As Hansole began walking in front of the dragon towards the large crowd of nearly the entire kingdom outside the courtyard, A large podium from the marble plaza was made for him to stand on. A bit uneasy about such things being magically made, he took a moment to look at the bronze beast one last time before walking up it. Still getting that impatient stare from those amethyst eyes.

He cleared his throat a few times while the people of the kingdom began to silence. "People of Ranoik. Today we have a visitor that is... Unlike any we've had before. He has displayed his power by blocking out the sun over our kingdom, and..." He swallowed, getting some people to whisper. "He's presented me with a choice: Drop everything metal in the very streets you walk in, or he will end the lives of everyone here. We normally don't... Negotiate against such terms, but I feel I have no choice. I value the lives of my people, than such things. So please, for the love of your neighbors, family, friends, children, and kingdom... Return to your homes. Throw out anything metal that you have, and stay there." As the people began to talk among each other, they remained unsure of what to do. Once again, impatience fell over the silver one, and he stepped forward. Spreading his wings a bit and making the crowd silent once again.

"Your king has spoken. Do it." Void said loudly, getting some people to return home, and others to follow. As the streets began to fill with coins, silverware, and treasures alike, it put a smirk on the large one's face. Lightening up his mood, which in turn made Hansole a bit at ease as well. "Ah, yes. Before I forget, there is one more thing."

"W-what?" The king asked, getting the guards tense once again.

"You might want your guards to take off anything metal as well. Including weapons."

"You can't be serious!" One of them shouted.

"It's either take it off, or retreat within the castle. I don't want your weaponry, nor your armor. But if you get abducted in the process, I will not go out of my way to spare your life. Now which will it be?" The

dragon calmly demanded. Looking towards the lord and hinting for his order.

"...Captain Kurt. Withdraw all your men within the castle."

"A stone building will work just as well." The dragon stated, changing colors once again to a red. "I would hurry before my patience retires." Though cautious about their warning, they were also worried about their king as well. Looking at the captain and Hansole, Void tossed his snout. "Fine. You may leave as well, your majesty. If that will make your men more at ease. I'm done with you, but check up on your servants within the castle. I've heard you don't carry too much of your wealth within it, but I know you carry some."

The man nodded nervously, and was escorted away. After about ten minutes or so, the dragon was growing tired. Heating much of the air around the rock in the sky, he started to create a warmer atmosphere around that area. Branching it off to the ground outside of the citadel. Then bringing some of the electrostatic energy within the planet through the ground, using the warm spots as a guide. Several strikes of lightning came from the earth and arched up to the massive rock overhead. Striking it several times, and giving it a strong magnetic pull. Much of the treasures from the streets began to float up to the rock and attach themselves to it, as well as a few of the shields and other weapons from the walls.

Those are things he'll have to sort out later. Or a job for Fen to do when he gets the rock home. For now, Void began to exit the town. Still half crowded with people, not understanding what is going on. How their valuables were magically being pulled to the air, and defying gravity. Even a few things that were either forgotten, or left inside homes were being shot through the wooden roofs and shingles. The pull was nearly strong enough to pull out nails.

(Perhaps I overdid it a bit.) The dragon thought, looking towards the large amount of junk also being carried up. (But it beats trying to move it all myself.) As he left the guardless gate, the disc began to follow him. Taking to the air and once again turning invisible, it was time to return home. Just imagining the look on Fenrick's face when he seen this.

Chapter 5

"What do you mean?" The little one whimpered. Still feeling the cold of the dark planet, even by the small campfire. "Why do you stay together if you don't like each other?"

"It's... Complicated." The lizard said. Looking towards the exit of the cave where the others left.

"...My parents left the world too." The green one made a noise in question. "My mom says dad made our island to get away from other people. They don't come here, but sometimes we go out there." The little one mumbled. "I never understood why though."

"I can't say for certain. Many dragons don't like outsiders really. None that I've really met besides a few."

Still shivering, the little one got closer to the lizard. Slightly timid, Stagg still held him. Knowing he just needed warmth. "What happened to you guys then?"

The larger one exhaled, turning to the exit once again. "Sinality's trying to find her master." Another set of perked ears put a smile on his face. "She works for a Warlord named Ricon. But he disappeared a long time ago."

"So she's lost?" Stagg half shrugged. "Doesn't she like freedom?"

"...She's... She was raised differently. In her culture, they're made to be assassins." Another set of perked ears. "They... You'll understand when you're older." They went back, hearing that statement a hundred times before. "But they never had freedom. They were always taught it was an illusion, and very heavy into discipline. They respect their masters, obey every word, and remove anything within their way ruthlessly."

"She just wants to find Ricon?" Dia looked towards the exit as well, remembering the bandages all over the black panther. "Is she hurt?"

The green one double taked. "Oh, no. Not really. She's always worn those things."

"Why?"

"Clothing gets in the way when you're trying to..." A bit of a sad face got the little one to grumble. "She stops people from... Functioning, Dia. And sometimes you need to get away. Often enough, clothing can catch on things, or be used against you if grabbed. She only wears enough to carry what little she has on her. You don't need much if you have skill."

"Stops people from functioning?" The little one questioned. But somehow he could understand what

the green one meant, making his scales turn green as well. "She... Ends them?" He whimpered, getting a sad look on Stagg's face.

"Sometimes you have to, to accomplish something. But she kept you alive, so she must like you."

"I don't think so. She didn't say anything to me." His ears hung lower as his body turned to a blue.

"That's because she can't." The larger one stated, getting the little one to make a noise in question and instantly change yellow. "That's highly amusing."

"She can't say anything? What do you mean?"

"Well, where she was trained, their final test is of willpower. They need to go through a... Surgery of sorts. Removing anything unnecessary for survival within the body. Usually organs." Another noise in question. "Have you ever noticed that there was this little drum inside someone?"

"Yeah, I remember hearing one in my mother. I can't hear it in my father though."

"That would be the Heart. It's within the chest, here." He tapped the little one's chestplates. "Those are usually thicker on a male, so odds are that's why you can't hear your fathers."

"And she has hers removed?" It made the lizard chuckle.

"No, you need your heart to survive. But many other organs within your body you don't. They remove them to make sure the person can fit through tighter areas. Be more flexible, and not make any sounds."

"And she can't say anything because she has the organ that allows you to speak removed." It made Stagg smile that he figured it out.

"You're smart for being so young. Yes, she had to do that without anesthetics." Another puzzled look. "Without painkillers. She needed to remain still for hours while they performed the surgery."

"I still don't really understand."

"It's probably better if you don't, but you will when you're older. What I'm trying to say is, that Sinality's been through alot. Losing her master is probably very harsh on her. So if she gives you the cold shoulder or a strange gesture, try to follow it. She's much smarter than people think she is."

"But that doesn't really explain why you don't get along."

"She believes in Ricon. Follows every word he says. Every suggestion he makes. And many of those choices have either hurt people close to Saber and Stratacast, or even hurt them directly."

"Saber and Stratacast?"

"Saber was the one in here before. Red fox looking guy with the long coat. Stratacast was probably the one outside. Saber's best friend Downe, he created Ricon. In a way, they're like clones, or opposite twins. Ricon often did things that tormented Downe, which in turn affected Saber."

"And Sinality works for Ricon, so..."

"They don't get along due to that. Even working together for a common goal, Saber never trusted Ricon's left hand." The little one's ears perked. "It's a figure of speech."

"What about the other one?"

"Stratacast? He follows another... Leader, you could say. Her name was Deaneil {Denial}, and she almost became a wife of Ricon. But her... Ambitions got left behind when she joined him. When she had enough, she left to chase those ambitions."

"Ambitions?"

"Goals. She wanted to... End her entire species. Stratacast was right beside her the entire way."

It was still a lot of information the little one didn't quite understand. But he could identify how bad it was. Ever since he took the life of that small bird, there felt like there was something missing inside of him. Something he couldn't quite place, and that the rest of his world... The rest of this world was missing it as well. With a slight whimper, he looked at the green and brown lizard once again. "What did you do?"

"Me?" Dia nodded, getting Stagg to sigh through his nostrils while looking at the campfire. "...Probably the worst of all. I tried to take away their ability to fight. I tried to take away their power, because I didn't feel like they deserved it."

It was the cool air that reminded him of that time. Flying through the winter clouds in a light snow nearly took the dragon back to over a year ago. Back when Atlas felt so lost in the decision to run away from what he was afraid of. It also reminded him of being alone, but in a good way. Nothing but silence and peace of a snowy desert to let him be alone with pleasant thoughts and memories.

And of course, the cold reminded him of that man. The hidden Oracle that tended to live up in the northern villages, the one that Atlas was almost afraid to call friend. At least to the others. Odds are, if he were to admit such a thing, the two women would probably push him into more friendships with the humans. Possibly even Trent would get in on the idea as well. Whereas he did suggest it to the dragon

before.

It irked the black one to think of such a thing really. More just learning yet another language vs actually befriending another person with a shorter lifespan. It was a trap Atlas knew well, and has fallen inside too many times to count.

Snorting loudly, the black one just focused on his flight for now. No use in getting into a depressed or bad mood while visiting someone. A few minutes later, he flew out to a clearing. Seeing the entire mountain side below. Though it was summer time, the grass here never seemed to get as green as it did back on the island. An easy bank to the left and a few minutes around the mountains was all it took to have the village in his sights.

He circled around it a few times widely, making sure people seen him this time. First time he hunted the Oracle down here nearly gave the people heart attacks. Most likely hearing the stories of a dragon attacking some places. He remembered how much it hurt to explain to Trent what happened during those times. Atlas honestly wasn't sure if the man ever really believed him. Though the thought of getting Tia to come visit him has crossed his mind, that would just lead to more problems.

Regardless, if Trent was anything like the other two Oracles, he was also a lie detector. And the black one was not lying about his story. As much as he loathed to claim himself as a victim, the definition fit. But that was all behind him, at least he hoped. He never had a clue what other people were thinking about the dragon. Friendly was never really a word that suited him.

But if he could somehow befriend all the Oracles, perhaps even the church, then his actions would be redeemed. At least to the common people. There wasn't much he could do for the ones who lost somebody in Lavendour, and revenge never solved anything.

Landing and shaking his muzzle from shady thoughts, Atlas strolled forward towards the village. It was rather common, to be honest. Quite a few homes, children running around. Adults cleaning and working in the fields. And the several horses used in various ways. However, there were a few of them that looked very well groomed, with an insignia below the saddles written on a blanket. The symbol looked a bit familiar to him, but he didn't care enough to study it.

A nearby woman waved to him, probably saying hello in their language. Then she pointed off into the far fields. Atlas has been here a few times to know who the dragon was visiting. Odds are Trent was working down there for the season. So he nodded at her and took off to the air once again.

It was only a short glide until he could see four figures in the outer fields. Three of them in black, and the man he recognized as Trent who was lying in the grass. For a moment, Atlas was concerned that he was wounded, but the relaxed position of the man stated otherwise. Although beginning to sit up after a beat of the dragon's wings.

The black one landed a bit far from them, and a bit hard. Staring at the other three, rather dressed

men who looked more like counselors from a church. Then it clicked in his head, triggering a memory over a year ago when Tia was carrying him through that church. Faintly seeing the insignia. (But what do they want with Trent?) Atlas thought to himself while walking towards them. Studying the man's face told him that the dragon shouldn't be here, that he shouldn't be seen by these people. Let alone together.

But such a thought irked the dragon as they kept talking to the Oracle. Snorting and coming in presence of the four humans, his purple eyes began to study the three older men one at a time. Sensing a bit of fear and untrust in the atmosphere, and getting him to release a held back growl. "Are these aristocrats bothering you?" Atlas asked.

"They are a bit of a shadow under my sun on such a beautiful day, Atlas, but nothing to be concerned about." As the three black dressed men and the black beast stared at each other for a few moments, Trent turned to them. "You've said what you wanted to, and I've told you what I know. Unless you have another Oracle that you trust with you, you best be on your way then."

"So be it." One of them said. "But we will meet again soon. I'd suggest making arrangements with this beast to claim your innocence." Though the dragon could not understand what was said, the tone was harsh and threatening. Getting the large one to hiss loudly and the men to take a few steps back, one of them falling over.

"Atlas." Trent put a hand up as he rose. Placing it over the dragon's muzzle while another growl slipped out. "You're not helping. It's alright, I don't need protection from them." A moment of studying in the man's brown eyes, then grumbled while laying down. With his ears still flat against his head, Atlas stared down the other men until they started to walk away. Getting Trent to sigh in relief.

"Who are they?" The large one almost demanded, getting a bit of a worried look from the man.

"No one you need to concern yourself over." The dragon's gaze moved to him and stared him down until a faint smile grew over his face. "They're just from the church. Investigating the incident of Larvendour. They have some suspicions of a Rogue Oracle still around us that's plotting with a dragon. Many of the villagers seen you come around for a few months, and... Well, word travels fast. They're trying to rule me out as a suspect."

"They're being awfully rude about it, by the sounds of their tone."

"Don't concern yourself with it, Atlas. But it would help if you could talk to another Oracle about it." Another grumble from the large one, and two women came to mind. Making his ears a bit purple. "Are you alright?"

The dragon shook his head and snorted. "Fine. Just thinking about the little one." It got the man to bring his normal smile back. Laying back down into the grass.

"How is he?"

"A pawful." A light chuckle from him. "But doing better. He's smart. Too smart to the point where he worries me." Atlas exhaled through his nostrils while laying his head in the grass. Feeling the strange coldness still lingering within it, even though it was a summer season here.

"Children will always surprise you."

"...He reminds me of my brother. And it was his genius that nearly got him killed several times. Then his incompetence ended up finishing his life, too early I might add." The black one mumbled, getting a hand resting on his paw.

"Tell me about him. Your brother." A light chuckle from Trent when the dragon rolled his eyes. Sighing through his muzzle, Atlas looked off into the distant cloudy sky. Covering up a mountain far away.

"...He was smart. Genius, but impulsive. He came up with the weirdest ideas and loop-holes through the rules of the Atonements. I remember so many instructors getting so pissed at him." The two chuckled. "He invented several of my common abilities. From turning into mist to become temporarily insubstantial, to using an undetectable sharp rock from the earth as an initiative. He even theorized making weapons with the combinations of multiple Atonements."

"He sounded very smart." The man said a bit nervously, getting the large one to smirk.

"He was a scientist, like many others. They enjoyed making weapons, but not using them. Not even when they were backed into a corner, they wouldn't use their powers for nothing more than defense." Another heavy sigh from the black one. "I can't tell you how much that irked me back then. I kept seeing our species as some weak pushovers, when we should've been the ones conquering. We had the means, the reasons, the power, and strengths to do anything. Dragons were gods where I came from, something other species feared. So much so that one of them tried to take away our power."

"Is that where your brother died?"

The purple eyes shifted to the man, revealing a form of guilt and sorrow. "...No. That's where I first died. I took out my wrath on that species. But my brother... He seemed to have this strange respect for everything that lived. For a person who designed ways to harm others using a variety of weapons, he loved living beings more." Another exhale. "Then one day, he was experimenting with Flash Freezing. His Atonement was Cold, and well... He was much better at the theory part. He noticed a form of mastery from the Hotheads that expelling flames from your mouth was impressive. Made for some great show, I know that. But he lacked the practice of such things."

"What happened?"

"I'm not sure. By the time I heard about it, his lungs were completely solid. Frozen and unable..." Atlas

lowered his muzzle, lightly swinging it side to side. Keeping his eyes closed while he took a few breaths. "That drove me insane. I chose Fire as my Atonement, and I felt like I influenced such a thing on him. I was so much better at doing the actions, the motions. Manipulations of the element, because Fire was so flexible."

"I mourned for him for years." Atlas continued. "Keeping up with my own studies in his name, and when I mastered Fire so quickly, I felt like I wasn't done. I felt like there was more to be found, more to be discovered. I remember when we were younger, we started to write down all of Shea'dinn's ideas and theories in a book. Hiding it away in our old room within a crude fireproof box that a friend of mine made. I never returned to that room until the night I burned it down and found that box in the embers. I contemplated opening it in solitude for a few hours, and eventually gave in. Only to find..."

"What?" Trent asked, enthralled in the tale and offering a drink out of his lunch.

After a small sip, Atlas snapped his jaws a few times. Still getting used to the taste of the man's odd, natural drinks. "Shea added more to the book. He added several other books that I never knew about. The thing was full of pages and pages from multiple scrapbooks. Diagrams, graphs in extended details, and instructions for multiple Atonements. But one more thing that I've never heard of before."

"It was a theory that none of the Atonements were separate from one another. That they were all linked within the same energy, something no instructor ever believed. That if you could learn one, you were capable of learning them all. Following a large chart that he made. Linking all Atonements within an Eight Pointed Star, and showing how each one was actually linked with two. And those two were linked with another as well. My flames were actually a concentrated form of light, and my heat was always connected with the cold."

"It took me what felt like ages to understand and learn the ways of the Golden Atonement. To separate the flames into all kinds of light that glittered within my paws. And to lower my heat down to the point where it was mostly cold. From there I went to another, and then another. Following the star in secrecy where nobody suspected anything. Not until I was forced to use it in front of others."

"What happened?"

"...It's a long story, Trent. But everyone who seen me change Atonements got frightened. They called it a Taboo, saying it was completely unnatural. Even my parents couldn't stand up for what I've done. So I just left, seeing it was better for everyone. Years went on and I just practiced everything my brother thought of. Even forging weapons straight out of thin air and learned the martial arts of using such tools from other cultures. Several hundred years later, an old friend from my nest found me. They discovered that another species that went crazy on technology wanted to attempt to wipe out the source of our Atonements. I didn't believe it, and told them to go to hell."

"But it kept me up at night. The idea of What If kept popping into my head. So the night before my nest was planning to assault their base, I went in alone. I used all my energy to destroy their technology

and shred their people across that small island. In the end blowing up the tower with several of my weapons, but I overdid it by mistiming the detonation of the first weapon. I survived the explosion, but it shattered my wings as it launched me out of the thousand foot tower. Landing hard on my back was painful enough, the large metal shard just finished me. Stunned too much to remove it quick enough before I bled out."

"Yet you lived?"

"Yeah." Another sigh. "When I woke up, the shard was out of me. Surrounded by my nestmates. All old and new ones... And that was the first time I was ever called a Devil. A Malefactor. A Monster." A soft pet from the man kept the dragon silent for a long time. All at once the large one groaned and tossed his head high. Landing further away from Trent and groaning with his head in the grass. "Damn it, that's another favor I owe you."

It sent the man into laughs. "You must not keep score, Atlas. There's no need for it."

"It's your fault." The black one mumbled in the grass. Pulling out his muzzle to breathe and snort loudly. "You're too easy to talk to." Another few chuckles from both of them.

"I just listen. However, I am a bit behind on my fieldwork. I don't suppose..."

"I'm on it. Just tell me what you want done." Atlas raised, but got a hand on his chest before he could push forward. Staring at Trent for a few moments.

"They had no right to call you that. You're far from the creature they feared from you." The black one just sighed through his nostrils, lightly nodding but looking away from the brown eyes. When he felt the hand move, he followed him.

It felt like an endless job, going through all the metal and removing everything invaluable to the black demon. As much as Fen detested it, he was in the dragon's good graces by doing the long task. Taking out all the plated and chain armors, all the spears and their heads, as well as any other metallic weapon that could have possibly been in the disc's grasp.

But that puzzled him. To Fen, the rock was just that. There was nothing special about it, even after Void discharged it and sent the entire thing down a steep slope that flowed through the lair. To the young man, it was just magic. Something so far above his head that he could not put into words.

His hand retreated sharply while he lightly cursed. Feeling another pointed end of a blade within the

pile of mixed treasure. Just thankful he started using some chainmail gloves that he found. Though they didn't completely nullify the damage done, they greatly reduced the threatening value such objects had. Still didn't stop them from hurting and making Fen's hands sore.

The sudden ripping open of the ceiling startled him, as loud wingbeats filled the air. As winds began to rush the lair, the black one landed. Closing the ceiling like instinct. Looking around the treasure piles, he eventually spotted his servant. "Road tax." He stated, getting a confused look on the man's face.

"What, sire?"

"What do you think of taxing my roads? Forcing travelers to pay a toll to pass though safely?" The dragon asked, petting some piles with his muzzle and then laying on them.

"I-I think..." The bandit swallowed loudly. "I think that it might be enforcing too much on them..." He said while his heart began to race. Feeling the purple eyes glare at him, imagining them to be angry that the human disagreed with the devil's plan. But to his surprise, the amethysts were in thought. Still staring at him, but pondering.

"Perhaps you're right. It's much more fun to surprise them and demand such things anyway." Void said rather cheerfully, which disturbed Fenrick a bit. Rolling onto his scaly back and washing himself with the bounty of golden coins, he purred a bit. Grabbing a bit and dropping them on his muzzle and neck. "I never thought I would enjoy such things. But I must say, they are quite delightful. And I have you to thank for them, Fenrick."

The man lowered his head a bit nervously. "N-no, my lord. It was your cunning and magics that obtained such things. I cannot take any credit for this."

"Yes, a magnificent use of such power, isn't it?" The black one smirked slyly at the man. "How goes the filtering?"

"There's quite a bit of armor and weapons in here. I'm sorry that I haven't been able to remove them all from your likings." The dragon just attempted to toss his snout and snort.

"I warned them to place all things inside a shelter. But I suppose it's my fault, I became impatient."

"Nonsense, Sire. You are very patient."

Void just smirked at the compliment. Still rubbing against the piles put him in an exceptionally good mood. Almost too good that he rolled back over before his red weapon could be seen from its sheath. "Fenrick, I believe it's time you took a break." It surprised the young one, nearly jumping at a sudden crack in the mountain wall near him. "I would like you to take some gold for yourself and enjoy a few days in the town below."

"W-what?" He double taked at the dragon. "N-no, my lord. I would like to finish this before-"

"Fenrick." He said a bit thickly. "Take some gold coins, and go enjoy yourself for a few days. If I need you, I will find you. I have your scent, after all."

As the young man looked at the pile near him, and looked again at the dragon, Void was nodding at him. Slowly taking it and making completely sure that it's what the devil wanted, then exiting. "When do you want me back?"

"Within four sunrises. On that day, I'll be expecting you back here even if I'm not. I'll leave that hidden way open for you from now on. Worry about finishing that pile then." The man couldn't understand why the beast was sending him away, almost expecting some sort of ruse. "Goodbye Fenrick." The dragon said sarcastically.

"G-goodbye, Lord Void. And t-thank you." The bandit bowed respectfully before making his way out the narrow rocky path. And coming out to the large road up the mountain. Seeing a series of plantlife grow to cover most of the secret pathway.

After the human was out of hearing range, Void smiled and licked his muzzle at the piles he was laying upon. Taking a deep inhale of them and rubbing it over his lower belly, he thrust his lower horn into it. Trying to contain his roar of pleasure in case the man could hear it from outside. Breathing heavily, he bathed himself within the valuables and lusted over it for the rest of the night.

Chapter 6

It was the slight burning in his lungs that began to wake him up. Though still feeling cold, there was a renewed warmth that had a dangerous comfort to it. He almost wanted to bathe in the bright flames to get warmed up, but he learned how much they hurt a while back. When his mother was cooking, he touched the red tongues within the stove. Though the injury was not severe, he couldn't stand on that paw for the rest of the day.

The thin smoke caught in his lungs, getting him to naturally attempt to expel it. "...Sorry." A voice on the other side of the fire said in a rather low and stressed voice. The little one looked around the fire and seen the red fox in the long coat lean up against a rock. A thin object with a small ember at the end hanging from the edge of his teeth. "I've held out long enough. Feel free to leave if it bothers you too much."

"What is that?" The dragon asked, finally getting a good look at the canine's eyes. One of them red, while the other was green. As he got closer, trying to study the leather pants and jacket he wore, the yellow one was still very curious about the cigarette. Slightly climbing the larger one's leg and trying to sniff at it.

"This?" He took it out, seeing the little one's ears perk up and study it from afar. "It's... A thing that relieves stress."

"Stress?"

"You know, when you get angry, impatient, restless or anxious." He put it back to his muzzle and breathed in deeply. Seeing the little ember get a bit brighter and a large amount of smoke exhale through his nostrils. The slight presence of it was enough to almost water the little one's eyes. "It's not really healthy for you, or those around you."

"Then why do you use it?" He whimpered a little after a bit of coughing. As the fox reached around and set a small bowl of water before the hatchling, he exhaled again. Trying to answer that question for the thousandth time.

"...You get addicted to it, kid." He knew that the little one wouldn't understand that, but the Lizard did tell him Dia was smarter than he looked. "You get... Attracted to it."

"To the point where you will do anything to be near it again." The red one looked at the dragon's head, hung low over the water and almost looking at his reflection. A mixed expression of sorrow and understanding seemed to fill those blue eyes as they looked into the fox's.

"So you are smarter than a three hundred and nineteen day old." Another breath of the cigarette. "How?"

"It's like... I can feel it. When I touch you, I can feel your attraction to it. Like needing to breathe, you've relied on it for ages, haven't you?" Another stare at the little one for several minutes before he started to drink again. "Where are...?"

"Stagg went out to find more water. Sinality and Strata went to find some food. I guess they really didn't want to eat you." The red one's stomach grumbled loudly, then he did at it. Getting the dark blue dragon to lower his head. "You were what? Dia?"

"Yes, Dia'vidd. And you... Saber?"

"Mhmm. I'm usually the one who doesn't give a sh-" He stopped himself, staring at the hatchling for a moment while the little one studied him. Turning yellow. "Nevermind. I just need to watch my language while you're around." Another exhale of annoyance came from Saber as he leaned back farther against the rock. A strap of a harness slightly moved inside his jacket, getting the attention of Dia, and seeing something that reflected the light of the campfire.

"What is that?" The little one tried to move in closer and sniff at it. As the adult opened up his jacket to see what the dragon ment, he lightly grumbled while taking it out. A heavy pistol that was nearly about half the size of Dia, designed along the models of a Desert Eagle. The polished metal of the barrel and chamber reflected red with the light of the campfire. So much so, that the little one could see his reflection in the black and red object. Making out the small yellow dragon with blue eyes and perked ears, Dia began to giggle at himself. Which in turn made the fox smile a bit as well.

"It's a custom gun I made a long time ago." He once again looked at it with wonder. "It's a type of firearm. A compacted ranged weapon often used for offense or defense."

"What does that mean?" It was one of the hardest questions to answer, something Downe's children asked Saber as well a long time ago. And still, to this day he had a hard time with it. "My dad says he likes to make weapons. I've seen a few, but he's never let me touch them."

"Well, he's right. I was only about Eleven when I was given my first weapon. Told how to fire it and was pointed a target." He mumbled roughly, taking another inhale of the cigarette. "It may not seem like it now, Dia, but you have something that you'll eventually have to let go of. But..."

"What do you mean?" The hatchling asked, climbing on the fox's legs and looking at the weapon closely. When he tried to look down the barrel, Saber turned it away. "What's in that?"

"It's... Where the ammunition comes out of. You never want to point this end at anyone or anything you don't want to hurt. You always want to stay away from this part."

"Why?" It made the adult sigh a bit heavily, and Dia could tell there was something wrong with it. There was a bit of heartache within the canine. "It... Ends people, doesn't it?"

A quiet exhale from Saber as he looked the little one in the sad blue eyes. "It can. Very easily. You need to be good with it in order to let them survive."

"But it will hurt them."

"Or scare them off if you just shoot it real close." Another exhale and one long inhale to end the cigarette, he snuffed it out on the rock. Pulling the gun up to his lap and taking it apart before the hatchling. "See this here?" He held up a single round. "It's called a bullet. Inside this part there is an explosive dust that makes this sharp end launch forward quickly. That's your ammunition, something you don't want to run out of. If you do, you're in trouble."

"That's why there's so many in this part?" The little one pointed at the clip, though only one bullet could be seen.

"Yeah, I only have eight shots right now though. It'll be enough for a while, but I'm not sure about getting back home." The red one shook his head. "And this part is your trigger, it's how you get the pistol to fire. When you pull this, it causes the hammer back here to pull back and slam against the bullet. Right in the back here, igniting that dust that sends the bullet out."

"I'm not sure I understand." Dia said, still trying to look at it. Noticing the fox's ears move towards the cave entrance. A few moments later, he could hear footsteps and something dragging. Once again getting that green color on his scales, Saber looked at him and motioned the dragon to get off his legs.

"It's just Stagg and Strata." He stated, getting the hatchling to calm down a bit while he put his gun back together. A few minutes later, the large lizard could be made out. Making the little one chirp a bit.

"Really Saber? You had to smoke inside?" Stagg grumbled, setting down two large buckets of water in the shape of huge bullet shells.

"I felt like I needed one. And I've been outside long enough." The red one argued, seeing a rather thin yellow furred creature drag in a deer. "Don't tell me you killed that thing with buckshot."

"Who hunts a deer with buckshot?" The yellow one almost growled. "I used a 125mm cannon, hence the reason why it's missing something." He said, pulling the full corpse forward and revealing it no longer had a head. Seeing that, and the dragon tried to look, Saber covered its eyes.

"Turn it around." The red one got a sharp look from Stratacast. "He's a hatchling. He shouldn't see that."

"Please. He'll see it eventually." The yellow one grumbled, but did so anyway. After the red paw was removed, Dia got a good look at the one they called Strata. He was a bit tall, almost scrawny compared to the others. A yellow coat of fur on a body that was a mix between a fox, rabbit, and a mouse. The shoulders were a bit on the broad side, and though it was hard to see in the campfire light, his entire

body almost looked covered in wounds. Places where the fur no longer flowed well in one direction, much like the uncles the hatchling knew well. Though Strata's bottom half was covered in jeans, they carried identical damage. "Get this set up and cooking. I'll track down Sinality."

"Attempt to track down Sinality." The fox corrected him, getting another loud growl from the yellow creature. "What? You don't find Sinality, she finds you."

"Enough Saber." The lizard interrupted them. "Just try to be back soon." With another grumble, the yellow one ripped out a knife out of his side and tossed it on the deer before leaving. Sighing, Stagg turned to Saber. "Must you agitate him? It's bad enough we're half stuck here, last thing we need is to have everyone against each other."

"You're one to talk, *God*." The fox growled, as if quoting the green one. "And what do you mean by half stuck?"

The green one was quiet for a moment while he started cutting the corpse with the knife. "We went separate ways. I actually just went back to the stream Sinality found before to get the water, and I'm assuming you two had a spat before about food." Saber rolled his eyes, but didn't disagree. "So Strata went hunting, but instead found a fortress out in the distance."

"A fortress?" Both Dia and the red one questioned. "So there's people here?"

"He said it was lit up, but didn't get too close. He was in his more purple form, let's just say that."

"Ah."

"What does that mean?" The little one questioned, remembering the strangely scrawny one. "Strata's the yellow one, isn't he?"

The two adults looked at each other, almost fighting back and forth on who would explain. In the end, Stagg sighed. "Stratacast... Remember how I said that he belongs to Deaneil?" The dragon nodded. "Well, her followers are-

"Giant, rabid dogs." A glare from the lizard. "What? That's literally what they are."

"To a degree, but they're more canines rather than just dogs. Those who sell their souls belong to her. Changing into large, canine-like monsters that have two major abilities: One is that they never seem to completely die off. So if one of them falls, odds are it's getting back up quickly. The other is that they can rip out weaponry from their bodies."

"And that's where the knife came from?" The little one asked, studying it from afar and feeling a bit frightened by the red that seemed to stain the steel. He remembered seeing the color before coming out of a small cut in his scales, as well as from his father as well. Though his mothers were not as fearful of

the larger dragon's wounds, they were highly concerned over Dia's.

"It's an odd thing to think about, but yes. They tend to rip them out of their bodies and quickly heal the wound it causes. Remarkable in a way, but..."

"But why did you call him purple?"

"That dog form of his is purple. Eventually you'll see it, kid. Strata's not really fond of hiding it."

"Dia'vvid, I know you're hungry, but you might not want to watch this. Try to get some rest, we'll wake you when it's ready." Staggs said, hearing the little one whimper in disappointment. But he did what he was told, going behind the rock and tried to ignore the strange sounds of cuts and squishes.

It was the soft strokes and the warmth of the sun that did away with that cranky mood of his. It wasn't so much that he was angry to return home, but he dreamt about it again. Being so far into debt to another human being to the point where he needed to slave himself to them to become freed once again.

Silly, he knew that. But it was almost a compulsion that drove him to such things. He disliked just taking from others, it led him to a bad road several times over. But the man was kind. Forgiving. Someone who was wise enough to have power in his hands and not be corrupted by it.

Perhaps that's why he was so easy for the dragon to open up to. Though he did feel manipulated by such a thing, much like the hands under his jaws at the current moment, but it was a different kind of manipulation. One that he could not explain into words... And that, in turn, almost made it worse.

Feeling the hands stop immediately stopped the large black one's purrs. With nothing returning to stroke his favorite spot, he let out a growl and a giggle filled the room. "Come on, it's time to get up Atlas. You've been asleep all morning."

"Only because I was flying all night." He lied, knowing he could get away from it while the woman wasn't touching him. "How were things?"

"Nothing bad really happened." Elexus said, getting a grumble in reply as she laid back down around his head. Stroking around the muzzle to tease him, he eventually just started nudging her body. Feeling the clothing of her dress and trying to get his tongue inside it. "Stop that you." She giggled, giving the

snout a few taps and a faint yelp came from it. "If you want some fun, it's going to have to wait until tonight. You should get something to eat though."

"You have something I want to eat." He chuckled a bit, getting her to shake her head at him. "But I suppose you're right." Another nuzzle into the woman's body and he got up to stretch. Yawning and snapping his jaws a few times, Atlas followed the woman to the hallway. Stopping a bit down it and looking towards the bedroom.

"I'm just going to check on Dia. Go find Tia in the kitchen and check up on how supper's coming." The black one nodded, but cut her off with the large tail. Placing her hands on it, she could feel the dragon's affection glowing as the snout nuzzled her again in the back of the neck, meeting the skin with a lick. The woman giggled a bit, petting the red appendage. "You're always so affectionate when you return." That immediately stopped it, even the affection turned into a little bit of embarrassment. Getting her to turn around and see the ears matching his eyes. As he cleared his throat awkwardly, the brown haired one just chuckled at him. "Don't be such a kresskre."

Even that made him chuckle as she went into the room. "Maybe I just am." He whispered with a slight smile. With a quiet exhale through his nostrils, he continued down through his home. Still getting the blonde's suggestion a few days ago swimming in his head. About how Elexus deserved a 'Reward'. Making him still grunt awkwardly at the very thought of it, though the empty rooms.

Though it wasn't the act of it, or what it meant that bothered him. He honestly almost wanted to. Almost did a few times during playful sessions. But it was the aftermath that scared him to death. Not only having another hatchling, but Tia barely survived the birth. He might not be so lucky next time.

But at the same time, he was too proud to admit such a thing to Elexus. He's been trying to make sure that she didn't feel like a third wheel, or that she was Second Place. Atlas loved them both. As much as he wanted to give them that gift again...

Walking by a mirror, he noticed his entire snout had turned away from its natural color. Shaking his head a few times, and trying to get himself back to normal using different thoughts was proving harder than he expected. Hearing the other Oracle in the kitchen not too far away meant that he was too close to showing that awkwardness to another. So he sat down for a moment, feeling the red rug brush his identically colored lower tool sent a wave up through him. Cursing silently at the near moan he almost let out, Atlas carefully laid down in the large dining room.

Changing himself into a white and tried to make the sensitive area colder to withdraw the tool and the ideals in his head was probably the best bet. Looking around, he studied the many objects that were obtained through the year. When he first built this castle, it felt so empty. And that bothered the wives and the kveldulf a bit. It took a few days being stuck around their size to understand exactly what they meant, even though he despised that new ability of Tia's at times.

Granted, it was more of the fault of Rex for giving her such a thing. And though he told them that he

was searching for that weird old man whenever he left at the end of the month, it actually wasn't a lie. During the flights and visits to see Trent, he was looking for anything completely out of place, though it was hard to gather information on a species he could not understand.

Like that, his lower horn had retreated. Though the dragon didn't notice it yet. He was stuck recalling the times he went out with the women and custom ordered such large things. Larger chairs and tables that were big enough for everyone there to eat comfortably, refusing to be shrunk down everytime he went to eat at the table. The looks on the carpenter's faces when they saw the dimensions of everything was enough for them to share a laugh at.

"Everything okay?" Tia's voice interrupted his thoughts. Looking slightly concerned at the white scales, but she knew him well enough by now.

"Yes." He stated, getting up and hoping that the red weapon was sheathed as he returned to a black color. "I just... Was remembering something." She just smiled at him, as the dragon slightly looked into the mirror. Confirming that there was no purple shown other than his eyes. "When we got the table, and..."

"The looks on their faces?" She chuckled, getting the male to smile a bit while nodding. "Where does the time go, huh?" She studied the wooden object from afar. Seeing all the scratches on the varnish from the hatchling scampering on it. As well as many of the legs of the chairs being gnawed on.

"What did you make for dinner?" He asked.

"Can't you tell?" She teased him, embracing his muzzle as he leaned into her.

"I can, but you enjoy telling me." A small chuckle from her.

"Well, I thought I would try a roast. Some carrots with some baked potatoes. Then maybe some garlic bread with it."

"And?"

"And what?" She giggled. Feeling the playful snort blow through her dress.

"How did it turn out?"

"You'll just have to see." She teased, tapping the tongue that was searching for the hidden openings of her dress. Atlas then noticed her looking behind him and slightly waving at another. Most likely Elexus.

"Have you seen David? He wasn't in the crib." The brown one asked, getting a bit of a worried look from the blonde. As the three began to study each other, the dragon's ears flickered and tried to make out any distant sounds.

"You two check inside the castle, I'll search outside with the Feys." The black one stated, moving towards the entrance of the building. Many thoughts went through his head to where his son could've gone, but hopefully he wasn't in danger. As much as he tried to be an optimist like Tia, he knew eventually something bad would happen to Dia'vidd. Or even one of them...

Reaching the gate, the loud pawsteps of the dragon startled the Kveldulf awake. "Have you seen Dia?" The black one almost demanded.

"No."

"Not that we've heard." They two shared a look while trying to scan the outside area. Picking up a childish giggle off in the distance at the same time the dragon did.

"Worst Guard Dog Ever!" Atlas cursed and bolted to the pier. Only to see something white in the distance.

"Why are you all fuzzy like Feys?" The little yellow hatchling asked. Padding away at the massive amount of white fur to finally discover the brown eyes below him.

"Why are you all scaly like your father?" The white beast asked, teasing the little one and making him giggle again as he moved his head to slightly bounce Dia.

"Because my father is scaly!" He chirped.

"But your mother isn't, so why aren't you like her?" The little one's ears suddenly perked up wide as if he just made sense of something. Getting the bear-like muzzle to smile and chuckle. "You're as adorable as Lexar is."

"I know I'm adorable! Everyone says it!" Dia smiled, still padding at the fur and looking around at the different height. A very loud roar came from the direction of the castle and immediately turned the small dragon to a dark green. Lowering those ears and head, and getting the white creature's attention.

"GET AWAY FROM HIM!!!" Atlas roared at a distance, charging down the path and turning into a bronze.

"I don't think your dad is too happy with us." Bartan stated, looking up to see the hatchling on his head. As the larger dragon came closer, a wide, flat spike of earth came straight for the Counterweight's eyes. Getting the bear to duck quickly, and the hatchling to land on the spike. Sliding down towards the father.

Scooping Dia up in one fluid motion, Atlas held him back while roaring at the white creature once again up close. "Dia'vvid, go home!"

"But-"

"NOW!" The large dragon growled, getting the little one to yelp and scamper back up to the waiting Feys. "What did you do to him!?" Atlas growled.

"Do to him? I didn't do-" Bartan tilted his head.

"Then why are you here!?" It made the bear's face cross.

"I'm only here to check up on you. I wanted to see if you two found each other." Another low growl as the two studied each other. "I'm actually surprised you had a hatchling." Once again, the dragon didn't say anything, but he was calming down. "Looks like Tia did well for you then."

"...Yes." Atlas admitted, glancing back to see if any of them were watching from afar. The sight of the blonde waving for the two to come up gave the dragon mixed feelings. Hearing the bear take a small step forward shot his eyesight back at the white one.

"I mean it, Atlas. I'm not here for any other reason than to just visit you. I promise."

"Yeah, well you've told me that before." He said coldly. Again another long silence, then a loud snort. "Don't stay too long. You have a habit of messing with what I already have."

"I can't, there's somewhere else I need to be. So I'll only stay a day or so." He started slowly walking up to the dragon, giving the black one a soft smile. "I'm glad you found each other again."

"No thanks to you." He grumbled, seeing a strange look in the brown eyes. "What?" He asked, not getting a response. "Bartan. What is it?"

"I didn't really... It was Ziik." A slightly puzzled stare from the amethysts. "He wanted to do something for you back then, and..."

"Did he take my place? In that machine?" Atlas asked, seeping a bit of worry in his voice.

"No. But that future went through some hard times. Ziik became the last Immortal to look after that planet, and..."

"What happened to him?" The bear smiled a bit sadly at him, getting the black one to curl his neck. "What?"

"You sound concerned about him." It made the dragon's ears glow. "He's fine, Atlas. A bit lonely, but he's fine." A faint exhale in relief. "You should pay him a visit sometime. I could rearrange one, if you like."

"And by Visit, I'm pretty sure you mean a three-way." He snorted, getting the white beast to chuckle.

"Don't you give me that, you and him both want to get under my tail."

"Please, I've already tapped that." Bartan teased, getting the black one to growl. "And what's wrong with that? It just means he wants to-"

"Stop." Atlas halted in place, covering his eyes with a paw. "Just... Stop." And the bear chuckled. Giving him a lick.

"He loves you, Atlas. And he is an immortal..." A nudge got the dragon to glare at the white one, seeing his eyebrows bounce just like Ziik's used to at times getting the larger one to smile. As much as he tried to hide it.

"Well, at the moment I'm taken."

"Excellent! I'll tell him that you've considered mating with him once I'm done here." A bit of a whimper leaked out of the black one as he did his best to compose himself in front of the nearby Kveldulf.

With an awkward clear of his throat, the dragon gestured towards the light grey furred one. "Feys, this is Bartan. Bartan, the worst guard dogs ever." The two heads lowered their ears in disappointment.

"A Twilight Wolf? There's only thirteen of you left here." The Counterweight's statement got their attention. The yellow eyes filled with a mix of disbelief and hope.

"Are you serious? There's some left?" Feyon asked.

"How can you be so sure?" The two began studying the hexaped before them from afar.

Atlas tossed his snout. "Please, just look at him. He's somehow weirder than you."

"Atlas." The bear playfully scolded, laying down to reach eye level to the two headed creature. "But don't worry about being the last of your kind anymore, Feyon Feyris." They took a step back and looked to the dragon for an explanation, only to see him roll his eyes.

"I told you, weirder than you. But he does this to nearly everybody." The black one shoved Bartan. "Come on, stop showing off and creeping out other people with your mind games."

"Alright." He gave the two a soft smile, then got up and gave the black one a lick to irritate him. Though the dragon growled at him, he led the way inside. Only to slightly notice the bear double take to the sky and stare at it for a few moments.

"What's wrong?" Atlas asked him, even getting the wolves to look back and forth between them and the sky. "Bartan, what is it?" Another grumble.

"Nothing." He said a bit sadly, getting an angry stare from the purple eyes. With his ears dropping, the larger white one looked at all three heads and exhaled. "...Your sun just went out."

It was the multiple colors of the sunlight passing through gems that soothed his awakening. The ones he placed in the ceiling that were big enough to make a difference. Making small tunnels that held little mirrors around corners to direct the light within his lair. Those warm beams then reflected on the massive amount of treasures that covered the grassy floor. Something he hasn't seen in months. Perhaps a year now.

How long has it really been? The thought pleasantly danced around his head. To him, the past couple of years were a relaxing vacation. To others: probably a depression of many sorts. He recalled the bandit mentioning that the people found a new form of bartering, due to the lack of funds from the entire continent. The funds that the dragon was addicted to, the funds that no one else had. At least no one else that he could find.

As those years passed on through his memory, he remembered hunting down other dragons after a few months of arrival to this planet. He remembered going through kingdom after kingdom and pillaging anything valuable from them. Eventually growing tired of attempting to negotiate and just arriving at the gates. If they cooperated willingly from the beginning, he would let them live. If they showed any resistance, he would end them.

It made things much better for the black one. He had grown a liking in the Wrathful Ego that he gave into. Being on top of the world, while standing on the backs of everything else. The way he always envisioned a God or Immortal would be... Perhaps even a Force or... Counterweight.

Yes, he still remembered what the Bear told him about the universe and how they seemed to work. Though never bothered telling another soul, besides that one woman. There was no point to anyone else knowing, especially here. To them, there was only one God, and that God was the Dragon known as Void.

Stretching out a bit, he playfully swooshed and squirmed through the mountains of gold coins. Still loving the music they made and the warmth they carried. Something he could never get enough of. He even went as far as to polish them to keep their beauty over the years. Picking up a pawful and letting them drop over his closed eyes. Keeping a few inbetween his fingers and claws to look at and see his

own Amethysts within a golden hue. He almost wanted to taste them, he was so seduced by such things. Bringing it slightly closer to his muzzle and letting his red appendage out to give it a lick.

"M-my lord!" The sudden cry of Fenrick startled the dragon into a bit of a yelp. Dropping whatever he was doing and searching where his voice came from. Hearing the man scurry through the coins with probably his muddy footwear half irked the dragon, but such movement was ever heard from him. Though such a thing should concern Void, he immediately half wrote it off as the man overreacting.

"What is it Fen?" The black one lackadaisically asked. A bit irked that his time was interrupted. Waiting to see the man climb through the golden valleys. Though it's been a while since he saw the bandit, when he came into sight the dragon studied him for a few moments while he caught his breath.

He didn't age very well. For being only three years max, Fen nearly looked twice his age. Scrawny, tattered clothing and weak muscles showed that he was not cared for. Let alone spared much health from being the dragon's personal servant. It was there, Void almost felt bad for him. Guilty. Though of course he would never show such weakness in front of Fenrick. "Sire..." The man was still winded.

"Spit it out, Fenrick." The large one said boldly.

"Outside! There's...!" Impatient, the dragon tossed his snout and got out of his slumbering area. Motioning the man to move forward and lead the way outside. When they got out, a chilling breeze met them. Nearly stinging the Black one's eyes. "Over there!" The bandit pointed around a corner and to the distance.

It took a while for Void to really make out what the man was talking about, but as his eyes adjusted to the bright sun, he could see it. Miles and miles of men, probably all over the lands. Siege weapons, Cavalry, all marching towards the black dragon's lair. Many of them carried banners he had half noticed within the other kingdoms. And whereas Void stated he was not interested in the steel or iron of their weapons, it would make sense how well armed they were.

A bit of growl escaped out of the dragon's throat while he turned to Fen. Seeing him lower his head and shoulders, almost cowering like the black one would take out his frustration on the messenger. But instead, the large one just exhaled through his nostrils, taking a step forward towards the vast army against him. "My lord?"

"Stay inside, Fen. I'll deal with this alone."

"But Sire, that's the entire land's combined army-"

"And what is an army's weakness?" The dragon asked, changing into a purple and looking back with a bit of a sly smirk. "The Weather."

"My lord?" He asked, but didn't get another answer. Instead he witnessed the clouds begin to darken

over the army as the winds began to pick up. Quickly, a large hole started to appear in the clouds as the dragon roared loudly. Dragging the clouds down in a large funnel began to race the man's heart as the winds turned into gusts. Scampering to get inside once again, he couldn't help but attempt to witness from a far what his master was doing. Hearing a few lightning strikes and people scream in the distance told him that Fen was better off just not seeing it. That if he did, it would all be too horrible. Instead, he braced himself inside and covered his ears. Still being able to hear a completely different roar... Or was it one? No. It was the planet screaming.

Chapter 7

The morning was clouded from the dust of the battle. Making it almost hard for Fen to breath while walking down the mountain path. The cloud that seemed to linger over the country after that display of the dragon's power sent a wave of cold throughout the land. It ached the young man's wounds, old and new. But he didn't risk staying here another night. He repaid his debt to the beast, and served him long enough. Or so he thought.

His heart still raced, wondering if the creature would even notice that he was gone that morning. It seemed every day was an interrogation. And every day, he feared for his life. Even though Void would protect him, the black one seemed like a double edged sword. Always threatening, even when it was defending him.

He stopped to catch his breath, as well as rest his ankle. Even after a few years of servitude, it still felt

like a new pain to him. The beast did cure his sickness the first time they arrived here, he could hardly call the creature a Friend or Companion. Fen was never sure how Void felt about the man's existence, and that's what drove him to this decision: To leave. Leave and finally start a new life away from here. Away from the dragon's greed and power. Away from Fear.

A few heavy steps could be heard from the path behind him, and Fenrick's heart skipped a beat. Running away from him would only seal his demise, so he nervously waited for the purple eyed creature to appear around the long turn of the mountainside. Meeting that usual irked look that was often painted on Void's face. "G-good morning, my lord." The man said, trying not to release the crack in his voice.

But the creature said nothing. Did nothing. Just stared at him with that blank, bemused face. "I-I should've told you, but I d-didn't want to wake you for this." He swallowed loudly, as the black creature just studied him. "I... I wish to leave and start my own life once again. In a different land-"

"And that's your decision to make?" Void questioned him with a deep voice. A mix between normally speaking with a faint roar that caused the winds themselves to be silent. The man didn't respond to him, didn't even look the beast in the eye. "Where will you go?" It nearly demanded.

"I-I don't know. But I didn't take anything! I swear!" The dragon growled loudly at him, changing to a silver. Fen took a step back, afraid to see what the beast would construct. Instead, felt a tug in his jacket pocket. One where a few gold coins were hidden. It made him release the sob in his throat as he lowered his head in defeat. "...Please... I just need something to help me get going..." He pleaded. Knowing Void had killed for much less than stealing from him.

While She Sleeps - Seven Hills (Alternate Version Feat. Jenny Staniforth)

As a long silence rained over the two, Fenrick was sure the dragon would kill him at any moment. Until it turned around and went back up the hill. Falling to his knees, the man started crying. Thanking the beast for sparing his life through a series of whispers that he thought Void could not hear. But walking up, his ears flickered, and a pain in his heart began to echo.

Falling asleep within the sea of gold coins, jewels, and gems, he couldn't help but think back at her once again. He gathered all these valuables to forget about that pain, yet one kind act... The act of sparing a servant's life that stole from him, it cracked the wall that he built. Leaving a wound within it and causing him to once again reflect over it.

Until he heard a noise. Felt a presence within his lair. Instinctively roaring at any intruder who was dumb enough to enter his home in attempt to steal from him again, he was ready to send a spike of rock through their chest. Until he saw it was the white beast from before. The six legged one with a bear's head. "Relax." The white one said. "I'm only looking at it. I won't take it."

As the dragon growled again, he got up. Leaving his comfortable bed. "It's mine. Put it back." He snarled at the bear.

"Is it?" Bartan glared at him a bit harshly. "Do you know who made it? Do you know who you got it from?"

"Get out of my lair." The black one hissed at him, returning to his bed.

"Haytre, what you're doing here won't fix anything. It won't make you happy-"

"I swore I was pretty happy until you came along. Now get out."

"How much treasure is it going to take to fill that void inside you? How much gold is it going to take to replace that empty heart of yours-?"

"As Much As It Takes!"

As the white bear placed a paw on the dragon's shoulder, the furred one leaned into him. "...I know it hurts. You're not the first one to lose someone, but don't make it your last. As... Odd as that sounds." The black one got a lick from him. "It's worth it in the end. But... These will hold no good memories for you. Only lonely ones." It made the dragon sigh, finally breaking his gaze from them. "I need to keep going now. Take care of yourself, Haytre." As the counterweight hugged him, the dragon grumbled at him.

"Okay, okay. Enough." The black one pried off the younger woman chuckling. Releasing her tight embrace and making a face over the dirty green slime that now covered her front. "See? That's what you get for hugging a swamp dragon." He snorted playfully at her.

"Ugh, I'll keep that in mind from now on." She tried to scrape off the gunk that covered her with a nearby stick. "I can't imagine why you would want to live in a place like this. It's dirty, smelly, and downright unsanitary." Looking back at the large creature, she noticed some pain in his eyes.

"...You want to know the truth, Karah?" He mumbled, looking west where the sun was setting through the trees. Looking towards the direction of where her village probably was. "To get away from people."

"Get away from people? Why? The villagers would love to see you. They've been talking about it ever since I got here, how much they want to see the spirit of the swamp-"

"I've done things, Karah... Things that they really shouldn't know about. Things that no one should know about."

She placed a dirty hand on the other side of his muzzle and brought it towards her. Looking into his amethyst eyes with her unusual lime green ones. "None of that matters anymore. The villagers are

fascinated with you. I'm fascinated with you..."

"Of course you are." The black one coughed. Still feeling faint from the blood loss of battle.

"And who wouldn't be with that kind of power?" The old man with a long mustache asked. Rolling up the sleeves of his fancy robe to show his long boney fingers. Though the dragon was bound completely in collars and chains, the man still gazed with caution. Tracing around the beast's eye with his long nails. Getting it to growl. "It's hard to believe that such a thing could possibly exist. How do you function?"

"In ways you cannot possibly imagine." He grumbled sarcastically. Getting a silent chuckle out of the female gecko doctor, as she shined a bright light into his eyes. Squinting away, he grumbled again. "What could possibly be in my eyes that would be causing this?"

"You never know. Besides, it's just routine that we do this. Now open your mouth." She got out a small, needle-like device that made him curl his neck. As she gave him a stern look, the wyrmling rolled his eyes and did so. Placing the small thing under his tongue. "Now keep that there until it beeps. Meanwhile, I'm going to look in your ears."

"Juss be carefwull with them-" And he hissed loudly as the man pulled down and twisted them. Causing the small dragon to whimper and grunt through the pain. As he brought out a small device, a loud snap omitted and a sharp pain went through his ear. Afterword, the man let go. Still saying something in a foreign tongue as the little black one held his ear. Now feeling a new weight on it. A tag of some sort, the same one he seen on others that were around the academy.

As the large clamps around his midsection released, he slowly got up in defeat. Wishing he could just level this entire school in a matter of minutes. But he couldn't. Not like this. A faint breeze blew through the fields that turned into a chilling wind, where the large dragon was being cautious around a snowy mountainside. Every step he took gave away and nearly sent him and his partner sliding off into the icy trench below. As much as the black one wanted to fly, it was too dangerous here with such a confined space.

"Easy, Fury." The man said, stroking the side of his neck. "Just take it real slow. If we rush it, it will just fall quicker." The dragon nodded. Taking another breath before taking another step. Only to slip on black ice and send him on an elbow. Lopsiding his entire body and slipping down the slope in a matter of seconds. Barely grabbing hold of the edge and growling at his terrible luck.

At least he still felt Arkram on him. With every attempt to grip forward, more and more snow slipped towards them. Eventually causing his anchored paw to lose grip and send them falling down. Feeling the man fall out of his saddle, the dragon rotated, barely catching him with a forearm and holding him close to his chest. Trying to land on his back to save him.

Crashing into a large window of a building stun his wings and sending shards of glass deep into the membranes. Hearing the airships race overhead of the dusk city. Holding onto his side wound, and

pulling the spear-like missile from out of his body. Only dumb luck that the warhead didn't trigger. Snorting loudly, he recklessly threw it outside. Tearing his wound more, but getting one of the ships that passed by.

Shaking his head to recover, his one good ear flicked and picked up a few soldiers jumping up to the large room from the walls. "Persistent on facing me, are you!?" The dragon roared, before morphing the metal guns of theirs into their hearts.

"Yes!" The voice of a young man said. Getting the black one to turn around in the clean palace and face the human in odd hair and the damaged breastplate. Along with three other comrades of his, all with different weapons. "You terrorized this world for far too long! It's your destiny to fall!"

"You think you can Destroy me!?" The dragon roared. "Then do it!" He slammed the ground and sent a sharp pillar of stone after each of them. Getting the four to spread out and attack from different angles. One with a maul charged Malefactor, but the swing was caught by the black one. "Give Me EVERYTHING You've Got!" Pulling the man overhead and landing him on his back hard. Throwing the heavy plate of stone he was resting on upward and launching the warrior towards an edge. Skidding and stopping just before it.

As an acrobatic woman with sais tried to attack the dragon overhead using a flaming whip, a surge of lightning from Malefactor's paws tore through it. Slamming her against the ceiling and then swat towards the edge. Just barely being caught by the Hammer Wielder.

A sharp pierce sent a loud growl through the dragon while he turned to face the other two. Feeling the white sword bleed his heart and then slash his neck. But it wasn't enough to take out the Black one. He slammed the young knight away with a heavy swing, even though the attack was shielded by the magical weapon. The sudden pull of harsh winds knocked the young man off balance, disarming him just under the dragon's claw. As Malefactor went in for the coup de grace, the archer sent a powerful blow to the dragon's side. Knocking him against the wall of the palace.

Shroud's ribs and shoulder felt cracked and broken. Even feeling a few sharp edges of the bones stick through his scales. Matching the several stab wounds of their spears under his belly. But they ordered a retreat, not like it really mattered to begin with. Stupidly trying to stand sent a painful roar out of the black one's mouth. "No-no-no-no-no! Don't try to move!" The silver dragon moved rather quickly towards him. Trying to help support his weight by putting the bad arm over the long silver spines at his neck.

Another painful growl came from the black one. "Wrong shoulder, Taath-head!" He hissed. Getting the larger one to apologize and quickly move around to the other side. "Did..." Another painful grunt as he tried to move forward. "Did you just apologize?"

The silver one gave him a sad smile, but with deep purple ears. "Y-yes. I guess I should've looked closer to your wounds." A few steps, each followed by a grunt. "Why did you...?" He overlooked the battlefield

with his sapphire eyes. Getting the black one to do the same.

"Would you rather me not have?" Shroud grumbled.

"N-no, it's just..." He lowered his head. "Thank you." Again with that smile. One that almost spoke out of love.

"Kresskre." The black one muttered, getting a chuckle out of the large one.

"Ziikrhi'd." He smiled, getting the other to once again look at him funny. To the point where the Silver wondered if he did something wrong.

"...Shroud."

"Pseudo"

"Void."

"Feir."

"Malefactor."

"Fury."

"Dominion."

"Rackri'th."

"Devil."

"Atlas."

"Haytre." A grey tirix with a shaded monocle muttered. Staring at the dragon with the one good, orange eye. "Is that even your real name?" The black one remained quiet. "He's told me alot about you. Warnings actually. But I have no reason to feel threatened by you."

"You say that now." Haytre grunted. Slowly raising up and treading the shadowy room. As a heavy rainfall hammered at the windows, there was something strange about the bipedal Tirix before him. Something he sensed before.

"I don't have a reason to fear you, because I don't have anything you can possibly take. And that is not a challenge." A low grumble went through the dragon's nostrils as he exhaled. "Do you even remember it? Your name?" The black one gave it some thought. Trying to remember back to the first life he ever had. After a few minutes, he sighed again. "That says alot actually."

"Who says I've ever had one?" The warm meadow air circled around them with fluid energy. Making the long grass dance in the cloudy daylight.

"Of course you had one." The white, six legged beast smiled at him. "It's Haytre."

"What does that even mean." It was hardly a question. More just a statement rolling off the dragon's tongue.

"It means who you are. It's the one word that defines you. One you created. It's your identity."

"One I created..." He grumbled to himself. Only to feel the bear lean into him and almost cover him with soft fur. "So I don't remember it."

"Does it matter if you do?" It got the dragon's attention.

"Bartan... How much of this is real?"

The white one shrugged. "As much as you make it."

"Another vague answer." It got Bartan to smile at him.

"Fine." The bear mocked his snout tossing. Nudging him a bit. "It's all real. But only if you believe it is." Another sigh from Haytre as a red sun began to set in the distance. As he sat on the top of an abandoned building in an abandoned city, the dragon held on tightly to yet another person he lost too early.

"...Bartan." He heard the beast land behind him. "...How can I die?"

"...I can't answer tha-"

"Yes You Can!" The black one roared into the night. Causing nothing to move in the dead urban wasteland. "You know!"

"...I don't."

"But you know what caused this!" The bear remained quiet. "What did?"

"I can't-"

"YOU CAN!" Another roar, as the dragon turned around. Almost displaying the dead body in his paws. "...How much is enough!?" A long silence. "How Much More Must I Need To Go Through This!?" A long silence. **"YOU KNOW!"**

"...I can't tell you-" A quick stone spike went straight for Bartan's heart. Just going through some of the fur as he moved out of the way. Dropping the body, the dragon charged the white one. Sending another

sharp spike with every pawstep until he could get close for a swipe of his claws. Only to barely miss with that.

Growling loudly, Haytre ripped out a flaming metal greatsword. Swinging it upward then across several times. Only to get the last one stopped by a white glaive. Sliding the weapons into a deadlock, the dragon roared loudly at Bartan. Leading into an Outbreak and throw all his weight into winning the stalemate. Only to have it shift and get him to stumble. Before Haytre could make several other constructs, the bear put a paw over the dragon's eyes. Sending all the energy given by the outbreak straight into the Black one's brain. Overloading it, causing an aneurism, and ending the outbreak.

As the black one's sinus drained of blood, he struggled to breath. A simple paw touching him made it that much easier. "...I'm sorry for your loss, Haytre. But..."

"Bartan..." The dragon coughed out some blood. "...How many lives have I been through." Another long silence. "Answer me."

"...4936."

"How many people...?" He couldn't finish without sobbing.

"...67249. She just made 50." Another sob from the black one as he did his best not to face the bear. Bartan just laid with him, stroking and comforting Haytre.

"...I'm so sick of the sound of people giving up..." He muttered.

"...Me too." The white one gave him a soft lick and waited patiently until the dragon was done. "...Let me show you something."

Chapter 8

"How much longer?" The hatchling asked, still trying to keep his balance on the shoulders of the yellow creature. It was a bit harder than it looked while they were walking.

"Long enough." Stratacast growled. Though it made the little one uncomfortable to be around someone angry, he could somehow feel that the anger was not because of the dragon. It was actually directed forwards at the other three ahead of them. Another growl was sent through his throat. "I should be the one leading, not being the rear guard. Let alone babysitting."

It made Dia's ears go low and stay silent for a long time. A faint flutter caught both of their attentions, and the yellow creature stopped in place. Searching it out immediately and following it in the darkness. "What is that?"

"...Just a bird. A small one at that, so nothing that would be worth hunting for food." It didn't stop the little one from still trying to search for it. Let alone see much in the darkness besides the faint glow of the stars in the sky. But no luck.

Still gripping the back of the creature's neck and shoulders, Dia tried to study him in the darkness with his paws. Feeling the creature grumble again made him stop and almost whimper. "...What are you?" He eventually asked, feeling the yellow one try to look at him.

A few moments of silence and Strata exhaled. "I suppose we have a ways to go." He muttered. "Stagg claimed that you're much smarter than you looked. Let alone your age, right?" He felt the little one nod. Returning his sight forwards, he cleared his throat awkwardly. "A long time ago, there was a species called Stratacaster. It was a creature that had a rather... Controlled society."

"Stratacaster...?" Dia'vvid questioned, but seeing a slightly raised paw of the one carrying him.

"I'll get to it. But this society had alot of strict laws and rules. One of them was, when the Stratacaster was born, it was giving a job and a future based on its fur color. The only one you really need to know is Yellow... Being a Family slave."

"Slave...?" The dragon muttered quietly.

"The story begins with a slave by the name of Zoe Jane. One who accepted her future until she seen another family slave named Mythias. The two secretly fell in love, and when Mythias' master found out that they've been sneaking off to see each other, he executed Mythias in front of Zoe."

"He killed him? For...?"

"You cannot question the acts of another species, pup. It's just something you need to accept after a while. The Stratacasters knew no difference, and didn't even turn to assist Zoe. Instead, they attempted to capture and have her executed as well. But she escaped."

The yellow one took another breath. "Zoe left that planet soon after. She eventually found someone to teach her how to defend herself. During those travels in the later years, she came across a pair of artifacts called Bloody Art. These were evil weapons that drove her to revenge against her species, or at least tried. But her humaneity got in the way. So much so those weapons turned on her."

"They forced Zoe to gut herself with the weapons, taking everything negative about her and forcing it into another being. That one was called Deaneil, and she carried that will for revenge against the entire species. Leaving Zoe to attempt a life in a different area."

"Deaneil is your... Master?" The question made Strata silent for a moment. To the point where he didn't answer, and continued his story.

"Deaneil began searching for a way to find Zoe's planet, usually traveling with a group of mercenaries. Stag being one of them." It got the little one to attempt to make out the lizard in the blackness. "While traveling alone and with them, she discovered different... Coincidences kept occurring. One of them was being attacked by giant dog monsters she branded as Houtainion. Mostly one she called Kisama that never seemed to stay dead. She marked it on the neck to assure it was the same one every time."

"That mystery eventually pointed to evidence that Mythias was actually alive. Hunting him down, she discovered that it was him. But getting close, Deaneil could hear his irregular heartbeat. Much like those dogs."

"The Houtainion? What are they?" Dia asked. Strangely, he was understanding everything the stratacaster said. Almost seeing it as if it were a memory within the darkness around them. Even feeling the aches like they were his own.

"They are... The consequence of selling your own soul. You are... Changed into one of them, forced to follow or find someone specific."

"Someone specific...?"

"Upon meeting with Mythias, he changed into one of those dogs. The strongest one. The Alpha, if you will. After this creature's defeat, Deaneil couldn't take the fact that Mythias was a monster. So she denied his metamorphosis, splitting him in two parts, much like she was with Zoe Jane."

"Making him...?"

"Making a separate being out of the negativity of another slave. Everything that Mythias became after death. Deaneil then named that monster after the one thing she loathed. The thing that caused her to lose the one she loved." The yellow one exhaled through his nostrils.

"And the Houtainions?" The little one asked after a bit of silence.

"They followed the Alpha. Which in turn followed her every word. We were the weapons she used to end that species, and do harm to many others. Often getting in the way of others like them." Stratacast motioned in front of him. "I don't blame them for not liking what we do. Let alone what we took away from them. But I'm still partially Mythias, and I need to return to Deaneil."

"And in order to do that, you need to cooperate with them." The dragon felt him nod. "Do you love her?"

The question seemed to stop the yellow one in place, getting Dia to yelp and almost fall off. The echo of the little one stopped the three in front, all staring in Stratacast's direction. A bit of an awkward grunt left him just before he growled at them. "What!" The yellow one barked at the others. Getting them to turn back around and resume walking.

A cross between a grumble and an exhale left his throat while Strata tried to glare at the little one. "Sorry." He whimpered, still feeling the stare. "It's just... You are still Mythias, aren't you?"

"The one who was in love with Zoe Jane, yes. But not Deaneil."

"But Deaneil kept her love for Mythias, even after she separated from Zoe." The stratacaster slowed to a stop. "That's why she was searching for him so zealously. It was even shown in her rusty golden eyes, she loved him." As the yellow one attempted to softly grab the dragon by the back of the neck and hold him in front, he tried to study it in the darkness. After a few moments, Dia started to whimper uncomfortably.

"How...?" The larger one finally asked, but didn't get a response. "Does someone as young as you even know what love is?"

"I know it's a chemical reaction within the brain. It makes people do rather stupid things." Another long silence, and the little one tried to struggle free. Only to be held like a cat, the way his mother used to carry him in her arms.

"You've been around Stagg too long." The yellow one made a sound that was very close to a chuckle, getting Dia to smile.

"It makes my parents happy, I know that much. And from there... It seems to spread. Maybe I've yet to really experience it for myself, but I've been around it enough for it to affect me." Another stare. "My point is, Love isn't something that's either positive or negative. Regardless of what you're actually

constructed of, you and Deaneil are still capable of love."

The larger one didn't respond. "Hey! Come on!" They heard Saber shout ahead of them, and he began walking once again. Soon enough they caught up to them. "Having a pleasant conversation without us?"

"Shut up." The yellow one growled.

"We're almost there. I can see it in the distance over that hill." Stagg stated, still leading the way. With some close study, the dragon could even see a faint glow. Giving the hill ahead a bit of a halo.

"I hope they have some smokes there. I don't like being without them."

"Actually, it might be a good time to finally quit them, Saber." The lizard suggested.

"Please, you thought I had a temper on them, wait until I run out." He grumbled, getting the little one to chuckle.

As the group drew closer, the more they could make out the fortress. Only a few torches were lit on the citadel walls, signifying the main gate. But many more were inside. "It looks... Almost medieval. But it's a shelter."

"Better than that cave. Hopefully they'll even have some decent food. I'm tired of stratacaster jerky." The red one grumbled, getting another growl from the yellow.

"I think everyone is. Let's just hope they're not as hungry as we are."

"Always the optimist, aren't you?" The fox grumbled at the green one as they drew closer to the gate. The dragon could barely see Sinality study the gate a bit, then lightly take off to the left. Disappearing in the darkness. "Where are you going?" Saber asked, not even getting a response. Getting him to sigh. "I dunno why I even bother trying."

"I'm not sure either, but I'm with her. I'll check out around. You guys try to reason with the locals." Stratacast said, tossing the hatchling towards the lizard and getting the little one to yelp loudly.

"Who's there!?" A voice from above shouted while the yellow creature disappeared like the panther.

"I still can't get over how silent his footsteps are like this." The red one grumbled. Gesturing Stagg to do the honors.

Rolling his purple eyes, the green lizard cleared his throat. "Hey there! We're survivors searching for civilization. Any chance we could stay inside these walls?"

The guards began to speak to one another for a while. "What are they? I can't even understand them."

"They're the same as mom." The little one said. Getting the other two to look at him.

"They're human." The green one stated, getting a loud groan from the fox. "Don't give me that, Saber. It's better than the cave. You'll live." The red one just growled again, but didn't argue. "What do you mean your parents are human? Aren't they dragons?"

"He probably just means he was being cared for by them-"

"My dad is a dragon, but my mom is human." The little one whimpered. Though not seeing the two stare at him strangely, he could almost feel it.

"...Or that he's a freak like us. I suppose he fits in quite well, really."

"Well, that would also explain the more human chromosomes within your body." The lizard said, looking back up to the people on top of the wall. "Hello?" He tried to get their attention again.

"Stay there, we're setting up a unit to scan you. How many are in your group?"

"There's three of us." Stagg stated. Getting a look from Saber to fill him in. "They're going to check us out before they let us in."

"Prepare for hostility then." He grumbled, turning to the opening gate and raising his hands half-heartedly.

"Come on, it won't be that bad-"

"Monsters!" One of the guards shouted hysterically. Getting all the others to arm themselves.

As the fox gave the lizard a dirty look, he rolled his eyes. "In a place like this, can you really blame them?"

"I can only try." Saber grumbled sarcastically.

"We're not here to harm you. We're just here for help, that's all."

The guards seemed to whisper to one another, getting the little green dragon curious and turning yellow. "I-it shifts colors, just like the other dragon!" One of them shouted, getting Dia to return to green.

"Other dragon? What other dragon?" The lizard asked, looking between the hostile group and the hatchling.

"Shifts colors? My dad can do that." Dia curled his neck. "But people aren't afraid of him. We've been out in places before, and no one's said anything bad." He whimpered, looking at Stagg again. "People love my dad."

"Don't bother telling me what's going on. I'm pretty sure I can follow." The fox grumbled, though they had a hard time to tell if he was being sarcastic.

"I assure you, we're not here to harm you. We're just looking for a place to stay-" The lizard noticed a guard in the back walking to the others at a quick pace. Whispering to the captain and getting a very strange reaction out of him. "What is it?"

"...The King here wishes to see you." The man grumbled, overlooking his unit and back at the knight. "Men, lower your weapons, but not your guard just yet. We'll escort these three to the throne."

"Why do I not like the sound of this?" The green lizard asked lackadaisically.

"You three, come with us. For now, you are welcomed to Lavendour."

"What do you mean my son just went out? You just seen him withdraw-"

"Atlas, that's not what I meant-" Bartan tried to correct the dragon, but was interrupted again.

"No, that is what you meant. Dia'vidd's inside."

"Atlas-"

"No, Bartan. That is what you meant." The black one growled through his fangs. "You don't mean that our sun has gone out and this world will soon freeze over. Not after everything I went through to-" The black one couldn't finish. Closing his eyes and looking away from the two, he took a few breaths. "Feyon Feyris, go inside."

"Atlas?"

"Just do it. Check to make sure Dia is safe." The wolves knew it was just an excuse to be alone with the bear, and so they didn't argue any further. Entering the castle out of earshot. "Why are you here?"

The question irked the counterweight. "Not because of this-"

"Then why!" The dragon hissed.

Bartan exhaled, looking Atlas in the eyes. "...The Basilica was attacked." The black one curled his neck. "I'm not sure who, but alot of them went missing."

"Could any of them have done something like this?"

"A few, yes. But without a motive, I can't understand why. No, I think this is the result of something else. I came here to visit you, and perhaps ask if you have seen any of them around."

"And not ask me to help you search for them?" Atlas growled, but the bear shook his head.

"No. Just keep an eye out for any of them. Promise." Bartan raised a paw as if to swear by his word. After some study, the dragon slumped his head and wings.

"Why...?" He whimpered. "What could be causing this?"

The white one stroked and hugged the dragon. "I have an idea, but I might as well explain it in front of everyone." The purple eyes found the brown ones, saying that they really didn't want the others to know about this. "Haytre, they're going to find out in a few minutes. It will return to night and start to become very cold. This isn't something you can hide from them." A sigh in defeat. "I know... But..."

"...I might as well show you around while it's still daylight." He grumbled sadly. "Off." The black one demanded, getting a slight chuckle from the furry one. Giving him a few licks to get the dragon to hiss made Bartan sadly smile before letting go. "You are way too affectionate for your own good." He grumbled.

The bear shrugged. "You'd be surprised how much a hug can help." Another chuckle as Atlas tossed his snout and led the way inside. Overlooking the spacious rooms and luxury of the building. "It's very nice. Though the lack of lines between the stones kinda make it look empty."

"That's just something I've gotten used to. After you spend so much time making these makeshift homes, you just don't notice or bother making it look pleasant."

"I would love to spend more time in your homes." It got the dragon to stop and grumble awkwardly.

"T-that's not what I meant!" The dragon hissed with his ears back. Giving them a purple tint when he heard someone in the next room.

"Atlas? We heard you bark outside, is everything okay?" Elexus came around the corner with a few plates in her arms. Yelping and dropping them at the sight of the counterweight. Shattering them when they hit the floor, and getting Tia to yelp in the distance. "Sorry!" She apologized a few times after being stunned at the white creature. "I-I thought you were talking to the... Feys."

"It's alright, Ma'am." The bear said, lifting a paw palm up and getting all the shattered pieces to fly above it. Fitting it all together like a large jigsaw puzzle and sealing them together like before. Even keeping a few of the tiny scratch marks that the hatchling made with his claws. "There, no harm done." He handed the plates to the woman, and she looked at them with a bit of wonder.

"How...?"

"Elexus, you remember when I told you about Bartan." The dragon grumbled, gesturing between the two. "And Bartan, this is Elexus. She would like to have a 'Session' with you." A sly smirk went across his black muzzle as the woman's face turned a bright red.

"Oh?" The bear's ears perked up and looked at her for confirmation.

"A-Atlas..." She tried to speak.

"Told you he existed. And you didn't even believe Tia's word either." He playfully snorted. "How's supper coming along?"

"F-fine." The woman stuttered, then shook her head quickly. "I'm sorry for staring-"

"It's alright, Elexus. You'll have plenty of time to look me over at your own pace later." Again, she was almost glowing.

"This is actually quite amusing when it happens to someone else." Atlas chuckled.

"But I'm afraid I have some grave news that I would like to announce at the table. Can you round up everyone for me?" The white one asked.

"Yes, but Dia is napping right now." She said, leading them to the large table. "Wait here, I'll get the others." The brown haired woman gave the dragon the plates, still trying to compose herself. Though the black one curled his neck at the objects, he didn't argue. Grumbled, but didn't argue.

"She's cute. I can see why you mated with her."

"...She's the one I met when I came back." The bear made a noise in question. "She was a slave, one that escaped from being raped by bandits. And I landed on the one chasing her." Atlas exhaled through his nostrils while placing plates on the table. "Ever since then, I used her to find Tia, but..."

"You feel in love with her too?"

"Not... Really. In the end, I did but-"

"He was accidently mind controlled by her." Tia said, entering the room and getting an awkward grunt from Atlas. "It's nice to see you again, Bartan."

"You too, Oracle. You look well."

"Thanks. You look like you haven't aged a day." She chuckled. "Was there a storm coming Atlas? Seems to be getting dark and cool all of a sudden." She noticed a bit of a sad look in his eyes. "What's wrong?"

"...You'll find out soon, but for now let's just enjoy the meal you two have prepared." He gave her a sad smile, and she lightly sighed. Stroking him on the arm.

"You're not leaving again, are you?" The blonde almost looked towards the bear's direction.

"No. Don't worry." He gave her a lick, and she nodded. Going back to the kitchen while the Kveldulf entered the room. "Have you said anything to them?" The dragon almost whispered.

"No."

"We've remained silent for now."

"But we would like to know what's happening." A head looked at each of them.

"Bartan will explain after dinner. For now, just enjoy it." The yellow eyes of them showed a bit of sadness and worry, but they nodded after a look from each other. Turning to their usual spots on the table and studying the hexaped.

"Do you three have sessions as well?" An embarrassing whimper from the black one as he covered his face with a paw. Resisting the urge to cover himself in his wings.

"I don't like males!" He hissed at the bear in a whisper, getting the wolves to chuckle awkwardly.

"That's not true. You just don't like me-"

"And any other male that's wanted to get under my tail!"

As the counterweight turned to the Feys, he bluntly asked. "Do you want to get under his tail?" It made them take a step back and try to imitate the dragon's neck curl, while Atlas groaned and covered his body with his wings.

"W-we don't take part in their... Sessions. No."

"And we've never tried to-"

"Did you want to try? I'm honestly quite interested in how a Kveldulf performs." The two whimpered, lowering their heads and avoiding eye contact.

"You're obsessed." The dragon grumbled through his wings. Hearing the two women walk in and start laughing. "You try talking to him for five minutes and not turn purple!" He hissed at them, taking a few breaths before coming out.

"You just gotta learn not to let it bother you." Tia teased, bringing out a large roast.

"Yes. You know, act like a dragon, Atlas." Elexus joined in. "We've been trying to get them to join us every once in a while."

"But the Feys are just too shy." The blonde gave them a pet.

"To be honest, I've been quite curious about them as well. And about you too, Bartan." It got the larger white one to perk his ears. "Atlas told me about your session a long time ago."

"Which one?" The bear asked, getting the dragon to groan loudly and everyone to chuckle.

"The one in that mountain full of gold coins, or something. It's been a while since I've heard it."

"That, and everytime you're mentioned, he tends to bottle up and get irritated." Tia went over and started tickling him under his wings. Getting them to flinch a little. "Come on, you. You're going to have to come out sometime."

"I was almost ready to until she made it worse." The dragon grumbled. Atoning to air and hiding the blush that seemed to invade his face. "Happy?"

"Much better. But no magic tricks at the dinner table. You've already done enough damage to Dia's influence." Atlas tossed his snout and made a small knife out of air. Cutting the roast into several sections before tossing it outside a nearby window and hearing the small weapon shatter in the distance.

"Hopefully our cooking will be good enough to suit a god." The brown haired one said, serving the bear.

"Please, I'm a guest before any title like that. Thank you." He accepted the plate. As the group enjoyed their meal, it turned night very quickly. Knowing everyone was itching to find out what was going on, the bear sighed. "As you probably noticed, your sun went out this afternoon." He said a bit sadly.

"You mean, the sun set early?" The blonde asked.

"I'm... Afraid not."

"What does that even mean then? I never heard of such a thing happening before." Elexus asked, seeing Bartan slightly lift a paw for a moment and turning to Atlas.

"You've seen a few of them go out before, haven't you?"

"Very rarely. And even then, I wasn't on long enough to see the results. Are you sure there's not just something blocking it?"

"Positive. But the sun didn't implode or explode. If it exploded, it wouldn't be dark. It just... Disappeared." Bartan pondered for a moment.

"So it's gone?" The left wolf head asked.

"What's going to happen to the planet?" Feyris wondered.

"I don't completely know." The bear answered.

"What do you mean? You know everything!" The now black one grumbled.

"What I mean is, your sun *disappeared*. Nothing really disappears, it's just... Misplaced."

"So you think someone took our sun?" The blonde asked, trying to picture it in the sky.

"Not really. When something happens to a planet that is beyond natural destruction, there is a backup that the Forces can do: Change the location of the solar system and transfer it elsewhere away from the damage."

"Okay, define 'Beyond Natural Destruction.' What would that be?" The dragon curled his neck.

"Well, in Veritas, they were plagued by a species known as the Unborn. It was actually more of an organization made from spawns of a Terrasque."

"Atlas has told us about the Terrasque a bit. Is there one nearby?" Elexus asked.

"Yes and no. But I'll explain that another time. Sometimes when these Unborn were entering Veritas, they would leave lingering holes or Wounds within the fabric-" The dragon sighed heavily, snatching the counterweight's ear. "...Of the universe. Too much damage would cause the planet harm."

"So the planet is trying to transfer?"

"Why now?" The Feys asked.

"It's my fault." Atlas murmured, hanging his head and ears low. As they all studied him silently asking the same question, he sighed again. "Lavendour."

"That city you attacked when..." Elexus said quietly. As the hexaped looked back and forth between them, he seemed to understand. Placing a paw on the dragon's shoulder.

"I'm the one who tore the holes in the universe and caused this."

"Hold on a moment, Atlas." The amethyst eyes looked at the bear. "There's a certain method to this function. When it's done, the people and creatures that inhabit the planet are never aware of it, unless something has gone wrong."

"Like what?" Tia questioned.

"Perhaps something on the after-planet is threatening it to extinction. There must be something wrong with that side that's causing the same process to occur back to here." The bear pondered. "If that's the case, that would explain why we're seeing the sun disappear."

"What can I do to fix it?" The dragon asked, getting the attention of everyone there. "It's my fault, I need to take responsibility for this."

"That's the thing... It's not something you can do." The black one made a noise in question. "There's only one real way to transfer over there safely, and that's..." Atlas motioned him to go on. "Death."

"Death?"

"As in dying?" The Kveldulf whimpered.

"I'm afraid so. If someone dies on this side, they'll wake up in the next world like it was a nightmare. However, if they die in the next world... It's permanent." Bartan said a bit sadly. During the long silence, his attention got to the doorway across the table, but nothing was seen.

"What do we do until then? What if the other planet is harmed or..." The brown haired one worried while getting some of the plates off the table. Tia also started to help her.

"We can't really do anything without permission. But usually there is a small group of people who are capable of transferring back and forth between the worlds. If we can find who it is, then perhaps we can warn them about what's going on. Maybe find out what's happening."

"Where are we going to find someone like that in the dark?" The black one curled his neck.

"Maybe searching through the cities? But..."

"Odds are they'll be in chaos from all of this." Tia thought. "How much time do we have?"

"It's hard to tell. Within a day, most of the plants besides the larger ones will die off. It will start getting very cold, even in places like this. Food would be hard to come by eventually."

"I can do it." Atlas interrupted Bartan. "I can support us, but it might end up taking alot out of me."

"Atlas..." Elexus pet him on the arm.

"Well, I have to do something! There's no telling how we're ever going to find the people who can transfer over!"

"You don't have to find them." Dia said. A dark blue and crawling in a bit sadly. As he looked at everyone in the room slowly, he whimpered. "...It's me."

"What is this place?" Haytre asked, still getting used to the crystal ethereal steps above what almost looked like a cloudy sky. "And where the hell are we?"

"We're outside of a universe. Much like the Terrasque, we're in a space between them. More specifically, mine and Arson's." The bear explained, leading the way to a large doorway.

"Arson? Your wife?" The dragon questioned, still looking around the area.

"Yes. We built this to remember where our original forms came from. For those who've helped us, let alone proved that change can be the outcome to great things." He felt the black one's puzzled stare behind him, making Bartan chuckle. "Counterweights were always forbidden to create things past a set of rules. To break them and experiment was Taboo, until one of them did it. That resulted in Veritas, even though the Counterweight was locked away for such a thing."

"Veritas... I still don't understand what that is."

"Veritas was a Multiverse. A large universe made of three divisions. It was created without many boundaries, and was self-sufficient. It did not rely on a Terrasque to power it, and overall was much more stable. Able to withhold alot, unlike most universes that nearly shatter in the presence of an Outbreak."

"What does this place have to do with...?" As the two got up closer to a large building, inside was a single room. One filled with real life statuettes of many different creatures. "What are these?"

"Veritas was locked away after development, and before the Counterforce could discover it, let alone dispose of it. When the creator was imprisoned, its universe still grew and evolved, regardless of the

wars within it. But a Terrasque was still able to feel it from afar. In order to keep it safe, we needed to reinforce the barrier so that not even the Terrasque's spawns could reach nor detect it. But doing that, we were also unable to enter it."

"And these...?" The dragon took a closer look at another black dragon standing upright. Green eyes, and platinum underside which looked more like plate armor than scales.

"These are the... Heroes, I guess, of Veritas. I wanted to give them the ability to explore outside their universe, and so they can exit through these statues." Bartan looked over one of a large white werewolf.

"Why show me this?" Haytre started looking over a few of them, eventually seeing a polar bear in the back, causing his ears to flatten against his head and spines to raise up. "Really? You put yourself in this?"

The bear laughed out loud and shook his muzzle. "I know, it's a bit misleading, but that's the very first Bartan. I'm made from his after image."

"And I thought you couldn't get any more confusing." The dragon grumbled. "But seriously, why?"

The counterweight looked over at a similar sized T-Rex. "They hold a lot of wisdom, you know. Experience. They've all been through so much, possibly even as much as you have."

The black one tossed his snout. "Please. You just told me I lived through over four thousand lives."

"Yes, but..." He shrugged. "I wanted to show you this because, regardless of how they look, they're all very much alive. You can view any one of their stories within a few seconds, or in real time to further understand where they're coming from. You can even talk with them, get some guidance. I have a few times, and so has many others." Looking over a large Charr-like creature in a bit of a baggy sneaking suit, the bear sighed. "I built this Basilica because I didn't want to forget any of them."

"You want me to...?"

"Look into them. Perhaps you might find someone that you connect with, you're bound to really. And you can learn a lot from them, I'm sure."

As the dragon looked about, he saw one that looked a bit familiar. A large purple beast with green cargos, black horns and jacket, and rainbow iris'. "I-is... That!?" He almost hissed, getting the bear to look over and laugh again.

"Yes, Dehoken. You probably heard him from a different name."

"Rex, he told me." The black one grumbled loudly, covering his face with a paw. "Why the hell is this idiot in here!?"

"It's where he's originally from. His story is a bit different than what you'd expect."

"I think I'll pass. I don't think I've ever been more frustrated with this Nuisance than anyone." Again the bear chuckled. "How would I come back here?"

"I can teach you how through your Atonements, but if they are disabled, there's not going to be much I can do." The dragon exhaled through his muzzle. "I know this... Endless loop is hard for you. But... If you can learn how to respect life as a whole, including the life you've been given... I'll tell you what happened."

The purple eyes gazed on him. "...You mean it?"

"Yes. But you can't give up. You're this way for a reason." The white one slightly chuckled at Haytre's snout toss.

"I'm this way because you want to have a portable sex toy that you can visit."

Bartan gave him a lick. "Besides that." And a sad smile. "I'll let you explore at your own will. Just don't trash the place."

"Fine, fine." Haytre snorted. Once again overlooking many of the statues, but returning to the black and platinum dragon from before. "...What is your story?"

Chapter 9

"I have a very very bad feeling about all this." Saber grumbled while the three were escorted by the

series of guards through the hallway before the throne.

"I think we all do." Stagg mumbled, still half trying to protect the little dragon in his arms from getting a lot of nasty stares.

"I still have eight bullets, just say the word and I can get us out of here."

"Only to have the rest of them know where we are. It's not a solution."

"Then what do you expect us to do? Wait until they decide to execute us publicly?"

"Let's just see what this king wants. You never know, he might just want some answers-" The green lizard suddenly whimpered, staring through the doorway. "Oh no." He sighed defeat, placing his free hand over his eyes. Getting the other two to look at him with worry, and then towards the closed door.

As the guards opened it, they seen another unit aiming their weapons towards their king, who was being held hostage by a black panther. "Fuaaa... Really?" Saber sighed like the green one did before.

The guards in the throne never looked more stressed, and the appearance of even more strange creatures to them was just adding to it. Holding a sharp needle to the king's throat, the panther almost had the man in a headlock. Gripping the back of his neck faintly with her claws.

As Stagg passed over the hatchling to the red canine, he nervously cleared his throat. "Sinality? What are you doing?"

"Inviting us in." The king said, though his voice was filled with fear. Even the look in his eyes claimed he spoke no such thing willingly. "Humans need to know their place to begin with."

"And don't you think that they'll be more unwilling to help us if you hold their leader hostage?" The lizard grumbled nervously. Wondering what the others were thinking of this.

"If we show them our strength, they will submit to our demands much easier than attempting to appeal to them." The king said, though it was the panther's eyes staring directly into Stagg's.

"She's right, you know." Saber shrugged. Getting a glare from the lizard.

"This isn't the correct way to do this-"

"Look around you. You honestly expect there's a morally correct way to earn their trust? Straight from the gate they label you as a monster. Even the little one." Dia lowered his ears and head. Looking at the fox for a bit of an explanation.

"Kid, you would never believe how much she really hears."

"T-the King has been possessed!?" One of the new guards shouted.

"He's not possessed. She's just speaking through his fear." Stagg informed them, trying to keep everyone composed.

"It's interesting how you're so resistant to this method, Stagg. Considering what you tried to take away from others within Veritas." The king almost whined, making the lizard's face cross.

"...I did what I had to do-"

"And what exactly were you trying to prove? That people were abusing their power? That they didn't deserve such responsibility? That they didn't deserve to rule?"

The green one didn't answer for a bit. "...What do you want me to say? That Ricon didn't deserve the lands he fought for? The guy was a Tyrant-"

"You never seemed to understand Lord Ricon, nor his ambitions. And you were the last one to have seen him after the escape from the Counterforce!"

The green one sighed through his nostrils. "Sinality... I know he didn't return to Veritas-"

"Along with Lady Destiny." A cold stare from the feline.

"But I had nothing to do with their disappearance."

"Yet you alone knew how to destroy him." There was another tense silence in the room.

"...He's not dead. Nor destroyed, that I know of. He's bound to be out here somewhere, but we'll never get the chance to find out if we don't find out what's going on. And in order to do that, you need to stop this hostage situation. You know very well that drastic measures like this don't end well-"

"For them. Not for us."

"...Do you want to find him or not?" Stagg asked a bit harshly, not getting a response from her. "If you kill him, you might lose Ricon forever. There's no telling where we are, we could be in a black hole for all we know-" He gasped suddenly, trying to look out a window. "No... We're not in a black hole, we're in a temporary space..."

"What?" Saber looked at him.

"That's why we haven't found anything. It's all coming from a different planet." Once again, everyone stared at him while the fox motioned for him to go on. "Um... Remember the time that Downe was a teacher for like a highschool-"

"You'll have to be a little more specific." The red one grumbled as his ears went back.

"The sun went out there." A slight curl in his neck, then it clicked in his eyes. "On that planet, everything was being sent away. We're currently on the receiving planet of a transfer elsewhere." The lizard said, turning to the captain of the guards. "You said you were attacked by a dragon?"

"Yes-"

"What happened there?"

The man looked at him strangely, but a bit of pain in his eyes was shown as he faintly remembered. "It attacked us during the night, tearing down our walls. Our weapons eventually took it down, and we celebrated our victory for a while. But..."

"It got back up after a few hours." Another soldier added. "And we..." They all began to look at each other, seeing if anyone else remembered the nightmare of them dying at the hands of the color shifting beast.

"You died." They nodded at Stagg. "How long ago was this? How long have you been in this darkness?"

"We cannot tell."

The green one looked around. "Those candles. How many times have you replaced them?"

"What?" A man questioned.

"They last for about ten hours before needing to be replaced. And I'm assuming you've always had this room lit regardless." Another nodded at him.

"I-I think maybe eight times?" The King stated, still being held by the panther.

"So around eighty hours. Over three days." Stagg pondered. "...Release him."

"What?" The king harshly questioned unwillingly.

"If we're on the receiving end, then that means death here is permanent. If you kill him, he's not going back to their original planet. They're gone completely-"

"I still don't see how that's our problem." Saber grumbled, getting a harsh look from the green one and the hatchling. "What?"

"There's no telling what's going on, this fort might be the safest place on this planet right now. Let alone, the strongest against whatever else might be inhabiting the earth. We haven't seen anything so far in the darkness, but only on the surface." Dia looked at him, then the ground. "Let him go, killing him

gives us nothing."

"And letting free gives him his life back. And their leader." The hatchling whimpered.

"Way to go, kid. Playing the innocent hatchling card." His little blue eyes met with the fox's in confusion. "Nevermind."

"His death won't resolve anything. And the last thing we need right now is another enemy besides hunger." Stagg said, waiting through the long silence. Then the panther withdrew the thin weapon, and lightly shoved the man forward. Getting his guards to surround and escort him outside the throne room. A wave of relief washed over them as they met up with Sinality. "You made the right choice. And we will find Lord Ricon-"

"Archers! Form Up!" The captain of the guards shouted from behind them, getting the attention of the four. Ten soldiers with bows lined up in formation in front of the group in a Firing Squad style.

"Frakking humans!" The fox barked loudly, tossing the hatchling in the air towards Stagg and drawing out his pistols. Aiming one forward at the archers, and the other to the right wall.

"On My Mark!"

"Don't kill them, Saber!" The green one hissed.

"You picked a very bad time to get all Goody Goody on us!"

"You don't know what it will do to this world!"

"Take Aim!"

"Fine! Get to the side room!" Saber shouted, firing the gun pointed at the wall and ricocheting the bullet to pass directly through each archer's forward knee and disabling them.

"What did I just say!?"

"They're not dead! Get moving!" The two growled at each other while another group of guards began to chase them into the next room. Further down the hall, they met a flanking group of crossbowmen behind a barricade of tower shield soldiers. With Sinality in the lead, she drew out several needles and threw them upwards in an arc. Disappearing in a faint cloud of black smoke, she teleported behind the archers in half plate mail. Striking two of them at a time in pressure points, she snatched a needle from the air and pinned it in the back of a man's neck. Even with her feet.

When one of the shield carriers spotted her and shouted, the others broke their formation. Trying to draw out a weapon, but were flanked by the fox. Trying to preserve bullets, Saber kicked them heavily in the helmets and used the hilt of the guns when he needed to. "The longer we stay inside the fortress,

the worse off we are." Stagg said, knocking down a few statues behind them to attempt to slow the other guards down. "They have the field advantage."

"What does that mean?" The dragon asked, trying to hold onto the lizard's arm and not be an inconvenience.

"They know this place inside and out, whereas we don't have a clue where we're going." The red one growled.

"But Sinality went through here, how did she do it?" Dia's idea got them to look at the panther for a moment. Tossing her snout quickly, she beckoned in the direction they were heading into. Meeting a few units of guards along the way.

Through the long corridors, the four came to the upper balcony of a large assembly room. Big enough to almost fit half the city of civilians and the entire kingdom. Three stories high, the little one noticed the extension of the building when they were walking towards the kingdom, but never understood what it was for. "What is this place?" The little one asked, as the three began to engage with another unit of guards.

The question came out of nowhere, almost breaking Stagg's concentration as he took on a guard with Dia in one hand. As the guard took a swing at the lizard while he faced the small one, the green one parried it with his bare arm. Hitting the guard in the nose with an open hand, and then striking at a rib that left the man breathless due to an old wound. "It's a large room for the king to make announcements to his people about-"

"Seriously!" Saber growled, grabbing a guard's wrist and kicking him in the side of the ribs. Then putting that foot on the side of the man's helmet, putting pressure on the neck. "Pick a better time to educate the kid, will you!?" The fox then took a shot at a tower shield another guard was holding, getting the bullet to bounce off of several helmets, ceasing the ones hit to move. As Stagg gave him another 'What did I just say!?' look, the red one tossed his snout. "They're alive! You don't trust my aim?"

"No!" He bluntly responded, getting the little one to chuckle. "No more guns!" A loud growl from the fox as several piercing noises came from Sinality's direction. Noticing several needles that impaled the plated armor of the guards. "Or Needles! Damnit Guys!"

"They'll live, quit complaining!" Another giggle from the hatchling. Though his scales were a dark green, he couldn't help himself. As the group moved forward a little ways more, the panther pointed up to a small window to the third balcony. "...Really? You want us to climb up there?"

"I can only imagine what's on the other side." Stagg grumbled, as the two males got a glare from the feline. "I know, I know. We asked."

"What do we do now, leader?" The fox asked sarcastically.

"Um... Guys?" Dia got their attention, as he tried to climb on the lizard's broad shoulder. "Weren't we being followed by some of those shiny guys?"

The group looked behind them, seeing a few more guards drag the unconscious and paralyzed away, but not engaging the three. "I have a bad feeling about this."

"I think everyone does, Saber." The group could hear marching coming from afar and on the first floor. Soon enough, a large number of archers and crossbowmen started to line up in formation quickly. Aiming at the group. "Uh... How many bullets did you have left?"

"This is going to be one hell of a trick shot." The red one grumbled, taking aim at one of them.

"The ground is still stamping." The little one whimpered, looking down and trying to follow where it's coming from.

"What do you mean 'stamping'?"

"Shaking?" Stagg asked the dragon, and he nodded. "...He's right, but it's coming from..." He followed the ground with the hatchling, leading to the opposite end of where the army was. The back end of the castle. "...Against the wall-Against the wall-Against the wall!" He shouted, trying to push them to cover and shielding the hatchling. Even the men below began to feel the earth shake and a loud roar come from the wall they were aiming at. A moment later, the wall caved in. Along with a four story tall purple rottweiler.

Another deafening roar from the beast shattered any glass in the room, from the windows to the chandeliers, and sent many of the guards retreating. A large vulcan chaingun ripped out of each shoulder, spraying bullets wildly around the men, but not hitting them. "God Damn That's Loud!" Shouted Saber, covering his ears while they got showered by the hot metal shells of the bullets.

"Get On!" The huge beast growled, as the barrels of the large machine guns spun to a stop. Glowing red and emitting a faint smoke. The group began to climb on the purple dog, and then it backed out of the Assembly. The little one witnessed the destruction that he felt through the ground earlier, a huge chunk of the citadel wall was blown into the city and scattered in one solid direction. Along with the damage to a few other buildings along the way.

"Stratacast, you can't kill anyone! Be careful where you step!"

"Are you serious?"

"I pretty much asked the same thing." Grumbled the fox.

"Why?" The purple dog almost demanded. Then heard several siege weapons on the walls ready themselves. Tearing out a large cannon from his side, Stratacast took aim at it.

"You just can't! I'll explain later, but if you do, you could mess up this entire planet!"

"I think he's already made a mess." Dia tried to grumble like the fox, receiving a bit of a smirk from the red one. Then Sinality jumped on the barrel of the cannon, ran to the very edge and leaped off. Vanishing in a thin smoke and reappeared on the wall. She disabled the guards, and sabotaged the ballista, then ran to the next one.

"Looks like she's going to cover us against the wall-" A few arrows stuck into the dog's side and he growled, more like it was a nuisance rather than painful. Several units of men fired a few more arrows from where the wall was broken down. "And we're cut off from that exit."

"Then I'll just make another." The purple beast stated, as it began to run forward with such raw power. Stepping in wide streets, a few units of guards tried to cut them off. But they avoided Stratacast's path and didn't risk being stepped on.

Meanwhile, on the wall, the panther was knocking out every guard that was tending to the siege weapons. Then lightly disabling them with swiftness. As the Houtainion bolted through the city, the hatchling riding him was trying to make out where he was. The structures of the buildings looked familiar to him, much like the cities his mother used to take him to. His thoughts about the past were interrupted by an upcoming wall Stratacast was charging towards, and the little one let out a loud whimper. Bracing for a rough ride, much like how his father landed once in a while.

The dog rammed the outer wall with his shoulder. The impact was massive, as the beast got next to nothing for resistance against the wall. The stone and bricks shattered, and much of the outer wall nearly followed through. Dragging his large paws through the debris, the purple beast took a sharp turn along the wall, slowing down towards the corner. **"Sinality!"** He called, and the panther jumped down and landed with the rest of the group.

"You do realize that we just made two doors for whatever the hell might be out there to get in, right?" Saber grumbled at the lizard, and he let out a defeated sigh as Stratacast began running into the darkness.

"...They should've just cooperated with us. I just hope I'm wrong, and that there's nothing else out here." The green one exhaled, looking back.

"Perhaps it's their fate to go extinct." The dog stated. **"Just like Ricon used to say: Those Who Do Not Change Are Doomed To Be Forgotten."**

"As much as I hate to agree with anything Ricon has to say, he's right. Their fear is what will end them."

"They're not all bad, Saber." The fox just rolled his eyes. "They're not."

"Whatever, Stagg. What's the plan now?"

They remained quiet for a few moments, and Dia almost whimpered. Looking towards the sky in the distance, he swore he could see something in the distance glowing. "...What is that?" He asked, getting the rest to search for it.

"Is that...?"

"It's a..." The glow began to brighten drastically, hurting the eyes of everyone that got so used to the darkness. "It's a sun?"

The black one stared out into the darkness of the sky, still being able to see many of the stars from under the veranda. But very slowly, those lights were dissipating. 'Being transferred over' is how the bear put it. He's been on this side of things before, but never cared enough about anyone to attempt to save them. And now that he does have something to protect...

Once again, he sighed heavily in defeat. Feeling once again helpless to do anything about the fate of those around him. It drove him mad, to the point where he was reminded of the attempt to transfer over by the stickiness of dried blood under his paws. Of course such a thing would fail. This dragon was unbound by the laws of death, the Force wouldn't be able to take him to help his son.

His ear flickered as he picked up the soft footsteps of a woman. Atoning to fire, he lit the many torches that outlined the large steps. Though he didn't really want to be with another right now, he didn't want one of them to get hurt coming down the steps. "I thought I'd find you out here." Tia said, sadly smiling at him when their eyes met. Though the dragon didn't respond, he opened a wing for her and invited her in.

As she accepted, she stroked his side. But stepped into the sticky mess on the ground. She looked at it a bit concerned, and then at the large one for an explanation. "...I tried to... Pass over." He mumbled. Getting a soft hand on his muzzle. "This is driving me insane..."

"We're all worried about him." She said, stroking around his eye. "But there's nothing we can do for him other than let him sleep. Hopefully he can find out what's causing this."

"It's just... He's not even a year old." Atlas let out a tear.

"I know..." She whispered heavily, hugging his muzzle while trying to keep herself from crying. As his large wings shielded them from the cold air, they consoled each other while the bear looked down at them from afar. Sighing himself, and returning inside.

Following through room to room searching for something. Giving a sad smile to an empty space while he laid down against the wall. Leaning into something a bit soft. "It scares you, doesn't it?"

Two heavy sighs came from the room, as the Kveldulf began to appear. "We didn't think we could get away from someone like you."

"Judging by the stories that Atlas has told."

"Only good ones I hope." The bear gave them a smile, expecting the embarrassed look from them and chuckling. He knew that the dragon wasn't fond of him. "Are you afraid?"

The yellow eyes studied him for a moment, and nodded faintly. "Terrified."

"We've spent centuries just surviving. Doing anything we possibly could to avoid death."

"But alas... It's inevitable, isn't it?"

"Pretty much." The bear mumbled sadly. "It's natural for things to end. It's a wonder how long you've lasted, to be honest."

"We've... Been..." The left head started, but didn't finish.

"Deceitful, as horrible as that sounds. We do what we need to, in order to live."

"That's understandable." He gave the two headed beast a stroke on the mane. "And I'm sure they would understand such things as well. People tend to be greedy for power, and well... That makes an issue when it comes to trust." A small nuzzle from the bear. "But you must know that they would never attempt such a thing."

"We do."

"It's the reason why we felt so much more at ease here. We haven't left this island since Atlas found it and brought us here." Feyon said, a bit uncomfortably.

"Do you miss the outside world?" They looked into his brown eyes, then at each other.

"...We miss some things. Snow for one."

"Our noses get so dry in this heat. It'd be nice to go somewhere cooler for a change."

"But... We don't miss being... Hunted." The larger one nodded.

"Chased and afraid for our lives. Never being able to rest."

"It nearly exhausts us just remembering it." The two took a breath. Still getting a bit uncomfortable.

"You don't like affection too well?" The two whimpered awkwardly at each other.

"It's... Not quite that."

"We always found it rather harsh to find a relationship that we could trust in."

"Let alone..."

"Ah..." Bartan nodded his head. "You haven't found a female of your species for a long time."

"...Yes. And to attempt it with another species..."

"Is more than a bit awkward." Feyris whimpered. "We can understand their motive and reasoning. But to participate in such a thing..."

"I understand what it's like to be shy about such things. But... You understand that they want you to join them, not because they're just interested, but because they value you as part of their family. They trust you two, as much as you trust them, and they want to share a gift to you."

"But... To give into such things, isn't that forbidden?"

"Or decadent?"

"If the reason behind it is for arousal only. But if you care for them, and they care for you enough to give such a consent, then there's nothing sinister about it. It's a form of love, as a comforting gesture or a hug. Even a kiss." Another awkward whimper got the bear to chuckle. "I won't force anything on you two. Because if you don't come to it on your own terms, you'll never enjoy such a thing. But if you're indecisive, it won't hurt to try. If you don't enjoy yourself, then they will never suggest it again."

"Um... Then..." The large one made a noise in question.

"You tend to push Atlas into..." A bit of a loud chuckle came from the Counterweight.

"Why do I do it so much with him?" They nodded. "To be completely honest, and he's not going to like

that I said this, but he enjoys it." They curled their necks at him. "But he doesn't like the fact he enjoys it. That's why Atlas is very... Aggressive against the topic. But really, he enjoys himself regardless of how it happens." Another chuckle. "I admit, sometimes I get a bit too affectionate towards him, but only because he reminds me of my husband."

"Y-your?"

"Husband?" The bear nodded.

"He's a dragon as well. Quite a bit bigger than Atlas, but alot of dragons tend to carry the same traits." A smile crept over his muzzle. "It's often that I don't make it back home in long stretches, and well... I tend to miss Beo alot. Perhaps I push it on Atlas a bit, but I'm trying to get him to welcome all sides. Embrace the part of him that enjoys attention, no matter where it's coming from."

"And the Oracles?"

"They've been helping him just get used to another species. Let alone one that's open minded. They have a form of influence over him that he will at least consider, though he claims it's a form of manipulation, it's still him making the decision himself." Another nuzzle from Bartan. "When I seen he was living with another male, I was hoping that he had gotten over this denial of his."

"You mean with us?" The large one nodded.

"But..."

"He respects you two. You guard his home, his mates, and his son. Three things he values more than anything right now." The Kveldulf looked at each other. "Again, he doesn't like to show it because he's afraid to show affection to the same sex. I would like him to get over that fear, but he won't do it with me."

"I heard you took... Advantage of him."

"Elexus half told us the story."

"That... Was part of the reason why he won't listen to me. But I was trying to cure him of an addiction that would've lead to an even worse downfall." The bear sighed. "I cleansed him, but he never forgave me for how I did it. And yes, I do enjoy sessions with him. But every time I do, it never seems to change his mind about this." Bartan exhaled through his muzzle.

"What exactly would you expect us to do?"

"As you can probably figure out, we're unfamiliar with such... Exercises."

"We're planning to have a session tonight in a while. Just consider joining us, the Oracles will teach

you as you go. And don't worry about making pups with them this time. I'll ensure that this is just for pleasure and fun." One last smile and nuzzle from the large one as he got up. "There's no reason to feel embarrassed or shy about this, it's among close friends and loved ones. Even if you decide not to join in, there will be no hard feelings."

The two nodded as the bear left. Still feeling rather awkward about such things, they did look at each other for a bit to come up with an answer... Or an excuse.

The room was silent but filled with the deep breaths of a hatchling in slumber. Along with the occasional sniff from the woman sitting on the bed. Yes, she tried to rest, but just thinking about what's going on with him kept her restless. She understood that Dia'vidd wasn't hers, that he carried nothing for DNA, whatever that term actually meant to the adult dragon. She knew she wasn't the real mother, but the little one was raised by her, along with everyone else here. Elexus couldn't help but feel connected with him, as if Dia did somehow absorb part of the woman throughout the year.

Another heavy sigh from her and a sniff. She was trying to keep herself together, but remembered the last time she lost someone close to her. Lucky enough that it was someone who would revive himself a few hours afterward, but those painful hours she went through. It was something she couldn't bring herself to go through again. And if they lost this little one...

She caught a hold of the sob in her throat, forcing it back down. For now, all she could do was be strong. Believe in him. Convince herself that Dia took after his father, and would keep getting back up if he got knocked down. That the little hatchling within the crib was as strong as iron, regardless of age. Because he took after the strongest person she knew.

"Is he asleep?" The dragon's soft whisper came from the doorway. Greeting the purple eyes in the darkness with a sad smile as the woman nodded.

"He's been asleep for a while." She whispered back. Getting up to hug the larger one's muzzle. "I suppose that's for the better, but..."

"I know. I worry about him too. However, worrying will only make us worse off." Atlas sighed through his nostrils. "...I'm going to try to get some rest. Later, I'll start making some... Preparations for our survival. Just in case." She nodded, giving him a few pets. "You should come as well."

"In a few minutes. I just... Want a little more time." She felt him nod and he backed out. Going into the next room. Once again, the woman took a seat on the bed and listened to the little one's breathing.

Chapter 10

The castle looked and felt so gloomy in the darkness. Though a lot of the information the bear explained to its residents did seem a little dark, the night itself really made it difficult to follow the faint noises in the distance. Eventually leading the white bear into the kitchen that was lit up with a few lanterns. "Here I thought everyone went to sleep." Bartan said, getting the attention of the blonde working with the dishes.

"Yes, I think we're all a bit stressed right now. Possibly too much on our minds for us to rest well." The bear nodded, walking up to her and helping the woman clean. "N-no, you don't need to do that Bartan."

"It's alright. I don't mind, though it's been a while since I've done it the old fashioned way." He gave a smile as he dried off the plates that were used that day. "I'm sorry about all this. It seems like everytime I visit, something bad happens."

"It's not your fault. I know that you're looking out for him." The white one nodded. "Do you love him?"

The bear chuckled. "He reminds me of the one I love. To a degree I love him as well, though I know he doesn't think the same about me. Sometimes you just need someone to blame for all the wrongs. I'm content with being that person."

"Is that the reason why he doesn't speak very kindly about you?"

"Actually... That's a different reason."

"Is it because you raped him?" The large one double took, getting Tia to giggle at his surprised

expression.

"Please, don't say that!" He couldn't help but chuckle with her. "I know he's told it in a negative connotation, but I never raped him. I was just trying to make him see what love really was."

"What love really was?"

"Yes. He was... Confused, let's say. Thinking he was in love with valuables, but really he was just trying to numb his pain of loss. Perhaps it wasn't the greatest way of doing such things, but..." She placed a hand on the large one's arm.

"If it brought him back on track, then I'm thankful for what you've done." The bear smiled, giving the woman a soft lick on the cheek.

"Thank you. I suppose we should get some sleep."

"That is if we can get our minds off of what's going on."

"That's actually a bit easier than you'd think." Tia made a noise in question. "Well, I know he was joking around, but Atlas mentioned that Elexus wanted a session with me. And well, I was thinking if everyone joined in, it would be a nice change. Perhaps get us all to relax a bit more." Another quiet giggle from the woman as she started to blush.

"I thought Atlas was joking about how opened you were." She teased.

"I'm not hearing a No." He smiled at her, getting another giggle from down the hall as well. "What do you think of Elexus?"

As the brown haired woman came into view of the light, her face was a bit red as well. "I'm not sure what to say, to be honest. It's rare that we've had conversations about such things with guests."

"That's a shame. It's a rather interesting topic, I'd think. Though perhaps not the best for other people who think it's a bit..."

"Forbidden to try such acts? That's what they've told us in the schools, in exclusive detail at that." Tia chuckled.

"Really? Then why did you do it with Atlas?" The bear teased again.

"Because I fell in love with him. And he was worth it."

"I think so too. Though..." A noise in question from the bear as Elexus took a moment to drink.

"Atlas has been very timid about going too far with it."

"It as in...? Penetration?" The two women laughed at Bartan's blunt question.

"Yes. I guess he's afraid of having another kid."

"And I did get sick several times while carrying Dia. He's probably worried about losing one of us."

"Well, carrying a different species can have some drastic effects. Especially when it comes to birth. But that's no reason to miss out. You two must have synced in cycles by now, haven't you?"

"Yes, but he won't believe such things. Will sooner castrate himself than attempt something like that again."

"Hmm." The beast pondered. "Well, maybe this will be your lucky night. I can ensure that there will be no pregnancy tonight. That should convince him."

"You think so?"

"I'm sure it will. But while we're on the subject, was there anything you'd like changed about him?" The bear asked, walking down the halls alongside the women.

"What do you mean?"

"Anything increased, decreased, or just removed? I could also do something else like give him a knot if you'd like that."

"Knot? You mean that swelling..." Tia asked through her giggles, getting the large one to nod.

"I'm not sure about any of that, Bartan. But..." The brown one looked at the Blonde.

"We were thinking a while back if he had a little bit more..." More blushing as Bartan perked his four ears widely. "He releases enough, but just..."

"Not enough for two?" They nodded.

"And not really much during either." Elexus said a bit quietly. "Is there anything you can do about that?"

"Hmm." Another ponder from the large one. "I could increase his capacity, letting him produce more and then release in faint spurts. It will make a mess though, and it might hurt him if he's not tended to properly."

"What does that mean? Stroking him off more often?"

"Not really. More like, once you start, you better finish him. If you leave it, the pressure might build up

and... Be discomforting." The two women looked at him strangely. "I'll show you tonight, think of it as a trial. If you're more satisfied, then I'll make it permanent."

"And if we're not?" Tia chuckled.

"Then more tests will be needed, and I'll have to extend my stay. Perhaps even work overtime." The three laughed quietly as they approached the dragon's chamber. Giving the symbol to be silent as they opened the door and snuck in. Hearing the black one slumber within the torchlight. A few steps closer got the dragon to grumble a bit and flick his ear. Slowly lifting his head to turn around and see who entered the room, but releasing a loud yelp when the bear grabbed his haunches and slid him over closer. Turning him sideways and lifting the hind leg while pinning him.

"Let go of me!" Atlas hissed loudly, trying to wrestle with the white one.

"Relax, I'm just making some changes." Bartan said, gesturing the women around the tail and within a clear view of the dragon's stones.

"Changes!?" He hissed again, only to yelp at the slight grip on the obsidian pouch.

"Alright, tell me how much more you want him to have. I'll go slow." A whimper from the black one as he felt his scrotum began to tighten. Slowly stretching the pouch to about a quarter more of its original size. "How's that?"

"It's not much bigger-" Elexus studied it from afar.

"What the hell are you talking about!?" Another growl as the blonde came up to his head. "What is going on?"

"We're just... Adjusting you a little bit." Tia said, getting the dragon to try to curl his neck. "We want you to have a little bit more... Um."

"Pre and releasing ability." Bartan finished her off. "And this seemed like the perfect opportunity to do some changes."

"Changes?"

"It's not like you aren't magnificent enough already, but... It'd be nice if we didn't have to share so much, is all." Elexus tried to explain. "Can you make it bigger?"

"Mhmm." More pressure in the lower area made Atlas grunt and whimper. Stopping when the sack reached about 150%. "How's that? From here, he'll start leaking out quite a bit after a few minutes of stroking."

"Looks big enough to me." Tia said, getting a bit of a sad look from the purple eyes. "Relax. This isn't

meant to hurt your ego."

"The damage has been done." He snorted, getting the woman to giggle. "If they're changing me, then I want something from them."

"Oh?" The bear perked his ears.

"No more kids. I don't want them to have any more hatchlings." Bartan looked at him a bit sadly, then over to Tia. The woman nodded like she agreed, but getting over to Elexus, her expression was unsure.

"Tonight's session will not result in pregnancy regardless, but are you sure Elexus?"

"...If it's what he wants. I'll give it up." Another sad look from the white one as his ears dropped. Sighing through his nostrils, he looked into Atlas' eyes for a moment.

"What if instead, I made you sterile?" It perked the dragon's ears.

"You can do that?" Those ears then went flat against his head. "Why didn't you do that before!?"

"I can. And I think I will, for this lifetime anyway. What do you two think?" He looked at the women. "That way you can ride him as much as you like, and he can live stressing over one hatchling instead of a litter."

"I'd like that." The blonde gave them a smile.

"Yes, I wouldn't mind carrying for Atlas, but only if he would want to..." The other woman stroked under the dragon's hind paw. Getting it to flinch slightly as it tickled.

"Alright then, this might sting." A faint whimper from the dragon, followed by a large one as what almost felt like a shock went through his lower area. "There, you feeling okay?"

"Other than the bear grabbing my stones, I'm fine." He grumbled. Getting the white one to look at them again.

"I can fit more in there, if you girls like. Might as well overdo it and see what the limit is like."

"What? No-!"

"He's got a point." Tia smiled deviously at the dragon.

"Tia." The black one growled.

"It can't really hurt to try, can it?" Elexus asked, getting another whimper from the dragon as he tried to struggle free a bit.

"If there's any damages, I'll ensure they are repaired." The bear promised. Getting a nod from the women before working on the dragon's pouch once again. Getting a few more groans as the sack stretched out and became more full. Getting Atlas to whimper loudly while clawing at the air and squirm until it reached about 175% of the scrotum's normal size. Panting loudly as the bear let go, allowing the black one to sit up and look at the swollen area.

"Does it hurt?" Elexus questioned, touching it and feeling the tightness like a large balloon filled with thick water.

"Not really. But that's going to get in the way." The dragon grumbled, staring down Bartan.

"Don't worry, once it's released, it will remain about your normal size. Just be sure to empty him when you start teasing him. That'll be your job." He nudged the Oracles.

"What was the purpose of this?" He growled in the bear's face.

"To satisfy them a little more." Atlas didn't release his glare. "...And me too, I suppose." The white one shrugged, looking towards the two females. "Do you mind if I take the honors?"

"Go ahead." Tia teased the dragon, scratching under his jaw and nearly paralyzing him.

"Honors for wha-Ughhh." Within seconds he filled the room with purrs, getting everyone to smile at him. As the white one looked at Elexus for permission, she nodded and his muzzle leaned down. Brushing over the dragon's black sheath, already feeling the weapon within harden. Within the mix of purrs was a faint whimper and him trying to speak. "Keep... Him... Away... Tailhole..." It got the blonde to laugh once she made out what he was trying to say.

"You heard him Elexus, you can play around that area for him."

"That's... Not...!" Another whimper as the brown haired one began to tickle the outside of the area. Still being cautious of the large pouch above it and the dragon's talons that were still trying to squirm out. As the bear's soft tongue began to slowly squeeze inside the sheath, another loud whimper came from Atlas.

It only took a few moments for that weapon to fully lengthen within the white muzzle. With the slippery tongue caressing it, the purrs were constantly ending in a whimper. Getting the black one to keep leaning forwards like he was going to sneeze. With a quick and rapid focus on the ridges, Atlas braced harshly, breaking out of Tia's hold and grabbing the bear by the back of the head. Thrusting the weapon deeper into his muzzle, and releasing a large squirt of pre down his throat. After several pulses and swallows, a foggy liquid started to leak out of the white muzzle. Panting, the dragon let go, and Bartan took a few more licks of the lower horn. Getting another whimper from the black one before slipping the weapon out of his muzzle. Reaching up towards Atlas' snout and kissing him.

Another grasp, but Elexus' work down below was wrecking his concentration. Making him open his mouth and giving the bear an opening for his tongue. Allowing that foggy substance to invade his own muzzle and almost submit to it as some leaked down the side.

"Wow. You were not kidding about alot." Tia studied the red horn, almost drenched in pre and still pulsing out a bit of it.

"It looks like the slightest touch will set it off." The other woman said, still keeping up with her tickles from the lower end. She motioned for the blonde to start stroking him while the males were busy, and she smiled. Softly gripping the weapon with two hands, focusing on the ridges, the dragon whimpered loudly through the kiss. Almost thrusting and struggling against the bear and the women.

"H-hey, no biting." The white one tried to say, but noticing Atlas wasn't doing it intentionally, yet just noticing too late. A large spray from the dragon caught the bear by surprise and he yelped at the sudden torrents coming from the lower direction. Soaking his fur and mane, as well as many of the pillows and blankets around.

As the black one laid panting for a few moments, Bartan looked at the two with a smile while they giggled at him. "Sorry. But I just had to."

"I'm sure you did have to... Shower on our moment here." He chuckled. "How much did that use?" He tried to look at the obsidian sack from far.

"Looks like barely anything. Think you overdid it?"

"More than likely, but all he needs is a stamina recharge." The white one began licking the dragon's face clean as his breaths began to normalize. "Come on, you. That should've been barely anything for a dragon." He teased.

"You try getting stroked on the ridges like that and resisting." The black one grumbled.

"Perhaps you're onto something." He looked down towards the brown haired one slyly, making her blush. "Tell you what, Atlas, you take care of Tia for a bit, and I'll take care of Elexus. Sound fair?"

"If it will get you off of me, then yes." Another chuckle and the counterweight got up. Motioning Elexus to follow him. "Come here, you." The dragon grumbled with a smile as he scooped up the blonde and making her yelp.

"No-no-no! You're wet! I don't want it all over my clothes!" She said through her numerous giggles.

"Fine, I'll take them off. One. By. One." Atlas purred, being careful with his claws as he unzipped the woman's dress.

"Are you nervous?" Bartan asked Elexus, smiling at the other two on the opposite side of the room.

"A little, yes. I've had... Sessions with Atlas alone before I met Tia, but I mostly did everything for him."

"Rarely taking advantage of you. That sounds like him." He gestured the woman to lay face-up in front of him. Comfortably on some pillows. She nodded, and got undressed shyly. "No need to be embarrassed." He smiled, nudging the woman as she walked in front of him to lay down. Licking at her body even before she got in position showed that he didn't need to look her over or study her. The woman was not on display, nor was she an object. A plaything. No, Elexus was a person to the beast. One that requested a time of pleasure and satisfaction.

As the red tongue began to lick around her belly and breasts, she could feel that faint slime of the dragon's pre still on it. Even feeling it on the bear's face while she tried to guide the muzzle around. Licking thoroughly, but not roughly at the most sensitive areas around the nipple brought out the most pleasure to her. And it was just like the dragon described a year ago. Almost a hidden warmth that seemed to dive through the body and make it relax. Letting the nipples widen and rest easily regardless of the cold of that day.

Meanwhile, Atlas was tending to the lady Tia. Doing much of the same with the breasts, but also being careful with his teeth. Pressing it before the point of tearing the skin brought out this dangerous stimulant within, and getting her to moan several times. Eventually moving the woman forward on his chest and lapping his tongue around her thighs and sex. Teasing the lips and getting the blonde woman to smile constantly. All the while breathing deeper the more he worked on that area.

Up until he began to separate the lips and play around with the tip of his tongue. The slight tickles it brought made her jerk a leg and slip right on top of the muzzle, sending the tongue deeper in her. Resting on the smiling muzzle a few moments and squeezing the red appendage a few times, the woman gasped and moaned over and over. Slowly beginning to ride the muzzle while the tongue thrashed a bit inside.

Back to Bartan and Elexus, his tongue was nearly in sync. Teasing those lips a few times and feeling inside the woman told him that the dragon had done this before with her. It's likely after that scare with Tia getting pregnant, Atlas would never attempt such a thing again. It almost made the bear feel like Elexus was left out, at least until tonight. Still, keeping his mind from wandering too much, he pressed the tongue inside her, getting the lips to squeeze it tightly and her to gasp. All while touching her upper half. Even feeling the paws of the beast massage her hips and legs, sending her into a grinding motion.

From there, the room was filled with cries of pleasure. Even quite a few early squirts before the two larger ones began to go faster. Licking the frontal area of the lips began to make the females squirm and squeeze harder. Along with the deeper thrusts with the tongue, up until they couldn't take it anymore. Squeezing it so hard until it was forced out, along with a large jolt of liquid. Only to have those tongues penetrate soon after.

Tia ended up losing her balance, and landed on the blankets near the dragon. Getting Atlas to get up

and refoot himself better. Though laying on the swollen sack was bringing discomfort to him, he bared with it for now. Working on the blonde through several harsh squeezes until the final cry and large squirt in his face. A bit of it going up his nostril and getting him to try to snort it out.

"Sorry." Tia gasped, breathing heavily on the blankets while listening to Elexus on the other side of the room. By the sounds of it, she was very close to done as well. Bartan was constantly working on her, slipping the tongue in and out, all while occasionally sucking on the lips. All at once, the woman arched her back and squirted in his face a bit. Getting the white beast to chuckle as she caught her breath.

"Enjoy yourself?" He asked with a smile, only to have it brighten when he seen Elexus'. "A few moments of rest, then we'll continue." He got up, not being shy about his own red weapon showing. A strange cross between a canine's and a dragon's, along with spines and ridges, but the spines were on opposite ends of Atlas'. One large set along the top, while two forked down along the bottom.

"He had that inside you?" Tia asked the dragon, getting him to turn purple and snort loudly at her. Getting her to giggle. "How did it feel?"

"I'm not telling you." He grumbled.

"I can only assume it felt very good, considering the noises you were making." The white one teased, getting the dragon to growl. "If you're interested, Tia, I could reduce my size for you. That way Elexus could also enjoy one with Atlas."

"That would be nice. So far, you've rarely gotten anything out of this." She chuckled, getting up and petting the black one a few times before shrinking him.

"I hate being small." He grumbled, but didn't argue. Laying on his back once again, he looked at the bear. "Are you sure there'll be no new hatchlings from this?"

"Positive." Bartan gave his word while reducing his own size, helping Elexus up and onto the dragon. Then laying down beside him. Though the black one grumbled, he didn't really complain. Not until the bear snuggled with him to get a hiss. "Okay, okay. You're very grouchy tonight for someone that's getting laid."

"I'm grouchy because my sack is twice as full as it usually is." A snort as he started licking the brown haired woman's chest. "It even tastes like me." It got them to chuckle.

"You ready?" The bear asked the blond woman, feeling her carefully mount his underside.

"Just a minute, I want to see her face when feels it." Elexus blushed a bit, and chuckled nervously. Searching for the tip of the dragon's red weapon with her hand. Just faintly touching the ridges caused the dragon to whimper and squirt out a jolt of pre on her lips. Slowly opening them with the very edge and backing up into it made her face light up with pleasure, and the dragon's to almost scrunch up,

trying to hold back. Going until the full head was inside, the black one groaned and sent a stream of foggy liquid inside the woman. Getting it to start to leak out.

Panting a bit, the brown one leaned in and kissed the dragon deeply, getting him completely submerged into the act for a few moments. After breaking it, the two looked at their competition. "Your turn." Elexus teased, getting the two to giggle.

"Alright, alright." She said, feeling around herself and getting the bear's tool in position. Slowly getting the hard tip inside and separate the lips with a small flare. Sending a faint wave through her. Though the head wasn't nearly as big as the dragons, the fleshy spines were. With one trailing along the sensitive area within the lips, it nearly got her to squeeze it sliding in. Panting while feeling the middle pair of forearms work on her upper hips and the upper pair on her breasts. A few licks from the muzzle as well muffled her moans a bit.

It was at this time they began to slowly start moving. Only taking about the first half every three motions. Slipping it in and out, and getting the males to gasp constantly. The dragon whimpered alot, releasing a bit more pre with every slip inside, as Elexus was completely hypnotized by the feel of such a thing. Studying the very shape of it from within, much like she used to with her hands. It was greater than she could have imagined, a feeling she longed for since she understood enough about it.

Meanwhile, Tia's experience was quite the same. The larger spines were a completely different feel, but not overpowering the dragon's. The tool was thinner than Atlas', but its texture made up for it. The very spines seemed to almost move and caress the inner walls of her sex like they had a mind of their own. Thriving on getting the woman to go deeper and feel more of it inside her. After a while, it was hard to resist such a thing, and so she did it the way she first mounted Atlas. Completely exiting the tool and feeling the string of pre almost latch on, then slowly drove it the full length. Getting Bartan to whimper and pant while squirming a bit until it was fully in there. The very feeling sent her squeezing the base until the white one let out a yelp and a torrent of pre. Causing it to leak out of her in an unexpected orange mess.

"That's normal." The bear explained through his breaths. "Beo loves the tastes of Oranges." A chuckle from Tia as she went the full length again. Inspiring Elexus to do the same, regardless of how much the dragon was whimpering. Completely unsheathing the weapon from her, she started from the top and slowly went down. The black one squirmed a bit, squirting constantly and giving her resistance from within. Almost forcing her to get the head out and empty herself before going back in. All at once she went the full way. The slight touch of the ridges sent the dragon in roars trying to hold back. Torrents of it began pulsing through his shaft as it began to pour into the woman. Feeling the large amount of warmth gets very deep inside her. Filling her up to the point where it began adding alot of pressure. Climbing off of it just resulted in the extra space being filled up, until it was out. Sending a few large foggy sprays above her and onto the others.

"Are you alright?" Elexus asked the black one, still getting him to pant loudly and whimper all while

thrusting.

"That was still pre, surprisingly." Bartan said after tasting it. "Yep, I overdid it." He lightly chuckled, then went into a whimper reflex as Tia squeezed a ridge. "You can keep trying to ride him, if you feel you've-" Another one as his ears went back. Spraying his own inside of the blonde woman and forcing it through her lower lips. "Careful Tia-" He tried to warn her, but she couldn't help herself.

Trying to get the dragon's tool inside again, Elexus had a hard time. The last load filled her completely up, and trying to push it in only caused him to release more of it. Not taking any more chances, she completely dismounted him, and started resuming the dragon's session with her hands. It didn't take long to see the torrents begin to launch constantly, soaking his underside and even the blankets they were laying on. With a loud groan, the sack began to deflate a bit, telling her that he would completely release any moment. Rapidly working on the ridges, Atlas arched his back. Thrashed his tail, and tried to contain his roar as his weapon began to thicken. Releasing a large white torrent overhead and spraying it against the walls from afar.

Constantly releasing over and over, Bartan got distracted by the dragon. So much so that he forgot about his own climax approaching. Feeling a harsh pressure from below begin to thicken. "Tia, not the full length-" He tried to talk through his breaths, getting her to notice the pressure herself, and pry the tool out. Witnessing the base of it began to thicken around the back set of ridges. "Knot." He panted. "You'll be okay now, just don't go the full length." She nodded, slipping it back in and riding him harder, while the dragon reached the end of his orgasm. "Elexus." Bartan called the other woman to the adjacent side, and she came over. Only to have him grab her by the wrists, and then place one hand on Tia's shoulder. Concerned at first, but she started to feel the pleasure between the two, like a medium.

It was soon after, the bear whimpered loudly. Sending the large wave through the two women and getting them to climax at the same time, along with his own. Spraying the orange release within the blonde and nearly filling her up to the point where she was forcefully dismounted. Several other torrents released before he was done, leaving everyone breathless and relaxed.

Several minutes passed as they all caught their breath. Hearing the dragon purr in his slumber got the three to chuckle a bit. "I think someone enjoyed himself rather well." The white one said, giving a smile to the other two while they gave a look of agreement. "Though he still seems to be quite full. I'll probably have to go down to maybe 140%. That should still be enough for both of you."

"Hopefully." Elexus studied her lower belly, feeling the pressure drain slowly. "But it felt amazing. Thank you for letting us..." The white one nodded, giving the two Oracles a hug, and then heard the door open.

"What smells like Liquorice and...?"

"Oranges?" The two headed creature tried to smell the area. Getting chuckles from the others, and the Kveldulf grunt embarrassedly.

"Glad you could join us, Feys." The bear greeted them, starting to sit up and taking a breath. "Did you change your mind?"

"Change their mind?" Tia looked at the two males. "Oh..." Another embarrassed whimper from them.

"Relax you two. Though we just finished with them, we can still give you something."

"Would you ladies mind? I'm sure they'll enjoy themselves, and give me and Atlas a rest." Bartan said, snuggling closer to the dragon and getting the black one to mumble something in his sleep. Making the other smile.

"Of course. Lets go over here, Feys." Tia led them to a side area. Though once again, they were uncomfortable, they stepped closer to the two women. Motioning them to lie down in front of them as they sat down. Leading their heads towards their naked bodies.

"...You definitely smell..."

"Like you were active." They said awkwardly. Really getting the strong scent of them both in heat, as well as the male's seed.

"It was very pleasant, yes."

"We kinda wished you came earlier, but we're glad that you came at all." Elexus stroked Feyris' mane and chin. Getting them to start licking the slightly bulged bellies.

"Are you okay?"

"There's a bit of swelling here..." They asked, getting the two to giggle and look over at the larger males. "Oh..." Another awkward whimper.

"Don't feel intimidated."

"Or embarrassed. Okay?" Another whimper, but they agreed to Tia's terms. "Okay, come on. Roll over on your back." As the two heads gave each other a glance, and then almost looked towards the bear, who was nearly asleep cuddling with the dragon, they got up. Carefully rolling on their back on the piles of blankets.

"Are you..."

"Sure about this?" The two women flanked the white beast, resting on each side and once again stroking the heads first.

"We are. We have been for a while."

"Just relax. If you get too uncomfortable, don't be afraid to ask us to stop. Okay?" Another nod from them. As the females began stroking each head's ears and giving small kisses to their muzzles, slowly getting them to part their mouths and lick at their tongues. Though still uncomfortable with it at first, they began to relax after a few minutes. Synchronizing their breaths with the women's, and feeling the stroking hands begin to go lower.

The wolves began to get almost tranced with the deep kisses, getting their two tails to attempt to flutter like they usually did when the Kveldulf was happy. A few pleasure moans came from them, as well as a couple of whimpers, as their rough textured tongues coressed the women's soft ones. Feeling the scratches on their chest as they breathed deeply in and out. Until Elexus stopped. "Oh wow..."

"Hmm?" Tia looked at her, and then traced her vision to the wolf's lower area. Seeing what almost looked like a black serpent slither out of a white sheath. "Oh..."

"Could we...?" The brown haired one asked, getting permission to observe it closer. The two nervously nodded, as Tia placed a few more pillows behind their heads to help them witness what they were doing.

It was long, and rather thick, let alone still growing out. A few soft touches were helping it reach its maximum size, as the two females began really looking at it. The head of the tool was flared out slightly, covered in little bumps and lines along the base that looked like ridges that the other two males had. Touching them didn't seem to get the same sensitive reaction, but there was this thick black, vertical line that showed on the upper half of the tower. From the lower side following all the way up the tip, and back on the upper side. "What is this?" Elexus asked, tracing it with her finger, and almost felt it slightly open. Though they did whimper awkwardly again, they didn't seem like they were in pain. "Does that hurt?"

"No ma'am."

"Look at this." Tia said, looking at the top of the tip and noticing there's two holes, most likely where the release comes out of. But they were divided by that thick line. Seeing a small indent at the very center of the tip, Tia placed two fingers in, looking at the Feys for almost a confirmation. They still didn't look like they were in pain, so she pressed down in the line a bit, getting the tool to separate in half. Getting the wolves to gasp a bit. "Are you okay?"

Once again, they nodded. Still breathing deeply as they motioned her to continue. Splitting it further began to show some small spines, fitting inside each other's side in small holes. Though they were a bit pointy, they were still a bit soft, and stimulated the white beast quite a bit. "Wow..." Elexus exclaimed, trying to separate it the full way, carefully and looking at the entire thing once again.

The full length was nearly to the center of the creature's ribs, but its ability to split would allow it to separate almost to their sides. Though fully erect it was still quite thick, but very easily penetrate the two females at once, if they were close together. It made them look at the white beast once again for an

explanation, and they sighed awkwardly.

"Our females..."

"Their sex tends to have a fork in it."

"Preventing any other species from..." The two women nodded.

"The barbs in the center must be to scrub away any competitors, as well as pleasuring the female." Bartan said, looking at afar with very curious eyes. "Kinda ruins it for males though."

As the two women chuckled, they began gently teasing the inside of the black shaft. Getting the white beast to squirm a bit and whimper in pleasure. Their breaths began to get much deeper the more Tia and Elexus played around with it. Soon releasing a few droplets of foggy liquid from each tip. After a few minutes, Elexus began to work down towards the base.

The sheath was rather familiar to her now. Much like Bartan's, it was covered in white fur and had this cute little black stripe across it. The woman remembered seeing it before, when the Feys were sleeping in the sun, back against the grass. But it was much smaller then, whereas now it was quite stretched out. As for the sack, once again rather familiar. Much of the fur along the underside kept it well hidden and almost untraceable. She really had to feel around for it to find the full size.

Though it wasn't as big as she expected it to be. It was actually quite small, compared to the dragon's and it's size before tonight's session. No wonder the black one had such an ego. The thought of it made her chuckle out loud, getting the other three heads to look at her, two with a bit of embarrassment. "Not about you. Don't worry, though I'm just used to something bigger."

"This seems to be big enough." Tia said with a smile, stroking Feyon's head while still ticking the center of the tip. "It's too bad we're kinda full right now."

"Well, there is someone who isn't..." The bear said a bit quietly, motioning over to the sleeping dragon. The Kveldulf whimpered again, not really sure if Bartan was joking or not. "If you're up for trying it. I'm quite curious myself, to be honest."

The two heads looked at each other. "We're not quite sure."

"Though you did say that it would help him..." Another awkward grunt.

The bear shrugged. "It's up to you. But if he gets mad, I'll take the blame."

One more look at each other, and the two took a deep breath. Slightly nodding as they rolled over and got up. Their tool quickly flexing together as one whole quickly as they walked over to the black creature. "What would you have us do?" Feyris asked, the women following behind them.

"Tia, can you make him normal size?" Bartan instructed, getting off of the dragon's wing and heading towards his head. Stroking his mane in his slumber got the larger one to start purring a bit. "Okay, mind showing him how it's done?"

"Over here." Elexus whispered, getting the wolves to almost climb on his thick tail and lead them towards the hole at the base. "Try to stick it in there slowly. Then it's just a matter of pushing in and out." They nodded awkwardly.

"Just watch his stones. They're still quite full." Tia warned, offering her hand to help guide their claws to a safer area for the dragon, while Elexus did the same. Then guided the black tool towards the tailhole.

"You're lined up." They each gave a head a pet. "Slowly now." And they started to press in. The slight pressure made the black one whimper loudly and begin breathing once again deeply with quivering breaths. A few more harder presses, and the black shaft slipped inside, giving the dragon a whimpering gasp of pleasure, and then a series of loud purrs. As well as the wolves a few breaths of their own. Feeling the dragon try to squeeze the intruder a few times.

The slight slipping in and out started making Atlas erect once again, giving the women something to play with for a bit. "Just don't try to wake him up just yet. He's still half conscious, so easy on the ridges." The bear whispered, getting the Oracles to nod. Lightly stroking the red weapon was all it took to get it to start leaking once again. Seeing the Feys really start to get into the motions and breaths, along with the vibrations of the dragon's purrs.

A few minutes later, they went in too deep. Getting the dragon to groan in pleasure loudly and begin waking up. "Damnit, bear. That better not be you..." He half growled. Still feeling the strokes of a few people.

"Nope." Bartan said with a smile, getting the purple eyes to blink open and stare at the bear's brown ones. Then shooting his head up and seeing the two girls, and the Feys behind them. Whimpering loudly, his ears turned completely purple.

"...W-what the-!?" A wave of pleasure interrupted Atlas as his back arched slightly. Pushing his head back into the large white one's arms. "Feys!?" Another wave as he whimpered. Now fully feeling the long black tower inside him and groaning. Exhaling in quivering whimpers as Elexus and Tia started playing with his ridges. "Who...?" Another loud whimper.

"It was my idea." Bartan smiled.

"Of course-" A loud whimper. "It was..." He tried to grumble, but he couldn't bring himself to do it. Everytime he tried to let out a growl, it was interrupted by another wave. With every action to retaliate, the dragon's body jerked against him.

"Don't fight it. Just enjoy yourself, Atlas." The thought of it almost made him angry, but the pleasure he was receiving was too much for him to deny. He released his tense muscles, and gave into the group's gift. Letting his vocals go wild with purrs, whimpers of pleasure, and moans of bliss. Squirting nearly every thrust of the Kveldulf. Until it came to a complete stop deep inside him.

The two heads squinted their eyes shut and groaned a few times as the black one began feeling a wet warmth release inside him. With every grunt, there was another pulse, and after a few moments, they stopped and breathed heavily. Pulling themselves out of the dragon and staggering to the side near some pillows. "Are you alright?" Tia tended to them, and they nodded.

"That didn't seem too climatic." Elexus giggled a bit, but heard the dragon whimper again. After a few breaths, another whimper. "Atlas?" The woman stroked his belly a bit, but could start to feel it tense up.

"Interesting." Bartan looked at it with wonder. Noticing the woman's looks in question, and he just motioned to watch the dragon's belly. Slowly, it began to expand up and widen, getting the black one to grunt a few times. As the scales began to stretch out, the dragon whimpered, and released his own seed over himself. Getting the bear with a few squirts and making him chuckle. "Apparently their seed releases almost like a Foam that expands within. Their females are very resilient, and can take large amounts of pressure from that area. So the release from the males tends to try to solidify it. Making it almost certain that the female will carry."

"Enough of that!" The dragon hissed, grunting a few times while holding his belly. "How do I get it to stop!?" Feeling it reach an extra foot and a half length from its original size.

"I'm curious to know if it actually will." The bear pondered, still looking at the black's bulge until he got a hiss from him. "Okay, okay." Placing his hand on it, the swelling immediately began to deflate, giving the dragon a sigh of relief. Looking over at the corner of the room while a rather large pile of white foam, though ceasing its expansion.

"Oh wow." Elexus began to walk towards it. "That's a different way of doing it, I suppose."

"Yes. Rather interesting, really." Bartan began to follow her, getting a closer look himself. "However, that's with both streams working together. If they're separate, they shouldn't grow that much. Meaning, it would probably be okay for you two to take one stream, but two... That would probably do some damage." The white one gave a smile to Feys. "They are quite fascinating-" The black one quickly rose up and mounted the bear. Biting him hard in the back of the neck, and getting the white one to growl against it.

"Atlas!" Tia shouted, surprised. Then heard Bartan groan loudly in a bit of pleasure, faintly seeing the dragon's red tool enter the white one's tailhole and thrust deeply into it. Getting him submissive and breathing heavily. A few more pants and no signs of resistance against him, the dragon released his jaws and thrust heavily into the large beast. Slowly, but heavily, until he started to whimper loudly against the dragon. Licking at one of his black paws that he was using for balance.

"I guess they're okay." Elexus said, a bit startled herself as she began looking towards their back ends. Seeing the bear fully erect once again, and the dragon's tool harshly enter the hole above it. Noticing the four ears low, but a smile on the white muzzle as moans of pleasure filled the room. Along with the dragon's growls, which eventually morphed into purrs.

Several minutes passed, and much of the dragon's pre began to leak out. As well as a few large orange squirts on the floor. A few forceful steps forward to get as deep as he could within the white one, Atlas' tail slammed the ground a couple of times while his spines raised. With three more harsh thrusts, the two stopped moving and the dragon contained a roar inside his muzzle, while Bartan let out a few blissful grunts.

Elexus pointed out a very slight bulge coming from the furred belly that was barely seen, and soon enough, the two were going at it again. Heavy thrusts, as the bear tried to lick the dragon's muzzle a few times, leading to a sharp kiss. A few in-place thrusts, and the black one whimpered loudly, while Bartan's weapon began to swell at its base. Feeling the inside walls around his red tower brush and stroke the intruder, putting him over the edge and breaking the kiss.

With one last hard thrust, his obsidian sack began to fully drain. Giving the bear a few sharp breaths before a long whimper as his belly began to stretch out. Filling up more with every large pulse and widen to fit it all inside. During this, his own release started spraying against the floor with a heavy pressure. The orange liquid soaking the blankets and pillows around them, and starting to push backwards due to the swelling of the dragon's seed. As the fur began to tighten, the black marks that turned into his ribbon wings stretched sideways and around, Bartan's claws dug deep into the floor. His middle arms, trying to support the resistance of his growing belly, while feeling a lot of it still leaking out from his rear.

One last roar, and one last large pulse pushed the belly to stretch down to the floor and widen a bit more before Atlas stopped. Still putting his weight on the bear and breathing heavily beside his head. "Now we're even." The black one grumbled.

Panting himself, Bartan smiled at him. "A few more of those, and maybe we'll be even." He joked, getting the dragon to chuckle before locking lips with the black one once again.

"Holy cow, you guys..." Elexus said while they both giggled at them.

"I'd say you overdid it." The two looked at the swollen white belly. Slowly deflating as the bear created a drain in the floor.

"Nonsense. That's just how you empty a dragon." Again, they chuckled as the brown haired one looked at the dragon's stones and discovered them to be about normal size. Perhaps a bit smaller. "Think the Feys got the right idea though." The bear motioned towards them, seeing the wolves slumber off to the side.

"I'm up for another nap." Atlas dismounted the counterweight, walking to his front and then rolling

him back as he yelped a bit. Then motioning Elexus and Tia to join the males as they all snuggled up warmly together. Slowly going to sleep, and not worry about cleaning up the disastrous mess until tomorrow.

Chapter 11

"You only have four of them left."

"Yet you have to remind me. After what happened back there, I fucking deserve one."

"Just be thankful we're out of that cave for now, Stagg. I hate the smell of cigarettes." The hatchling slowly came to, making out the voices around him while murmuring something along the lines of 'what happened?', getting the others to look at him for a few moments. rubbing his eyes a few times with aqua blue paws and feeling the warmth of a campfire in the dark of night.

"What happened?" He repeated while yawning. Snapping his jaws a few times, he overlooked the three. Thinking that he did something wrong, he began to turn a glossy purple. "What?"

"Nothing." The lizard stated.

"It's just a wonder how you fell asleep by looking at the bright sun. Y'know, when it was up." The red one grumbled, taking a breath of his cigarette and blowing out the smoke into the air. The log he was leaning against looked rather dry and out of place from when Dia remembered this area.

Looking around, the dragon began to notice very large shadows, just barely out of the light. As if they were stuck under a thick fog of darkness. "Where are we?"

"Not too far from where I stopped. Stagg got concerned about you, and we stopped to plan our next move. Next thing we know, this forest grows out of nowhere, and we made camp." The stratacaster explained. Getting the little one to look at the shadows once again and notice they did look a lot like trees.

"Seems to have gotten quite a bit warmer too. There's even a moon in the sky." Stagg tried to point out in the sky, faintly seeing something glow in the far distance. Then looking at the dragon once again. "Dia, be honest with us. When you go to sleep, do you go back home?"

The little one whimpered, lowering his head. "...It's like a memory, but yes. I do remember seeing my parents and guardians. But the sun went out, and it started to get very cold."

"So you're probably on the base side then. And if the sun went out there, it would make sense why we got one."

"What was with that fort then?" The fox asked.

"Lavendour..." The hatchling mumbled. "It was a place my father attacked because it threatened someone close to him."

"He sounds like a swell guy."

"He was... Not himself when that happened. But he ended up destroying everyone in that fort."

"Which would explain why everyone was afraid of dragons, and remembered dying." The lizard pondered again. "But why are you going back?"

Another whimper as the dark blue one lowered his snout. "...When I was back there, there was a white creature named Bartan."

"I know that name..." Stagg said quietly.

"He says it's because this side of the world is threatened by something."

"Like what? The only destructive thing besides old Yeller over here we know of is your dad. And I haven't seen any evidence of dragons here." Stratacast growled at Saber.

"Unless your dad is somehow over here as well." The yellow one said, still giving the fox a glare.

"I don't think it's that. There must be something else."

"Did Bartan say anything else to you?" Stagg asked.

"Just tried to explain what was going on. By the sounds of it, you figured it out already." The lizard went back into thought while everyone else went quiet. Laying his head back down, the little one felt so close to helplessness. Given the responsibility to save an entire planet from a threat he knew nothing about was beginning to weigh on him heavily. Though he had help, they were doing most of the work. Dia was just a faint medium between two worlds that brought nothing much to them other than-

The hatchling felt a small vibration from the ground, getting his head to rise up a bit quickly and look at the others. But there was no reaction from them. "Did anyone else feel that?"

"Feel what?" The red one grumbled, barely even raising an eyebrow.

"It was... A Stamp."

"Like a Postage Stamp?" Strata began to study their surroundings a bit.

"No, like... A Stamp on the Ground. In the ground."

"In the ground?" The lizard began studying the ground, his eyes shifting to almost see further. "What the hell are...? Move!" He rolled off to the side, and everyone attempted to follow his lead. A moment later, several black beetle-like creatures burrowed violently out of the ground. A dark green shimmer came off them when brought to the campfire light.

"Well, don't these look familiar." The fox grumbled, holding his cigarette in his mouth while pulling out his weapons.

"It's best to spread out!" Stagg ordered.

"Fine with me." The stratacaster grumbled, provoking his bug to attack, and then hip-tossing it behind him. Slamming hard with his shoulder while it was trying to get up and sending the thing flying into the forest. Damaging a few trees in the process.

All the while, Dia scampered behind a large rock. Just trying to stay hidden from the creatures and not make a single sound. But still, he could feel the vibrations through the ground, as one burrowed a little ways behind him, submerging from the ground and towering over the little dragon. He whimpered loudly as raised one of its bladed appendages at him, then something began to happen in the hatchling's vision.

It was like he could read it in a few microseconds, a million pieces of information began to leak off the

creature. All things he could somehow understand clearly. What it weighed, it's sharpness, length, mass, volume. What it was made of. Even its physics, calculating its motions, and where it was going to land. With this information... This Knowledge, he scampered towards it, getting the blade to miss.

From there, he understood its pressure points. How to disable it from past damages it's body took. How to strike the nerves within it to render it helpless, but it required both Agility and Precision. Jumping and climbing off one of its legs, the dragon hit it as hard as he could with his knuckles, getting the creature to growl in pain. Then to another pressure point in the limb to let it fall completely helpless and limp.

Landing in the warm grass, Dia could sense something else. Something very strong within the creature. Something that made it hesitant towards the little one, and diving it to attack it recklessly with another bladed arm. Hopping just a bit back, the blade landed in the ground, and the dragon climbed up on its shoulder. Striking another point in the neck heightened that strange sense, and he could feel something over it... Control.

Grabbing a hold of the bug's face, he concentrated that sense of Fear within it , and pushed it out on the other side of the head. The creature screamed like it was frightened, and the other half of the head exploded outward in a bloody mess. Getting the beetle to stagger and fall down on the ground lifeless.

Hearing a gunshot from Saber's direction got the dragon's spines to rise in fear and surprise. He still didn't like that sound, but he could still hear the red one grumble while one of the creatures squealed. "Damnit, are there no end to these things?" He yelled, somewhat relieving the little one that he was okay. But soon seeing another creature come up behind the lizard.

Huffing, Dia picked up a small stone and just took a fraction of a second to study it. Gripping it to 'skip' it, he aimed at the new beetle's eye and whipped it in the air. Hitting the creature's eye with a loud snap, and then getting the stone to ricochet off and hit the bug Stagg was fighting with as well. Giving the green one an opening he needed.

Meanwhile, the dragon hit the ground, sending out a faint smoke and appearing below the first beetle hit. Uppercutting it heavily in a pressure point in the underside, and then rapidly tagging one after another. Getting the creature to back into a large rock. Taking a deep breath, the little one charged and rammed the bug in the chest with his shoulder. Sending a massive force through it, shattering the creature's shell into pieces and even cracking the rock.

A few clicks could be heard in the darkness, one of a gun being empty along with the fox cursing. Looking in the direction, Dia could see that information once again. Seeing the complete dimensions of the custom Desert Eagle. When he was first being told about the weapon, the little one didn't quite understand. But now, it all came to him. How the trigger was powered by a long spring, how the hammer just lightly taps the ends of the bullets to ignite the black powder inside. Sending the projectile outward with such a rapid force that it causes damage to whatever is lacking the resistance to guard against it.

With this information, the little one dug into his side. Painfully ripping out a full magazine with a loud whimper. One that would fit the gun. "Saber! Catch!" The little one yelped, throwing it sideways at him and seeing the fox glance at it. Releasing his empty clip, and catching the one the dragon threw with the pistol's hilt. Spinning with it and slamming the magazine against the creature's head, locking the clip into the pistol. Then a slam against the other side to stagger it and get a clear shot. The echo of the gun seemed to silence the rest of the forest.

As Sinality and Stratacast came back from the darkness, looking unharmed, Saber came forward. Spitting out the butt of his cigarette and stepping on it, while releasing and studying the clip that the dragon made. Then looking at Dia, still holding his side like it still hurt, and even noticing a small scar left from him pulling the magazine out. "...What the hell?"

Everyone looked at Stagg for an explanation. Looking over each one of them, the green one hissed. "Sponge!"

"What does that even mean?" The yellow one grumbled.

"It means that he's been absorbing the powers of everyone he's made contact with. It's the reason why he's getting smarter, because you guys keep getting me to carry him."

"Here we go." The fox tossed his snout.

"Shut it, I'm serious. You've all made contact with him, and well... We all know that Stress tends to ignite power. He hasn't been in any real danger with us until now."

"So what's that mean exactly? He's going to become everything he touches?" The yellow one crossed his arms.

"Who knows. As long as he can control himself, odds are he'll be okay."

"It's a wonder he could handle himself against these things."

"Not really. With the four of us... He's got Knowledge." The lizard pointed at himself, then to Saber. "Precision." Then to Sinality. "Agility." And finally Stratacast. "Strength. We basically just created the ultimate weapon."

"So it seems." Strata grumbled. "Just a shot in the dark here, any chance that he could be the thing threatening the planet?" It made the dragon's ears go really low, and turn him dark green. Looking to the other green one for an answer.

"...It's possible." He said a bit quietly, making the little one change to a dark blue. "But it's not something we're going to make sure of until the last minute."

"I'm just saying, if we're going to kill it, we might as well do it while we don't have a struggle. Something like this is a very bad thing to carry around." The stratacaster said coldly, walking out of the forest. The panther studied the little one for a moment, then followed Stratacast.

"He might be right, you know." Saber shrugged, getting a harsh look from Stagg.

"He's just a kid." He replied sternly.

"Yes. A kid that holds the powers of the four most powerful beings currently on this planet." He grumbled putting his weapons away and following the others. "By our powers combined, he might as well be Captain Planet."

As serious as the lizard was trying to stay, he couldn't help but chuckle. Meeting the little one with a sad smile. Picking him up and carrying him normally. "We're missing one for Captain Planet, by the way."

"Like any of us really have Heart, seriously."

The waves were still singing, serenading the entire sandy side. Regardless how cold the water and the air have gotten, the black one just needed a place to wash his paws. Still shaking, and his breaths still quivering as he fought against the dark thoughts. About his son. About the fate of his new family. It was something he never wanted to lose, though it seemed inevitable.

The soft paw scrapes in the sand caught his ear, as once again the dragon Atoned to Fire and lit up small torches nearby. Seeing the Feys slowly approach him with the look of defeat in their eyes. "Atlas..." The left one started, getting the two yellow eyes to make contact with one another again.

"We've... Come to a conclusion. Perhaps a solution."

"...You have, have you?" He mumbled, getting out of the freezing water and returning to his black state.

"...You said before that you can... Support this family, in case things don't work out."

"But it would take alot out of you." The two looked at him sadly, taking a few steps towards the dragon

and sitting down. Lowering their heads.

"...We've decided that... You can have us."

"Take our soul and claim it, that way you can support everything that you've built here." The two took a breath as Atlas remained silent. Studying them for a few moments, before the dragon stroked their manes. Getting them to whimper slightly.

"...Are you sure?" He mumbled, getting a slight nod from the both of them...

The castle was still shrouded in darkness, even after the black dragon woke up. Shivering and almost expecting the bear to be glued to him, or serving himself what left the dragon had to offer. The thought half irritated him, but he was more concerned about where everyone was. Let alone the mess from last night.

Some damage to the blankets and pillows still remained, but no stains other than what was previous to the night. It half concerned him, but another clicking of his scales worried him a little more. Even with the torches around, the room was nearly freezing and the air was getting thinner.

This transition was happening alot sooner than Atlas expected. As if the planet was purposely planning to snuff out everything living on it. Giving into death itself, and plunging everything else into transferring to the new one. At this rate... He didn't know if he could support them, let alone for very long.

His mind returned to a memory of when one of his draconic friends sacrificed himself to attempt to revive a dead land. Burying himself deep within the lands, and letting it feed off his magical power. Something that Atlas has done before, but not something he could remain conscious through. Meaning, the rest would be left alone, that's if it actually worked.

A heavy sigh passed through him, along with another shiver. For now, he'll just have to find them. Walking out into his stone castle, the hallways remained dark. The torches must've gone out, or were just too cold to carry on. Even the flames were trying to struggle to stay alive in the other room. And the longer they're up, the more air they were going to burn through... "Up, are you?"

Elexus came through the darkness, almost spooking the black one and getting his spines to raise. "...Yeah. Where is everyone?" He tried to scout further into the blackness, but nothing out of the ordinary showed up.

"Around. The Feys disappeared, I'm thinking they were still a bit embarrassed from last night." The thought of them made the dragon's ears go back. "Tia should be in the kitchen, and I was just checking up on Dia. Giving him a few extra blankets to keep warm." She smiled at him, stroking his arm.

As he looked into the direction of his son in the far room, his heart felt heavy. "You're worried about him too?" The woman asked, getting the large one to double take faintly. Grumbling something about how he should be used to that by now and making her giggle a bit.

"Yes... And worried about us. I need to talk to Bartan, have you seen the furball?"

"Not since we got up. He went outside, I know that." Another glance in that direction. "Is something wrong?"

"...No."

"Atlas..." She said sadly, stroking his arm a bit. "You're lying."

The dragon sighed heavily. "Elexus..." He started stroking her hair, then motioned for her to come in for a hug. She did, still petting his arm and chestplates. "...Everything's going to be alright. But... You might have to go on without me."

"What?" She tried to struggle out of the grip free to look at him, but couldn't. "Atlas, No. You can do this for us. You can come with-"

"Take care of Dia for me, on the other side." He whispered.

"Atlas-" A sharp piercing was felt in her chest, getting her to attempt to suck in a breath. Completely stunned from the pain, she quietly stopped moving, all while the dragon let out a few tears and whispered his love for her. Once the woman stopped moving, he carried her inside the chambers and laid her to rest there. When she awoke in the next world, it would all be a nightmare. Just a bad dream.

Closing the door for now, he glanced at the hallways before heading to his son's room. Looking over at the makeshift stone crib still slightly rocking back and forth. He carefully picked up the little hatchling with his black and red paws. Giving him one last hug.

But he couldn't bring himself to end the little one. As strong as Haytre was at times, he loved this little guy. More than any other child he either had, or was forced to live with. There was something special within Dia'vidd, something the black devil could not explain. So instead, he just held him for a few minutes. Smiling sadly at the little murmurs he made, until his scales started to click and whimpers leaked out of his muzzle.

Placing him back into the blankets, heating them up faintly, and rocking the crib a bit, Atlas took one last minute to study him. Coming to the conclusion that perhaps whatever he was doing in the other world, he might just need this second chance. But the thought of him suffocating or freezing to death here... Or wake up completely alone and lost.

He wouldn't be alone though. Haytre, the dragon immune to death, was forced to remain on this

rogue planet. Forever drifting in space frozen. Another heavy thought that just weighed on his wings. Getting them to drop.

Wings. He'll never teach his son how to fly. He'll never get to see the little one do air tricks. Crash land a few times, sprain a wing or two. Maybe lose a few fangs. Never know the lore or stories where his father came from... But perhaps it was better off that he didn't know what this black dragon did. What he was capable of. Bartan already told the little one about Lavendour, even though he really didn't want the hatchling to know about it. The day after he was conceived was the day Tia even found out about it. It was also the day she realized that she mated with a monster.

Yes. Perhaps it was better this way for the little one. But only in some areas. Haytre now knew why he always thought himself as a terrible father. He knew why he feared such a thing for so long. It was never about the commitment, the relationships. Not about watching them slowly die, while he would live on forever. It was about them finding out who this black devil really was. What he did... And what he will do. Haytre's greatest fear was his children's shame.

It was then that Atlas turned away. Leaving the room and his son's responsibility with him. Hearing a few things clutter in the distance, the dragon started following the noises to the kitchen. Keeping a lookout for the Kveldulf, but no sign of them was found. "Who are you looking for?" The blonde woman asked.

"The Feys and Bartan. Either or actually."

"I'm not really sure where either of them went. Haven't seen them for a while." She still greeted the black one with a smile, one barely seen by the torchlight. "Planning to mount the daylight's out of him again?" Tia giggled at his reaction; purple ears and a curled neck, along with a faint whimper.

"N-no. Just wanted to ask him something. Though I probably know the answer." He mumbled. Getting the woman to stop what she was preparing for dinner and pet his snout.

"What was that?" She asked, not hearing the second part of his sentence. He just half grumbled and shook his head. Nuzzling her and giving a few licks. Noticing how cold her skin was.

"...You're freezing."

"I know I am. I just didn't want to get my sweaters dirty with the food." He looked at her a bit sadly. "Don't give me that. You made a fuss about nearly choking on a thread from a wool sweater before, so this is your doing."

Atlas snorted loudly. "I wasn't choking on it, it got caught in my throat. I was almost willing to swallow one of you to go down and fetch it for me." He teased, giving her a few more nudges to get the blonde to stop giggling. (I'll never hear that again...) He thought to himself, though it must've shown in his eyes. The woman stopped laughing and looked at him sadly.

"What's wrong?"

"...Nothing." She placed a hand on his chest and he grumbled.

"You're lying."

"You're lying." He mocked her, getting Tia to give a sad smile. "Tia... This... Won't work. The planet won't let me keep everyone al-"

"Yes it will." She interrupted him, making his ears drop. "Atlas... Haytre, you can do this. You've done so much for us, I know, but you can do this."

"It's no life for anyone. To be completely stranded, never being able to go out again. I know how much seeing people... Seeing the world means to you. And you can't give that-"

"It's worth it." It made his head sink. "Haytre, it'll be worth it."

"...How can you possibly say that?" He whispered, covering her with his wings and holding her closer to his chest. Feeling her soft touch stroke his arms.

"Because it is. Because I'll be with you, our son, Elexus and the Feys. And that's all I need." He could feel a bit of wetness stream down his plates, along with a few tears of his own down his muzzle. "I love you, Haytre."

"...I love you too Tia." He held her tightly, hearing that god awful sound once again. Feeling her reflexes struggle a bit against him. "I'm sorry... I'm sorry..." He whispered, as she faded away in his arms. As much as he wanted to roar his pain, he contained it for now. He'll have all eternity to do so afterwards. For now, he'll just set her beside his other wife, and wash the blood off his paws.

"...Are you sure?" The black dragon mumbled, getting a slight nod from the two wolves under his paws.

"You need your family..." Feyon said.

"And we... Are expendable." The right one said heavily. "But thankful."

"For everything that you've done for us, Atlas."

"...Feyon Feyris." They looked up to the dragon's sad eyes. "...I have one last request for you."

"What...?"

"Take care of Dia for me."

"Atlas-?" A sharp rock spike impaled each of their heads. Killing them instantly and leaving their body limp on the sandy beach. Soon dissolving into a faint light, which then started to circle around the dragon's left paw.

It was warm. Could even be felt through the black one's half frozen, wet paw. It was also welcoming, as if the two were trying to lick his paw still. "It's very pretty." The white bear said, coming out from the darkness with a sad smile. "They'll miss you." He gave the dragon a lick.

"...How do I let them pass on?" The black one mumbled.

"Just let go. Like you're trying to release a small bird into the air." And Atlas did, watching the light flutter a bit and move out into the darkness. "They'll wake up. They all will, knowing what you've done."

"...Yes." Another mumble. "Bartan..." It got the bear's attention. "I probably know the answer to this, but why haven't you offered to just send us to the new planet." It got his four ears to slightly drop. "I'm sure you know where it is by now."

"...Yes. I do. And I'm guessing you're talking about through a Time Storm as well." The dragon nodded, and the white one sighed. "It's because the new areas can be easily torn. That, and it's very possible that something else might travel through it as well, meaning-"

"What caused this." Haytre's head sank. "Meaning I won't be able to find them. Likely not in time." It made Bartan whimper a little bit, giving the dragon a hug and a few licks to the point where the black one grumbled. "You're way too affectionate." Getting the Counterweight to smile sadly.

"Yep, that's me. Affectionate B." Haytre gave him a very odd look, and Bartan just gave him another lick. "Don't give up." Then he turned around and walked away, into the darkness to disappear.

"...What was that about?" The dragon grumbled. Trying to follow him, but lost the bear by the stairway to his home. The landing zone the dragon often used, seeing the slight cracks in the marble. Ones he's repaired a hundred times, to the point where he was just tired of doing it. From there, he could still see the trees that were still faintly black. Ones that the Doctor wrote on and irked the dragon, getting him to set them on fire... Only to have them say-

Haytre gasped. Affectionate B... Huggbees. Then instantly grunt and smack his forehead with a paw. "What the hell did he mean by this then?" He grumbled, looking them over, and noticing a very faint path. One that was almost too small for the dragon, but he managed anyway. Opening up in the middle of the forestry. "How did I live here for almost two years and *not* notice this?" He growled. Half knowing it had something to do with the Doctor.

Studying the ground a bit, he noticed a very small metal disc, covered in plantlife. After cleaning some of it, the dragon tapped it a few times, getting it to light up in a faint upward cone in front of him. A few moments of studying it, the black one grumbled, looking back down at the disc to see if there was

another way to activate it. "BOOGIE-BOOGIE-BOOGIE!"

Haytre jumped backwards with a very loud yelp, landing several feet away from the hologram of Doctor Banjo laughing hysterically. "Oh Mercy, that was just too funny!" The doctor managed to get out, getting the large one to hiss loudly at him. "Oh come on. That was classic! You were all like 'Yarrrrrrlllp-y' n' stuff!"

"The hell are you still doing here!?" Growled the dragon with his ears back and spines raised highly.

"Hah! Fooled you! This is only a recording. But I'm guessing you're wondering what I'm still doing here. Let alone on your island." Another growl from the black one. "Well I'm not telling yo-okay you've convinced me. Back when you were on your stupid conquest to once again run away from another commitment by boiling alive in the planet's core, I built this thing while being horribly distracted by trees!"

"You've gotta be kidding me." Another paw to his forehead.

"Yes. You are that predictable, captain snarls. But anyway, somewhere on this island, I built you a device that will allow you to travel through **SPACE**!"

"...You mean a spaceship-"

"It is NOT a SPACESHIP! It's a **SPACESHip**!"

"...I'm not seeing a difference."

"What are you talking about? The **SPACE** in **SPACESHip** is bolded. You're just blind."

"On With It!" The dragon hissed.

"Fine! Sheesh. Learn some patience, Mr. I-Smell-Like-Burnt-Toast. You're going to have a hatchling soon-"

"I do not smell like burnt toast. Wait, what-?"

"You don't smell like it, but you look like it!" The old man chuckled cheesily. "Where was I?"

"Spaceship." The dragon rolled his eyes.

"Right! **SPACESHip**! I hid it somewhere on this island!"

"You said that already!"

"Just-! Lemme do the thing, damnit!" Another grumble. "But it's specifically powered by something."

"Is it love?" Haytre whimpered in frustration.

"It is not love."

"Frustration?"

"If it was powered by that, you'd be there by now."

"Huggbees?"

"As cool as that would be, no. You'll find out when you get there."

"Well, where the hell am I supposed to find it?"

"Now I bet you asked 'Where the hell am I supposed to find it?' The dragon grumbled, glaring at the hologram. "Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Are you sure you're a hologram?"

"Of course I am. Like I said, you're just horribly predictable." Another loud growl. "Look Mr. Ugly, you want to know or not?"

"Just tell me! And I'm not ugly!"

"Says you, your spines are so high, you might as well be the cross between a dragon and a lion." A very loud growl. "Say the magic woooooord."

"...Please?"

"Nope."

"...Space?"

"Nope."

"Taath, it's Hugbees, isn't it?"

"HUGBEES! Yes!"

"But I already said Hugbees!"

"You did? Oh wow, the cheer track didn't go off. Oh well. Not important. Now where did I put that button?" The hologram started digging through his robe, tossing out random objects out of the hologram's field, yet still displaying on the grassy ground. "Here it is!" The man pressed it, and nothing

happened. Pressed it again, and nothing happened. He then pressed it seven times in a row, and nothing happened. "Is this thing broken? Here, you try it."

The black one looked very oddly at the holographic button. Unsheathing a single claw, he carefully pushed it and got a very loud sound track of people cheering Hugbees. Getting him to hiss and raise a paw to swat the Doctor. "Blastoff!" He shouted enthusiastically, getting the large one to make a loud noise in question as four very large glass walls surrounded him. Then a large one to seal the cube. "Buh Bai!" The man waved, releasing a very large spring from beneath the cube and launching it into space.

Chapter 12

"Ready to admit this is a bad idea yet?" The little one could make out the fox's snarky tone in his sleep. Murmuring in response to it, but wasn't quite ready to get up just yet.

"No." The large dog's voice sent a bit of fear through Dia's heart at first, but soon realized what it was. **"And quit complaining. Would you rather walk?"**

"I'd rather not get hit by a gigantic bolt, is all."

"Odds are I'll see another fortress before they spot us." The large one grumbled.

"Are you sure about that? You don't exactly blend into the wilderness here." Another growl, made the hatchling whimper awake.

"Guys, be quiet. He's trying to sleep." Stagg whispered harshly. Sighing when the little one began to stretch out a bit.

"Think it's late for that." The lizard glared at Saber. "Don't look at me. Blame Barry White over there." A loud snarl from the dog.

"Enough you two." Dia met the purple eyes with his blue ones. Though the lizard's expression was a bit irritated, he knew it wasn't towards the dragon. "Talk about a rude awakening."

It made the little one chuckle a bit. Turning his scales a bright pink and nuzzling the green one with his face. Though Stagg's chest was far from soft, the hatchling didn't care. Basking in the morning light, he was just glad to get out of the cold of his old home.

His stomach growled loudly, getting the hatchling to whimper. "Hold on." The lizard reached over and grabbed a bag. Taking out a few strips of half dried meat and some water in a small bottle. "Not the greatest of meals, but it's something." The dragon took a bite and made a face, getting the green one to chuckle at his expression and his sudden color change to a brown.

"Sorry, maybe I'm just not used to... Makeshift food." Another chuckle. "But I'm... Thankful."

"I know you are." The two smiled at each other, while the little one started choking down the meal. Then taking a drink. "Had enough?"

"Yes. I should be fine." Dia got up to stretch a bit more, jumping down on the large purple furred one and getting used to the movements of his powerful shoulders. "How long have you guys been walking?"

"**A few hours.**" The large one answered, still looking at the surroundings of several green hills and forests in the distance.

"We've seen a few villages in the distance, but haven't really approached them just yet. Though, I don't know what we're waiting for. It's not like fire and pitchforks are his Achilles heel."

"Saber." The lizard grumbled, getting the red one to shrug. "Last thing we need is to make more enemies. What I want to find is what's threatening the planet. If we can do that, perhaps we'll get a better reputation with the humans."

The fox grumbled at it with his ears back, but didn't argue. But a few moments later, Stratacast slowed to a stop, sighing irkfully. "**You have to recklessly ask for trouble, don't you Stagg?**" Getting a noise in question from the green one. Stopping halfway from a turn about, the Houtainion pointed his head behind them a little ways, then the group could feel a large vibration through the purple beast.

"Not a moment of peace, is there?" Saber grumbled, expecting some more of those beetles. Then a very large shockwave that created fissures from the ground about a mile from where they came. Seeing

a large red paw erupt from the ground and grasp the cracked earth. Rising from the ground with a large muzzle and several black horns. A humanoid beast with a brushy mane and a long tail.

"That's a Cryo!? I thought those were only in Veritas!"

"Well, you learn something new everyday. What the fuck woke it!?" The fox barked.

"I'm not sure."

"Was it the bugs?" The little one whimpered, turning a bit green while trying to hide behind Stagg.

"The beetles?"

The lizard looked at Saber. "They came from the ground, it's very possible that was their plan all along."

"And odds are that's the thing threatening the planet." The red one withdrew his guns.

"Meaning, if I kill it, I can get back to Deaneil." The dog growled, charging at it with an impressive speed.

"The hell are you doing!? You can't rush that thing!"

"You mean *You* can't. If you're too chicken, then bail already."

"Not a good idea to stay on here anyway." Stagg grumbled, hearing the hatchling yelp and get pulled behind him. Turning around to see Sinality jump off the Houtainion with Dia in her arms, and landing with a tumble. "Come on, Saber!" The two jumped off and took cover behind some large rocks along the field.

"Dumbass doesn't know what he's getting into!"

"Actually, he's taken them on before, but always with Deaneil behind his back. We can do it, but he'll need backup."

"I was afraid you might say that." The fox grumbled, looking at his clip. "Eleven bullets left from what the kid gave me."

"It'll have to do." He muttered, looking around the fields. "Where's Dia?"

Stratacast roared loudly, getting the attention of the large red beast overlooking a village in the distance. Getting it to roar back and crackle its paws with lightning, attempting to launch the violent energy forward, but underestimated the dog's speed. Getting rammed really hard in the lower gut, but

not pushed more than a step. Grabbing a hold of the purple one, the Cryo tried to shock it again. Only to be surprised by the sudden cannon that ripped out of the Houtainion's back and fired point blank in the creature's face.

Angry with the canine, the Cryo tossed him behind it. Covering both paws with plasma and throwing it at the dog in midair, but once again it was interrupted. A bullet getting into the softer tissue within the ear and throwing off its concentration. A heavy growl came from it as it searched for where the shot came from. Nearly pinpointing the rocks the fox was hiding behind, and allowing the panther to approach it unnoticed. Climbing the beast from its tail and following the long mane, trailing its spine.

At the base of its tail, she let go of the little hatchling. Letting him grip the long strands of hair and hold himself up. Taking a few more climbs ahead, Sinality turned and looked at him, motioning the dragon to follow her. "N-no! I can't!" He whimpered, getting a harsh glare from her. Sliding down to him again, she grabbed the little one by the back of the head and looked deep into his eyes. Again, he whimpered, but slowly felt that fear begin to fade. Turning into something more empowering... Courage. "...Okay." He whispered, nodding and getting the feline to nod as well, climbing again. Feeling the Cryo begin to walk forward a bit made it a bit unsettling to press on, but Dia took a breath. Then started upwards.

A large blast came from nearby, blowing up a large rock as the large creature wildly shot in the direction of Saber and Stagg. "Fuck, one direct hit of those, and we're toast." The fox cursed.

"I can get a good look at it, but there's no way you can take it out with bullets until something weakens it's armor." The green one grunted, shielding his head over another blast of plasma. "Though, you've succeeded in pissing it off by shooting it in the ear. I'll give you that."

"Told you I could hit it." Saber grumbled. "What about an Outbreak?"

"We've talked about this. The universe won't hold-"

"Yeah, but how long would it hold?"

"Without permanent damage? ...Three seconds?" Another blast as Stagg growled.

"That's more than what I'll need. But I also need time." Another blast, and the fox noticed only one other rock remained besides theirs. "And a few more rocks would do."

Hearing another plasma shot charge, the two braced themselves, only to hear the challenging roar of Stratacast in the distance. "Get ready..." The lizard said, overlooking their cover.

Furious, the huge purple dog roared loudly at the Cryo, bracing his body and growling at the sheer

pain this was putting through his body. Several mechanical legs shot out of his sides and dug deep into the lands around him. Nailing him into the ground as a large metal platform was shot out of his back and folded down. Within it, more mechanical parts began to unfold and shift out, making two very large cannons with two large chambers for ammo beside him.

The large red one remembered the barrel that shot it in the face before, and put up an energy shield in front of it to guard the attack. As the first round echoed nearly planet-wide, it nearly broke the shield with a single shot. As a heavy, twelve tonne shell came out from the right cannon, the left loaded its first twenty-two foot round. Firing it and completely shattering the Cryo's shield, hitting it in the chest but not penetrating its hide. Several more shots echoed and quaked the earth, staggering the red creature, but only doing enough damage to fracture its ribs.

Every breath brought pain into the creature's chest as it struggled to keep balance. After a few moments, Sinality and Dia'vidd landed about halfway on its muzzle, enough for the creature to focus on them. Gripping its Fear tightly, the two smaller creatures slammed its snout and released the control through its eyes. Causing them to burst outward in a horrible bloody mess and the Cryo to roar loudly in pain. Making the creature reflex its head upward and turn around, resulting in flinging the two in the air.

Down on the ground, and still half deaf, Stagg hit the fox's shoulder to get his attention. Pointing at a specific spot on his own neck, he shouted for Saber to take the shot now. In one fluid motion, he rolled out of cover, and concentrated his Outbreak. Giving him a slight after-image to all his movements. Creating a clear, large bubble in the space between him and the Cryo, he took a shot through it. As the bullet passed through, it accelerated dramatically, and hit the red creature in the artery. The unreal force abiding the projectile made it able to pierce through the weak spot in the hide, and the massive winds trailing behind it made the wound rip open wildly. Tearing off flesh and bone alike.

After firing the pistol, Saber released the Outbreak. Timing it around the two second mark. After the damage was dealt, there was next to nothing left of the Cryo's head. Shreds of it showered down to the ground, and some were still attached to the body by threads. The bubble he created still remained in the air, as the fox and the lizard took a moment to relax. Only to still notice that the panther and dragon were still falling, the little one heading straight into the bubble. "Kid-kid-kid! **For Fuck's Sake, Fly Around It!**" Saber barked loudly, only to see him pass through it, and slam into the ground with a very loud crack.

"No!!" Stagg yelled, rushing towards the dragon and looking him over. Hearing Sinality hit the ground a bit hard, but rolled to distribute the force.

"What the hell!? He has wings!"

"But he's too young to know how to fly." The lizard muttered, still carefully studying the unconscious hatchling. "He's still alive."

"**The hell happened?**" The dog caught up, looking down at the black dragon in the grass. The

expressions on the other two males basically told him. Growling a bit in cursing, he galloped over to a nearby hill and looked in the distance. **"There's a city over there."**

"That's probably our best bet then. Any chance you can make a stretcher?" Stagg asked.

"It'll be made out of guns and straps, but yes."

"That will do. Saber, help me lift him."

It was the least aerodynamic thing that could possibly be used as a spaceship, and he wasn't sure if that irked the dragon more, or that it was made with such folly. Yet powered by... *Something*. Something unknown to him, which only worried him a bit more. It was a chance though, to make it back to his old life. He just had to figure out how.

He knew space well. Used several vehicles, and even drifted frozen, yet conscious though it before. But never was he so eager to find them. It was a desperation that was stressing him out more and more. That, and passing by asteroids that were a bee's shit from touching the glass. Whipping by helplessly by a random trajectory made by a mad wizard, all Haytre could do was just watch and wait.

"It's fascinating, isn't it?" It nearly jumped the black one out of his scales, hearing a voice that he thought would never come to life again. "To think we're all just one small part to all of this." The smaller white dragon took a look around, then gave the black one a smile.

"Shea..." Haytre whispered. Looking at the old face and then noticing there wasn't a reflection in the glass. "You're..."

"Never too far from you." His brother smiled. "But I am... Curious."

"You always were." He returned a sadder smile. "Ever since we were hatchlings, you were always..."

"Intrigued by everything? Yes. I suppose I was." Another gaze at the constant changing view. "But I could never help it. It was all just..."

"So interesting. Fascinating. You wanted to be part of it all so badly." The white one double taked, getting the black a bit embarrassed. "I... Met someone that was *a lot* like you."

It made the younger one chuckle. "You mean smart? Curious?"

"Kresskre?" Haytre teased, making them share a chuckle. "Yes, he was all of these things."

"Can... I ask you a question?"

"I have the feeling you'll be asking me more than one." The black one sat down on his haunches.

"Did you like him?" The loud groan and epic snout tossing sent the white one into laughter.

"I had a feeling it was going to come to this. Damn bear."

"Bartan has nothing to do with this." It made the black one double take. "And... Brother. You need to answer *honestly*." Shea really stretched out the word, giving Haytre a big hint, and making him think. Of course, too much thinking got his ears purple, and the smaller one to giggle a bit.

"Stop it." He grumbled, but only making it worse on himself. "I... Wanted to. But the last time I gave myself up for another..."

"It hurt. Badly, I know." The white one leaned up against him. "And to lose another would be too devastating."

"That's why I was so mad at him. That stupid idea to just give himself up for a dead land..."

"It hurt." The black one nodded. "It hurt because you liked him."

"I only liked him because he reminded me of you. Not because I was in love with him-" A red siren went off as the box began to change direction. "Okay-okay-okay! I liked him that way!" The siren stopped and the course reset. Getting the larger one to grumble, whimper, lay down, and cover his eyes with his paws. "Force it out of me, why don't you?"

"And for someone who didn't have a lower horn-" A loud whimper. "Stones-" Another whimper. "Or a tailhole-" Another very loud whimper sent the younger one into laughter. Unable to continue sitting, and fell to the floor.

"Why!?" The black one hissed, covering himself with his wings.

"You could..." A few breaths to compose himself. "You could never show him that you did. The only

thing you could do is make yourself *good* company. And I say 'good' very very very loosely." Shea smirked, nudging the larger one a few times until he groaned. "Why?"

A heavy sigh from Haytre. "...Because I didn't like it. The feelings he gave me, how he made me feel so important, yet never feared me. Was never jealous, envious, or sexually curious about my body. He liked me for... Me. And I could never understand how anyone would like that."

"You're not that bad, brother." He said with a chuckle.

"You don't get it Shea... I didn't hide anything from myself besides those feelings. I was misanthropic about everything, I was unsupportive, pessimistic. I held onto no faith what-so-ever. I was so brutally honest about everything, did what I could to put that Kresskre down... Yet every time, he just laughed about it. Smiled at me... Loved me for that horrible monster these lives have turned me into. That immortality has made me..."

"And that's why it hurt so much to see him..."

"Just leave on such a ridiculous purpose. It was because of me that he felt worthless, useless, helpless. I'm the one who pushed him to make something of himself, but I didn't want to lose him. So of course I shut down his ideas, his faiths and beliefs. I just didn't want to be alone, and it wasn't until I really lost him that I found out what I really felt. And my second chance... I left him instead. Leaving him alone with the entire weight of the world on his shoulders..." The two were quiet for a few moments. "...I shouldn't have been given this name of Atlas. He should've. I gave up holding up the world. Threw it down and discarded it, not caring about whoever it hurts. And of course, Ziik would be the one to pick it up and carry it. Smiling as it bent his shoulders and broke his ribs with every step. Just knowing how much it meant to others, whether they knew of him or not."

"Haytre..."

"That is a name that suits me. One who cares little about the life around him. One who hates and despises it, all because he's forced to see it over and over. Jealous of how it ends, and all I do is just begin endlessly. You want to know where it came from? That name?" He uncovered himself with his wings, and looked deep into those sad blue eyes. "It's ancient draconic, more ancient than ours. When I first switched Atonements in front of our nest, it was the first thing an Elder called me... 'Death Incarnate.' Something to fear. Something to avoid. Something to Shun and turn their backs to. Nothing to befriend. Since that day, I wore that name, stained onto my chest. Long past the day that my real name was of existence."

"Brother..." The white one whimpered. "...Yet you use it as a form of respect. Friendship towards others." The larger one slowly curled his neck. "I know you've learned to use it either to your advantage or just adopted it as your label, but there's a meaning behind it deeper than its bazillion year old translation. It no longer means Death Incarnate. It should only mean... You."

"Me being what though? What everyone wants me to be? What I want me to be? Or what I actually am?" The black one said a bit coldly.

"Whatever you want it to be. But that name will always mean something different to each person who hears it. And many of them think you're a Her-"

"Don't." Haytre interrupted him, taking a breath. "Please." And the white one nodded.

"...Belief is a powerful thing, brother. If you travel the worlds believing you're a monster, then you're going to turn out like one."

"You never seemed to be the type to believe."

"I do. I need to believe to find reason. Or else reason will never be found." The black one was quiet. "What do you believe in, brother?"

"Is this another question that will be choked out of me?"

"Just a common one, that is all. There's no right or wrong answers when it comes to faith." Haytre detested that word, making his ears go back and spines raise a bit. He's lost too many people due to blind faith. "Destiny? Love? Freedom?"

"All Freedom Is False." He replied coldly.

"Not yours." That time it got the attention of the purple eyes. "Ever since death, you've never been bound to anything. All Freedom is, is the belief that you are capable of doing anything."

"Like dying?"

"...You can die, there is a method available to you that will let you finally rest." Shea lowered his head, staring at the ground. "But... You're not ready yet." The black one didn't reply for a bit.

"...What do I believe in...?" Haytre pondered.

"I know you believe in love. You've always have. Regardless of who it was towards, you always believed you loved them. Or else you wouldn't be here."

"You mean flying through space in a glass box?" He grumbled, getting the younger one to chuckle.

"Yes. Because you believe there is a way to see your family again. See your son again, and hold him in your paws. You want this so badly, that you're flying through space in a glass box talking to a personification of your psyche." Another strange look from the black one made Shea chuckle. "You have the Freedom to do anything, brother. You just need to believe that it isn't False."

"...Then I believe in that. I believe in the love of my mates and my son. And I believe in... You." It made the white dragon smile, coming close to him once again and giving him a friendly lick. One that felt so real.

"We're almost there. Just a Hugg-"

"No." The black one's denial got Shea to laugh again. "No more Huggbees. I don't believe in Huggbees."

"You should. I think it's what powers this ship." He teased, giving the older brother a hug. Haytre tossed his snout a bit, but hugged him back. "Keep your spirits up brother. And don't be afraid."

"Afraid of what?" He tried pulling off the white one, but noticing him much bigger, and silver.

"Affection." The sapphire eyed dragon said, giving him a deep kiss and making the black dragon whimper. Snapping out of what was almost a daydream, Haytre looked around and found no trace of Ziik. He was alone. Seeing his ears and muzzle purple in his reflection, he whimpered embarrassingly again and shook his head violently. Regaining his sights, he saw a planet dead ahead of the direction of his ship, and once again whimpered. Slumping his shoulders and wings.

"...This is gonna hurt."

The woman woke up sharply in the chambers, just before the other did. Breathing heavily from the bad dream she had. "Elexus, is that you?"

"Yes. Tia? What happened?" She asked, barely being able to see from the very early morning light. It felt so much warmer than they remembered... Just like a couple of days before.

"I'm not sure. It all seemed like a dream."

"Did... Atlas...?" She seen the woman nod at her, and the two held each other close. After a moment, the brown haired woman's eyes widened. "Dia!" The two scampered up and rushed out the door. Following down the hallway to the hatchling's room. The crib was there, but it was empty. With no signs of a struggle or blood. It half relieved the two, but concerned them at the same time.

"Where could he be?"

"He said earlier that he was traveling with a strange group of animals. Odds are they were looking around for whatever Bartan was talking about." Tia bit her lip while thinking.

"Let's see if we can find Atlas." The other woman nodded and the two began searching the castle. After minutes of calling and searching, they did hear the Feys call back.

"It's good to know you two are still alive." Feyris greeted them at the castle gate.

"We awoke at the beach."

"We woke up in the chambers together. Have you seen Atlas?" Tia asked, getting the two to shake their heads. "What about Dia?"

"Is he missing?" Feyon asked, getting the women to nod. "Curses..."

"The best place to start looking would most likely be in a town or a city."

"Yes. At least we still have a boat we can take to the mainland." Elexus said, heading into the kitchen. "I'll grab a few things, we'll leave as soon as possible."

"Okay, it looks like it's morning at least. And no pink in the sky, it should be alright." The blonde began heading down to prep the boat.

"We're coming too." It surprised the woman.

"We... Need to find the little one."

"And you might need us."

"Are you sure? You haven't left the island since you've come here." Tia pet the two heads, and they nodded. "Okay. Come with me, I could use your help with the mast."

Daylight rose fast as the two made an easy journey to the harbor. Not knowing where to go first, they started to search the familiar city as a group. Of course the Kveldulf got many strange looks, it didn't stop them from trying to track the hatchling's scent. "He's here somewhere."

"But we can't quite place it." They said sadly to Tia.

"Keep trying." She smiled, giving them a pet.

"You... Have his DNA." A voice behind the woman said, getting a bit surprised to turn around and see a large green, biped lizard in a cheap cloak. "Are you his mother?" He asked.

"Who's? Dia'vidd's?" Her heart raced when he nodded.

"We have him nearby, in a sick room. Follow me." He led the way, getting the others to follow through the streets and into a rather shady looking building, the three were almost hesitant about going in. "We won't deceive you." Stagg said, holding the door opened for them. Not expecting the woman to touch him on the muzzle and study him for a moment.

"...Okay, I trust you." Tia said, going inside. And the others followed. Once again almost startled by the Fox, Panther, and Stratacaster around a bed. "Dia...?" The blonde whispered and rushed towards the hatchling on the bed.

"Well, looks like you found someone to help. Or make things worse, it's hard to say." Saber grumbled, looking at the other two that joined in the room.

"What happened to him?" Elexus asked.

"He fell from..." The yellow one started, not really knowing how to finish.

"Something tall, let's just say that. And... Landed at about seventeen times terminal velocity. His ribs are shattered, and one of his lungs collapsed. But he's still alive." Stagg explained sadly.

"He's tough, but we're not sure if he'll pull through. This place doesn't seem to have the means to heal him. Unless you know someone." Stratacast tried to sound sincere.

"Maybe, but he's nowhere to be found." Elexus said, overlooking Dia on the other side. Hearing him whimper a little bit as the two carefully pet him. The whimpers eventually grew louder into yelps, while

his ribs began to crack a bit loudly. "What's wrong? What's going on?"

"Dia..." The blonde whispered, only to hear one last pop and hear him go silent. What felt like ages went on before the dragon breathed in deeply again, moaning awake and blinking his eyes opened. "Dia?"

"...Mom?" He muttered, yawning and snapping his jaws a few times as he shifted himself without any trouble. "Where are we?" She just pet him a bit, holding onto his head as Stagg took a step in. Tracing a few fingers around his back.

"He's... Completely healed. Everything working perfectly, barely even a mark left." He said, getting everyone there to look at him. The Kveldulves gazed at the Oracles mostly for an explanation. But when they saw the blonde hug the little one tightly and lift him up, they relaxed a bit. Still unsure of what was going on.

As for the others, the three were looking at Stagg's rather sad face for a moment, but then put their own concerns behind them. Enjoying the lively hatchling that they've traveled with, and were just happy that someone was returned home safely. The only one that was missing was...

A rather large quake was suddenly felt in the ground. As the lizard and the others gave each other a very concerned look, they all rushed out and outside of the city. The Kveldulf and the Oracles soon after them.

The black dragon grunted awake. Hearing the chirping of several birds circling over his head and stars, he shook it violently and tried to bite the cartoon bird. Catching one, but it squeaked and tasted terribly like soap, causing him to spit out several bubbles and make a face. Getting up, and cracking his neck and back into place, he looked over at the glass box that he was riding in. Completely totaled and in a small crater, one rather small for entering the atmosphere.

"Dad!" Dia's voice came from a distance. At first, Atlas thought it was his imagination, but soon after spotting the town, he could see several people coming towards him. His mates, the Feys, and his son being held by Tia, almost scampering to get off and rush towards the larger dragon through the thick grass.

"David!" He roared in excitement, catching the little one when he jumped at his father, and rolling on his back with the little one in his arms. Licking each other and purring loudly as the others caught up. "Thank all of dragon-kind you're alright!"

"You made it here! How?" The little one asked through his giggles.

"It's a long story. It doesn't matter, you're here now. I'm here now. And I don't think anyone is missing." Another tight hug while the others caught up.

"Did you just call him David?" Tia asked, with the brightest smile on her face. He just rolled his eyes and pulled her into the hug. Elexus and the Feys too when they came about.

The other four stayed back a bit far, not wanting to intrude on their moment. "So... You know what happened." Saber stated to the lizard, once again looking at his cigarettes and pushing the urge to use another.

"I... Know." Stagg exhaled through his nostrils, just glancing at the others. "Everyone here knows that Cryos never stay dead. And that one we killed didn't sink into the earth like they normally do."

"What are you saying? What happened to the kid?" Strata grumbled.

"...The planet won't let its weapon die. Let's just say that." And the rest went quiet. Until the group got done with their reunion. Getting up, Atlas walked over at the four.

"You're the ones he was talking about?" The dragon asked.

"More than likely." Saber grumbled.

"You actually look... Familiar..." Looking over them, stopping and tilting his head at the stratacaster. "Didn't you used to have breasts?"

It made the yellow one grunt embarrassingly, then growl loudly. "You're probably thinking of Deaneil, they look similar." The fox corrected him.

"Racist." Strata grumbled.

"Haven't we met?" The red one grumbled at the yellow.

"Good point."

"Thank you. All of you. You saved his life." Atlas said. "Bartan taught me how to get to the Basilica, from there, I can get you home."

"Finally, some good news!" Saber gave a sigh of relief. "Lead the way." The dragon nodded, and the yellow one also followed. Stopping to look at the lizard, he gestured to him. "Coming?"

Stagg stopped and looked at Sinality for a few moments. "...No. We need to find someone first. We'll find another way to make it back."

"Suit yourself." The fox shrugged, and the green one walked up to the panther.

"We'll find him." Though the gaze was slightly cold, she nodded. "Let's just say goodbye to him first, okay?" A slight roll of her eyes. "Oh come on. I know you bonded with him at least a little. You basically

took him under your wing during that Cryo fight. It was stupid and reckless, but you believed in him." She gave him a shove and walked towards the hatchling as he released a chuckle.

It was a normal day, just like any other. The large black one found it hard to believe after everything that's happened. For now, he could just lay down, soak up the sun, and relax in the green grass. All while his son was having a nap. As much as he was worried about the changes and experiences Dia went through, he was still his rather normal hatchling self. Just... Smarter. Speaking more clearly, and learning faster. The little one wasn't even a year old, yet it seemed like he was nearly thirteen in human years.

But that was a worry for another time. If anything, Haytre felt proud of his son and his accomplishments. And, as awkward as it was for the dragon to say that to him, he managed to tell Dia... In a horribly embarrassed sentence that was unlikely he even understood. Oh how Tia and Elexus laughed at him, but told the larger dragon that it would get easier over time. The important thing was that Dia knew that his father loved him.

That his father loved him... The statement replayed in his head several times. It was such a new experience for Haytre, this past year. And the recent events really got him to blossom that feeling, as horrible and stressful as they were. Perhaps maybe... He would turn out to be an alright father then after all. All Haytre needed was to... Believe. Just as Tia did with him.

A few footsteps in the grass got the black one to put his smile away. Muttering something and stretching out his limbs. "Good afternoon." One of the Feys said, smiling at the rather surprised dragon.

"Expecting someone else?"

"Just one of the girls to ask me what I feel like for supper." He yawned, seeing them take a moment to make sense of what he just said. Laying his head back down, he felt them lay down as well beside him. Flicking an ear towards them as they sat in silence for a bit. Until he moved his wedge head towards them as if to ask what they wanted.

"...About a year and a half ago, when we first met." Feyris started.

"Yes? What about it?"

"...We didn't believe what you said. About not needing anymore power."

"We've been... Doing everything we can to not displease you, and not... Regret that decision."

"Feys?" The dragon questioned.

"Atlas, we're thankful for what you've done for us."

"Very thankful. For getting us out of that trap."

"Giving us protection, a safe home to live quietly in."

"And... Sparing our lives once again. We're sorry we can't be... The Guard Dog you wanted."

The dragon chuckled. "Perhaps it's just a chain of bad luck then." He gave them a smirk, then an awkward grunt. "I... Don't really think you are that, though. The Worst Guard Dog Ever." They looked at him as his eyes turned away to the distance. "Actually, to be honest, I'm quite fond of what you do around here."

"You... Are?" Feyon asked, the two heads looking at each other and then at the dragon's ears getting purple.

"Y-yes. I'm just... Defendant, I guess, around... Males."

"Does that mean...?"

"What we did that night with Bartan...?"

"Was horribly awkward, yes." The black one snorted. "But..."

"Are you upset?" The dragon was quiet for a while, and the two wolves lowered their heads.

"...No." Atlas said, sighing afterwards. "I... Need to stop doing this at some point." He mumbled, feeling the two pairs of yellow eyes look at him.

"Doing what?" Feyris asked, the two getting uncomfortable when the dragon took a step backwards and wrapped an arm around the Kveldulf. Laying there for a few moments in silence before whimpering.

"...What are you... Doing?"

"I'm..." He grunted awkwardly before clearing his throat. "I'm giving you a... Hug."

Another long moment of silence. "...A hug?" It made the dragon whimper embarrassingly. Causing his wings to fold and cover over the three of them. Though, it made the two smile, and Feyon gave him a lick on the neck.

"Now you're just making it worse." The large one grumbled, getting the three to chuckle a little bit. "I'm... Glad to have you here, Feyon Feyris. You make... All of us happy, and I wouldn't sacrifice you for anything. Not even for them." It made the two smile brightly, nuzzling the black one while he nuzzled them back. Giving them a few licks and then tried to spit out the fur stuck on his tongue. "Seriously, how are you *still* shedding?"

The two chuckled. "I guess we're still not used to the warm seasons."

"Just to be clear, about the... Sessions..." It made the dragon whimper a bit.

"You mean... Back end service?" He cleared his throat. "Eventually the two will talk you into doing it again. Just... Don't do it to one of them. If you... Pressure me until I burst, I'll come back. They won't." He said awkwardly, and they nodded.

"Bartan says if they take one, then they'll be fine."

"But not both." It made Atlas double take at him. "Oh, right. You didn't see how we... Function."

"Would you like to?" A loud embarrassing whimper from him.

"Hello?" Tia's voice came outside of their makeshift tent.

"Perhaps another time." Feyon said, tapping the dragon's arm to get up and giving him a lick. After exiting, they greeted the woman with a pair of smiles.

"Forgive him if he's purple."

"Alright." Tia pet them and then started tickling the black one's wings. "Come on. Now I'm curious at what you were talking about to get you like this."

"You really don't want to know." He grumbled.

"Was it about them mounting you?" A loud whimper. "Oh come on. I bet it felt wonderful."

"Tia..." Another whimper, and he Atoned to air. Taking a breath before uncovering himself and confronting her laughter. "No more getting ideas in my head, you."

"It's not my fault you enjoy it. Besides, so do they. We all do."

"You say that now, but wait until they seed you and nearly make you explode." He grumbled, rubbing

his lower belly. "I swear I still feel like I'm carrying that extra weight."

"That's only because you've been lazy this past year." He growled at her playfully. "I'm sure it will go down once you get a flying buddy."

"Yes." He smiled. "And you never know. When he gets big enough, he can take you flying as well."

"No." The Oracle bluntly said, getting the large one to chuckle loudly. "I've gotten to the point where I trust your wings. His, I'm not too sure."

"I dunno. We trusted him to save the world, and he didn't do half bad." The two looked out in the clear distance. Just barely being able to hear Dia chirp inside the castle. "Sounds like someone is up."

"Yeah, we should go see him. Perhaps take him outside for a bit before supper." Atlas nodded. Picking up the blonde and placing her on his back before walking up to the castle. "Over a year here and I still can't believe how beautiful it is. A little piece of heaven." He smiled, trying to look back at her.

"Yes. It Really Is A Little Piece of... The Right Side Of Heaven."

"...By the way, Elexus is pregnant." It immediately got the dragon to freeze in place and whimper

loudly. Toppling over and landing on his belly while the woman laughed, barely keeping her balance.

"T-that's not funny!" He hissed. "You're joking, right!?" All he got for replies were laughter.
"Right? ...Tia?" Another whimper as he covered his head once again with his wings.