

Chapter 4: Blind Hatred

Kathia sat by one of the trees as her mind was lost in despair and shock about the loss of her home and most importantly, her family. "Mom... Daddy..." she whispered to herself. Images of Mr. Rittevon being eaten alive and Mrs. Rittevon getting burned down would haunt her tonight and every day from now on. Her throat choked with sobs being very quiet at first until they gradually became louder to the point where Kathia was crying and wailing.

"Miss? Are you alright? Are you hurt?" someone asked. The girl looked up to the concerned voice and through watery eyes, she saw what looked like a white hybrid holding a damp cloth to his nose standing in front of her. He had black hair with a similar colored mane running from his neck to the tail tip, long ears that stood like a rabbit, light blue eyes, a black chest and black toes. Now scared out of her wits, she started sobbing out louder, thinking that this "thing" was going to kill her like the other dragons. The hybrid slowly moved a bit closer and said, "I'm not going to hurt you..." He paused when three men, who have heard Kathia's cries, came by to see what was up with her.

"Hey, what's going on over there?" one of them asked. Then when they saw the hybrid, they all got alarmed and cried, "Oh shoot, it's another dragon!"

The other man said, "Hang on, I'll chase it out of here." Taking out a knife, he walked up towards the hybrid swinging his knife and yelled, "Scram, dragon! Get your butt out of here!"

"Nnngh?" the hybrid groaned momentarily, cocking an eyebrow at their initial reaction and tilting his head slightly in a misunderstanding head-shake. Then he caught the man's wrist with his free hand and held it firmly.

The man was taken by surprised and murmured, "What?!" He tried to twist his hand free in hopes to get himself away before the creature would attack him, but it was futile under the hybrid's strong grip.

"I'm trying to help, thanks. I'm not a dragon... not exactly..." the hybrid trailed off, giving the man a slight shove back as he released him.

"What?! Not a dragon? Then what are you?" the other man asked as they were all confused. Maybe he was just some guy in a costume? But it looked too real to tell.

The hybrid stared at the men blankly for a moment before answering, "I'm a mechanic." He looked back to Kathia and answered, "I came out of the shop and saw everything go crazy... I heard her crying and thought she might be hurt..." Then he moved in front of the girl and crouched down to her level. "So, are you alright?" he asked again.

Kathia heard, but hadn't listening to everything, due to being lost in her grief. So when the creature got

near her, she backed away and cried, "Get away from me!"

The hybrid shook his head and picked up one of her hands, holding it firmly in his, yet not to hurt her. His other hand lightly petted the top of her head. "Hey, hey. Just calm down. You're alright," he said quietly, seeing she had no major injuries. "What happened?"

The girl immediately calmed down when the creature didn't mean any harm to her. "Dragons... they killed my parents. They ate daddy and they kill my mom with a fireball," she told her story. "They were everywhere; they killed our guards and servants and burned down the neighborhood. It was horrible!"

Everyone felt pity for the teen after listening to her little tale. The hybrid looked around and saw that the crowd was starting to thin as the main horde of people and dragons had already fled. "We should probably move then. Are you okay to walk, or do you need assistance?" he asked.

"I'm fine. I was lucky not to get hurt by those horrible beasts, but... I just wish the same thing for my parents," said Kathia before she walked in the direction of where the other humans were going. When she got to the new camp, the humans had set up what tents they had carried for some, but not all the people to sleep in tonight. She went in line to get herself registered as a refugee and to get a free sleeping bag, provided there were any left. Luckily, she was able to get one upon registration and found an empty tent that looked it hasn't been occupied. She went inside and got inside the sleeping bag to get some rest for tomorrow.

The next morning, Kathia woke up to the smell of smoke outside her tent. Her initial thought was that the camp was being attacked by dragons until she heard no screaming, but rather people chatting with each other. She got outside the tent and that the cooks were only cooking breakfast for the survivors. The meal consisted of foods from the cans, which were sausages, beans, and veggies. The redhead joined the line and waited for her turn to get her plate and drink. After she got her breakfast, she sat by the tree and started eating her food. The meal wasn't savory as the home-cooked foods made by her chefs or the gourmet food from the expensive restaurants, heck it was pretty bland; but it was all she had to eat if she wanted to fill her stomach.

Kathia was now finished with her breakfast and soon her thoughts took her back to last night when the dragons broke free and viciously attacked the whole city. Memories of her parent's deaths haunted her and left a scar in her mind. *'Why? Why did this have to happen? How did this happen? I thought we had it all to keep those damn lizards under our control. What went wrong?'* she wondered in disbelief. Her eyes looked off to the side and saw a few lonely children who were saddened by the loss of their parents, then her sight drifted to everyone else who lost their loved ones. *'Those monsters took everything from us and left us with despair. This isn't right! No one should have to suffer like this! Not me, my parents, or other people for that matter,'* the girl thought with grief that eventually grew into anger. She got up with her fists clenched and yelled, "Those dragons won't get away with this! I hope

they all pay for this someday; every last blasted one of them! One way or another, something or someone will have to teach those monsters a lesson!" Then she let out an angry that caught the attention of the refugees, who wondered what was up with the redhead.

Atlas used fire magic to unfreeze some of the hybrids and the apples out of their icy cocoons. She cast fire aura around the hybrids to heat them to a temperature that was comfortable for the magi and Danielle to eat. The spell was weakened to harmless flames so that hybrids will be warmed up without getting burned black. The apples were left alone as they were fine for Kylie to eat cold. When the bodies were done cooking, Atlas dispelled the fire auras and served the breakfast to herself and Danielle.

Minutes after breakfast was over, Atlas put the hybrid bones to the side and turned to the mouth of the cave. Her nieces saw her leaving and wondered what was up. "Aunt Atlas, where are you going?" asked Danielle.

The magi stopped for a minute and answered gruffly, "I'm going to tear down the lab that created the monsters who killed your parents." After last night's event, there were a few things in mind that Atlas felt compelled to do to carry out her revenge: destroy the lab, kill the hybrids, and their creators who made them. "I'll be back, girls. Don't leave the cave or talk to strangers while I'm gone," she told them.

"Alright, take care, Aunt Atlas," Kylie said to her.

The dragoness flew out of her home and went to look for the lab. Unfortunately, the place was hard to find since she knew nothing of its location. *'Damn, this would be easier, if I could ask Flarina where the place is at. But she's dead... Grr! I can't wait to find it and when I do, I'll rip them all to shreds!'* Atlas thought angrily. It took her about an hour to finally find the place she was looking for. The image of the lab, Flarina once shared with her, made it easy for Atlas to recognize; well almost. The building looked rundown with some of the windows being broken and a few holes on the walls from top to bottom. She landed at the door and broke it down with to get inside. The magi went through hallways and rooms to look for the scientists and their creations. She noticed that the place had been abandoned apparently as there were dust everywhere. Even more curious was the foul smell looming around in the atmosphere. She finally found a hybrid lying on her path, but it was a skeleton. *'Well good riddance! A good hybrid is a dead one!'* the dragoness thought. Soon, she came across another skeleton of hybrid and one that belonged to a human. The further along she went, the more corpses she saw of the two species. *'What the heck? Did someone kill these things a long time ago?'* Atlas thought. *'How and why?'* If it was dragons, then they must have been lucky to rebel and free themselves from their enemies without the need for the Spell.

But how wrong she was, because as soon as she entered the room where the slaves used to be kept, she found many dragon skeletons. "What?!" the dragoness gasped. Looks like they were behind the massacre. Territorial as some dragons were, it was highly unlikely for at least the strongest slave to go

against everybody. And what would the humans gain by betraying their fellow scientists? Atlas came to the conclusion that the culprits were hybrids. The proof of that was the small claw marks she had seen on the walls, on the tables, and on the equipment. *'It was probably Ramkot and his friends that did this,'* she thought. *'Well they're dead now, but what if there are others out there?'* She couldn't bring her nieces outside to play yet, unless she knew for sure that these monsters were extinct. Perhaps she should check the whole lab first, in case there were hybrids here. Atlas went to search around in every place until she caught a scent that was almost draconic. Thinking she found the hybrid, she decided to call to lure the creature over to her. "Alright you mangy half-breed, come out wherever you are! I'm a hybrid-slayer who's here to rip you to bloody pieces like you did with everyone else here!" she challenged.

After a long while of searching the whole lab, Atlas found no living being. She went back to the lobby room she entered from and was about to head out the door, when a small golden dragon came out of the shadows and asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm Atlas," the magi answered. "Are you one of the lab's slaves? What happened here? I came here to destroy the hybrids and scientists, but everyone around here is dead."

"No, I just hid here since last night... everyone lost their minds and went on rampages," the dragonet said idly. He looked around at his surroundings and made a quiet snort of laughter. "This place has been abandoned for years. Everyone is dead. Rumor was that a hybrid rampaged over the place and destroyed everything. Even the computers." Then he introduced himself, "Name's Akuma."

"Well your rumor's probably right, Akuma, because those dead guys seem like they were done in by a hybrid. I encountered 10 of them last night and killed them all after they took away the parents of my nieces." The magi looked down and shook her head sadly and said, "Those poor girls; they didn't need to lose their parents this early. They're only a month old." *'And I didn't need to lose my sister this early after the Spell,'* she thought. She looked back up and continued, "I hope the hybrid who did this was one of the ones I killed. We don't need those blood-crazed killers running around outside."

Akuma stared at Atlas blankly. He faintly felt his left eye twitch. His eyes narrowed slightly at Atlas as he responded coldly, "Yeah sure. Anything else?"

The magi noticed that tone and thought, *'What's his problem?'* She didn't bother ask him about, so instead she answered his question, "No. Now if you'll excuse me, I have a lab to destroy and burn down. So, I need you to get out while you still can. I want to put an end to the place that created those monsters for good." And to keep any human who wonders in from getting any ideas from the lab's secrets to make their living weapons; not that they could since the Spell destroyed all their technology.

"Tch," Akuma huffed quietly, swinging his head to the side to vent annoyance. The gold dragonet walked past Atlas. "Yeah, monsters," he repeated quietly as he passed her. With the winged hatchling gone out the door, the dragoness proceeded to get to the highest floor of the building from there, she started

busting down walls to get to the insulators and thermal protections keeping the steel columns from getting burned by fire. She ripped them off and kept pulling more of them until she couldn't anymore. So, she cut part of them off with her wind magic and let the other half fall down the interior tunnel. After that, she started casting fireballs everywhere in the room, igniting objects, equipment, and everything. Then she cast her strong fire beam spell at the unprotected steel column. She did the same process over again each time she went down a floor. By the time she was finished with all sections of the lab, Atlas came outside for fresh air. Her flames may not destroy the exterior of the lab, but at least she could do some damage to the interior. Next time, she was coming back with fuel to finish the job for good.

As she walked through the woods, she encountered what seemed to be a human boy with horns on his head. Atlas noticed that a particular scent that she smelled from him. Normally, humans and halflings would smell like humans; although halflings smelled a bit less than their purebred counterparts. This person had dragon scent on him, which means he was a hybrid. "Oh great, another one. I better put him out while he's still asleep," she said to herself. Then she cast an ice spear at him.

But unfortunately, the hybrid woke up and saw the glimmer of a spear. He scrambled to roll over, narrowly missing being skewered. "You again! You already interrupted my sleep once!" he shouted at the magi dragon. His chest rose and fell rapidly as he calmed himself from his near-death experience.

"What? That voice!" Atlas murmured to herself as she recognized how the hybrid sounded. "You're a hybrid?!" she asked. She should have known Akuma was one after he sounded angry when she brought up the conversation on his species.

Akuma sat up and stiffened slightly. "Yeah, I'm a hybrid," he snorted. "Suuuuuure, WE'RE the monsters, but you're the one going around DA DA-DA trying to STAB people!" Akuma growled. He still felt tired, but that didn't stop his loudmouth from running nonstop.

"Hah! Says you, the killing machine," the dragoness growled back. "You were born for the purpose of slaying dragons. You even go into an uncontrollable killing spree when you smell blood. Someone has to exterminate you freaks before someone winds up dead." She covered her body with the fire aura and continued, "And I'm going to put you down for good!" She casted fireballs at him.

The hybrid moved behind the nearest tree to use as a shield against the spells. "Ah yeah, I'm the killing machine. Not the sadistic psycho bitch trying to kill me unprovoked!" he shouted.

"I'm a sadistic psycho, huh? Well, what you do is no different when you go into Hunter's Mode. Killing dragons for fun, how disgusting!" Atlas growled, remembering the stories from Flarina about how hybrids enjoyed their killing sprees. Pretty soon the tree burned down, but then a sudden bright flash of yellow engulfed Akuma and he rushed out from his spot in a lightning fast dash. They were like leaps as he had to pause for each dash. "Hey! Get back here!" the magi yelled. Her fire aura disappeared and was replaced by a boosting wind spell that increased her flight speed by having the winds blow behind her

hard. She wasn't going to let the hypocrite of a hybrid get away and kill dragons at random. If he wasn't dead, then more people like Flarina and John would die.

"Yeah sure, except you have a choice. I don't. That makes you the true psycho here! I don't know what you have seen, but I'm not them and blaming me for someone else's shit seems REAL fair!" the boy shouted as he kept dashing.

"Sure you say you're different, but how do I know you're innocent? For all I know, you could be lying to save your skin just so you can go back to killing in peace!" Atlas yelled, distrustful of him. Soon she followed him into the ruins of the city, where the hybrid tripped over a small concrete obstacle on the road. He let himself flop to the ground, groaning in response to the feeling of hitting the ground. He shut his eyes and curled up again. *'Hah, looks like you're mine, half-breed. I'm going to make a popsicle out of you right now!'* she thought, smiling inwardly. The dragoness was about cast her ice stream spell at Akuma to cocoon his body in ice, but then stony pillar rose above ground and blocked her way. "What?" The magi hovered back a bit as she stood frozen in surprise for a few moments.

Then she heard someone yelling, "You've already been warned once! Your onslaught of the innocent will be tolerated no more!" And with that the deadly red spheres launched towards Atlas.

"Ahh!" the dragoness cried while moving to the side to dodge them. She looked down and saw the human from last night. "Oh, it's you again. Trying to help the hybrid, huh? Well listen human, if you get in my way. I'll have to take you down, too," she warned as balls of fire floated above her paws.

The boy didn't budge but instead rose his own hands up, balls of water forming above his palms. "I am issuing one final warning to you, dragon. Leave this place or die," he warned. The human took a defensive stance, waiting for the dragoness before him to make the first move.

Knowing her fire attacks would do nothing against water, the magi cancelled out her fireballs and replaced them with ice spears. "I'd rather die than let this killer run loose!" she yelled. Then she shot down the ice spears towards the boy. She figured that if he was out of the picture, she would get to the hybrid without any problems.

Then a black-maned black hybrid wearing a blue scarf jumped on a wall next to the boy and breathed out magma to melt the spears. "Hah, try a real hybrid. You've just been nipping at the heels of a weak dud. Kid no less," he smirked. "And I thought my taste in prey was bad."

A white-haired girl in a red outfit took cover behind a rock wall and said to the boy, "Should have just jumped to killing the filthy beast in the first place. Obviously, the thing is deranged and needs to be put down." She holstered an arrow and shot it at Atlas's right shoulder. The dragoness let out a pained yowl in response.

The white hybrid, who had just moved Akuma to set him against a rebuilt building, moved around the

wall and stood next to the others. "You're outnumbered here. You're making chaos where there is peace. You should leave," he told the magi.

Atlas pulled out the arrow and spat it to the ground. "Oh, now you're all in for it! You're going to rue the day you messed with me!" she yelled. She cast a wind aura spell on herself and then she fired wind blades at the humans and hybrids. She handled ten hybrids before, so four enemies plus that sleeping hybrid should be easy for her.

"Rue the day? Who even talks like that?" the girl laughed. "She really is deranged," she continued.

A small spotted black dragoness with yellow wings, known as a mirror dragon, lunged forth from the right side of the boy and his allies, flame spilling from her maw to cross before the blades and under them. The fires heated the air the blades were constructed of and slowed their movement drastically, as well as projecting them upwards. Her front claws dug into the ground as she halted her movement, hind hips swinging around so that she faced the large magi dragoness, a snarl ripping from her larynx, accompanied by an underlying drone of a hiss. There was an odd light of mischief in her eyes as the dragoness focused lightly on the earth beneath the magi, partially amplifying the gravity below her.

Fortunately, the wind aura was there to dispel the blades and keep Atlas from getting cut by her own magic. The magi glared down at the dragoness and yelled sarcastically, "Oh great, a human pet! Isn't that awesome? Now you listen here, midget. You're aiding the wrong side. Those humanoid creatures you're aiding aren't dragons; they're hybrids, monsters created by humans to be dragon-killings. They become even more savage and dangerous the moment they smell blood. So if you want your skin saved, I suggest you leave those scums along and help me kill them." She didn't want to have to kill this misguided dragoness, because she might have gotten the situation wrong. The blood from her wound and on the arrow would cause the hybrids to go into hunter's mood at any second now, thus having the mirror see the error of her ways. But that didn't happen as the wind aura was keeping them from smelling the blood.

The insult of the mirror dragoness being a midget pierced her honed ears as it drove a bolt of fury into her brain. Jaws parted lightly as she bared serrated teeth at the other draconic figure, the tiniest of drones murmuring from her form. After a moment, though, the static amplified and several lines of electricity jumped from her teeth and up her features, jumping down the line of her spine in a quick series of jumps before fizzling out at her tail. Her talons sparked slightly and her tail lashed, the fans upon her head flaring and extending outwards, spreading with aggression as she hissed. The fact that she would not side with the Magi due to the grudge sown from the seeds of the insult was engraved deeply into her mind. With the exception of the growls trickling through her throat and the electricity still arcing over her form and across her spider-webbed garments, the witty creature was oddly silent.

"You seem to know something about hybrids. But whatever you've faced before were shams. Jokes. Failed hybrids let go from pure pity. Good for you," the black hybrid sniggered.

"Oh so you're the stronger hybrids, huh? Well good for me, because I'll feel really good once you two are gone!" Atlas yelled with the intent to avenge her sister.

"You're the only one making trouble here," the other hybrid scolded. "We were trying to rebuild the city and you just came by trying to kill us. You're the only mindless killer here," he continued.

The magi responded to the white hybrid, "At least I'm doing this for a good purpose. Now die!" The hybrids breathed their respective magma and ice breaths at Atlas, but she cast a wind beam at them breaths, blowing the two breaths back with powerful winds.

The hybrid brothers easily moved out of the way of the reflected attack. The white hybrid yelled. "You are an evil being and everyone here can see right through you." He scolded, "You're the only killer here. Going after some kid. I don't know how you sleep at night."

Suddenly, a jet of blue flames flew out of nowhere at the magi and died upon hitting the aura. Atlas looked to the side and saw the black dragoness from last night. Apparently, she too was siding with the hybrids as well. "What?! You too?! What the hell is going on here?! Why would you side with me over these beasts who would kill you at any time?! Did you not see how ruthless hybrids can be?!" she yelled while still keeping her wind beam going at the hybrids' breaths. She was sure the black had seen and heard everything about the hybrids during the fight with Ramkot, so why pick the wrong side?

The young woman poked out again, firing three more arrows. The hybrid brothers zipped around at the same time, breathing their breaths on either side of the magi. Having gotten used to fast opponents after fighting hybrids, Atlas was ready for them. She intensified her wind aura and kept the attacks at bay. The black one jumped high with the attempt to slash at her with his claws, but he got blown back to the ground. Pieces of stone broke off from the boy's pillar and formed into three sturdy pikes of stone. "Dragon, have you not seen how ruthless hybrids can be? Have you not seen how vicious dragons can be? Have you not seen the atrocities committed by countless humans? I could keep going until every race has been listed, would that give me a righteous reason to go, chase down, and slaughter any one of them? You cannot condemn the whole for the deeds of a portion." The stone pikes rose up and one of them shot forward towards Atlas, while the other two stayed behind, still ready for use. The pike managed to break through the aura and stab Atlas on the wing, causing the dragoness to roar in pain. "I have fought Albel, a hybrid may I remind you, and he has shown me mercy. Does this sound ruthless to you, dragon?" He launched another pike and stabbed her other wing, sending the magi down to the ground. "I have been crushed by a building, only to be helped up by Fayt, another hybrid. You are misguided, and your mind has been poisoned by hatred." And with that he launched the final pike. Atlas turned to the side to avoid getting struck on the head; she took the hit on the side underneath her wing.

As the magi laid wounded on the ground as she glared back at her enemies as the mage's words rang again through her mind. He seemed to have a point as she had seen all that has happened last night but... Atlas pulled out the pike out of her chest and spat it on the ground. She said to the boy, "Okay, so the hybrids have shown kindness towards you. But I bet that's only because they're human like you."

"Wrong again, miss. We're more dragon than anything," the white hybrid corrected. "Only a small portion is human. So you've been attacking your own kin." The magi let out an angry growl; how dare he called dragons kin to hybrids after all Flarina suffered at the lab and all the atrocities they've done to dragonkind? "What's more, you try to blame us for something you do yourself. We were put in test tubes and forced to have a blood attraction. But I and others lead peaceful lives anyway. And then there's you. Complete free will and you still choose to act on your lust for blood. I nor do anyone else have to prove ourselves to the likes of a murderous dragon like you," he continued. "They're helping because they're not stupid enough to blame the actions of one of a whole race. So, what about you? Are you stupid enough to do that?"

Atlas refused to answer "yes" to the question and let out a growl instead, because she knew she'll always hate hybrids and will want them dead. Plus, she refused to trust the hybrid's pacifism. Like Akuma, he could have been lying to save his behind. If he wants to prove his innocence, he'll need witnesses. She turned to the two dragonesses and asked, "What about you two? Have you seen hybrids who have done good deeds for you?"

The black dragoness leaped down where everyone else was, looking over the hybrids. "They don't have to do a deed for me just to prove that they're not "bloodthirsty" like you say they are. Sure, they can kill without second thoughts, but is it truly their fault for it? It's something they cannot control, something beyond their power to stop." Her crimson eyes stared straight into the magi's. "I am not like most dragons, I accept hybrids for who they are, not what they do for it isn't their fault they act on the scent of blood. Even though I've seen what they can do my view for hybrids will not be changed." Her lips curled into a snarl, a low growl rumbling in the back of her throat. "I will NOT allow you to kill them, for they did nothing to deserve this cruel punishment. You'll have to fight me as well if you truly want to kill them!"

Atlas snorted and pulled out the other two pikes from her wings. She snarled at everyone, "Fine, if you're all dead set on thinking those things are innocent little creatures, I'll your take words... for now. But know this, half-breeds, if I find out that you're lying about yourselves, there will be no mercy next time. Sure, I'll leave the "good" hybrids alone from now on, but any bad ones I find won't be spared. You have been warned!" Then she teleported out of the ruined city and vanished from sight.