

Chapter 6: First Taste of Blood

After regaining energy for flight, Atlas stood up and spread her wings. She took off into the air and flew back to the spring cave. The sisters, who had been playing in the hot spring, saw their aunt return home. "Aunt Atwas, you're back!" said Kylie.

Danielle ran up to her and asked, "Did you kill da hybwids?"

Atlas shook her head and answered, "No I didn't, some idiots want to keep them alive."

"Oh no!" both sisters whimpered scared.

"Why would they do dat?" asked Kylie, not understanding why on Veleia would anyone protect these monsters.

"Because they're stupid and don't know what they're bringing on to themselves." the magi answered, growling. "Anyway, we have to leave this cave to go to a new home. Climb aboard, kids!" She laid down to let the hatchlings climb up her tail and get onto her back. Then the magi left the cave and took off over the woods. "Now before we leave the Northeast region for good, we're going to go to your parents' graves and pay our respects one last time," Atlas told her nieces. The magi flew down into the part of the woods where John and Flarina were killed and landed right by the mounds of earth that held the deceased dragons beneath. The family said their goodbyes and wished them a happy afterlife before they went back into the air.

Danielle had one question, "Aunt Atwas, what is da Northwest like?"

The magi replied, "I don't know, Danielle. But when we get there, we'll know."

Kathia was now going into the city ruins. Earlier, she had heard in camp that humans were going into the city to reclaim their possession and try to rebuild the city. The girl walked all the way back to her mansion, hoping to retrieve the sword that had been passed down from generations to generations. With it, she could use it to get her revenge on the dragons and slay them all. It a long time to walk there and eventually she reached her burned down home. Kathia rummaged through the ashes and debris hoping to find what she was looking for. Eventually, she found it. The redhead smiled sadistically and murmured to herself, "Hee hee hee! With this weapon I have, I will slay every last lizard in this world and make them all pay!" Of course, she didn't know how to swing a sword yet, but at least she could practice her killing moves on her first victims; hatchlings and pygmies.

The first step to becoming a dragon-slayer was complete; now what she needed next were a shield and

some magic spells to learn. Ever since the modern era, magic has gradually been used less and less as technology became more dominant for human use, leaving dragons as the majority in the magic field. In fact, most people today don't even know how to use magic as it had been lost in history. So when Kathia saw a few mages pass by earlier, she could not contain her surprise. But it was a good thing to see, because that would mean more power to kill the damned beasts. The girl rummaged through the ruins once more and picked up her family shield. Then she left the place and went to one of the mages, hoping to learn some attack spells. "Excuse me, sir. I'm looking to learn how to use magic. Can you teach me after you're done?" she asked.

The mage declined and said, "Sorry kid, I'm a man who's busy all the time. Why don't you find somebody else?"

The girl felt a bit disappointed and walked away from him. She tried asking the other mages, but none of them were willing to help her. Kathia got mad and gave up trying to learn from them. "Fine! Maybe I'll find some way to teach myself!" she huffed. Yes, that was definitely what she was going to do, if those stupid mages won't teach her. Maybe she could find spells on the internet or in a spell book later. For now, the girl went to the forest to look for pygmies and hatchlings to kill.

The redhead wandered through the woods looking everywhere for her first victim. It took her like 18 minutes until she found a yellow pygmy eating a squirrel he caught. Smiling sadistically, the girl walked up behind the pygmy with her sword ready to kill and her shield ready to defend against its attacks. As she got closer to him, the tiny dragon felt her presence and looked back to the hunter about to attack him. He jumped back out of the blade's path and spat a fireball at her, which she blocked with her shield. She lowered her shield and then quickly raised it back up when the pygmy tried to jump at her. Kathia tried to shake him off, but the dragon got to her face and started scratching her. "Eeek! Get off! Get off!" she screamed. She blindly staggered around, dropping her two equipment, as the dragon kept biting and clawing at her. After half a minute of struggling, the girl grabbed the creature by his wings and took out her dagger. The pygmy spat and snarled as he thrashed at the air in front of the hunter. Kathia laid him on the ground as she took out her dagger and stabbed him right where it kills. The dragon's eyes closed and his body became limp and cold. Kathia had made her first kill.

The girl picked up the dead pygmy, grinning evilly at her victim and said, "I am going to turn you into a brand new purse later!" She carried the pygmy off with her to go look for others to kill. The girl trekked through the woods until she found a clan of dragons in sight with some hatchlings. Not being ready for this many dragons yet, Kathia retreated and continued to look for easier targets. This time she saw a winged hatchling that was flying a bit low above ground. The hunter hid behind a tree before she jumped him and pushed him down against the ground. The hatchling struggled to get her off, but Kathia raised her sword and sank the blade down from the back and into his heart. Another life was taken in cold blood.

She left her second victim on the ground as he was too a bit too heavy for her to carry around. The redhead went to look for some more dragons to slay and found a sleeping black dragoness. Although she wasn't

experienced enough to take on a dragon that size, the dragoness being asleep would leave her very vulnerable to unsuspecting attacks. Kathia laid the pygmy on the ground and walked quietly over to the dragoness. She raised the blade above the head and tried to stab her through the skull. Unfortunately, the dragoness woke up to the human scent and her body shifted slightly as she opened her eyes. She could react to the oncoming attack. When she tried to move her head out of the way, the sword met its mark as it sliced the side of her neck. Blood flowed out of the wound and stained the grass a dark crimson. The black dragoness screeched in pain, her eyes locking onto the enemy with a furious glare.

Kathia now regretted her attempt at assassination. Her heart raced with fear and her stomach churned as she slowly backed away from the dragoness. "Oh God, no!" she murmured. Then she turned and ran away for her life. She did not want to die before she got to learn how to use magic to fight dragons with. With a roar, the dragoness thundered after her, racing through the forest to catch up with the girl. Kathia never looked back, but she could feel the presence of the dragoness behind her. She wanted to run faster and leave the beast behind, but this was as fast as her legs could carry her. Suddenly, the black beast made one swift jump and landed in front of her, blocking the girl's route to escape as her tail lashed from side to side in aggravation. Kathia let out a frightened scream as she was now face to face with the black dragoness. The creature's wound on her side was worse; blood drained from it at a quicker rate than before, creating a small crimson pool at her claws. The dragoness stepped closer to her a low growl rumbled in her throat. Seeing as she couldn't outrun the creature, Kathia had no choice but to fight for her life if she was going to escape death. Holding onto both her sword and shield, the hunter pointed her blade at the dragoness and threatened nervously, "Back, beast! D-d-don't make me have to kill you."

Stopping in mid-step the black dragoness froze, her gaze shifting from the blade in front of her to the human's eyes. Taking one step closer, the dragoness faced the girl, wincing at the throbbing pain in her side. "Why would you try to kill me?" she challenged, her crimson eyes narrowing at the human.

"B-because..." Kathia answered nervously. While trying to find words to answer this question, the hunter recalled her reason for becoming a dragon slayer and how she felt pleasure in killing two dragons. Her fear turned into hate and her eyebrows furrowed as she answered maniacally, "Because I like kill to dragons!" She swung her sword at the dragoness and again for another hit. If she can accomplish killing a full-grown dragon with just a sword, she can take on a whole world of them. She would then tell people how she slew a dragon like a knight did in story books and then give rise to an army that would reclaim their slaves and take revenge against them.

The creature's eyes widened in surprise as she tried to evade the attack, but her timing was slow. Her pained roar rang out as the sword sliced across her shoulder. Blood trickled down her night-black scales, coloring the grass a thick, dark red. Stepping back, the dragoness hissed. Her mouth unleashed searing hot jets of blue flames at the hunter before her, her eyes blazing with fury. The first few inches of flames managed to get onto Kathia as she raised her shield to block the rest of the fiery breath. The teen girl screamed in pain from the blue fires searing her skin and clothes. She dropped her sword and slapped down the flames. Her hands burned whenever she tried to put out the fire, but it was better to save

herself than continue burning. When she was no longer burning, Kathia took up her sword again and tried to run around the dragoness. She went to try and stab the dragon's side.

The dragoness stood on her hind haunches and leaped back to avoid the sword's damaging blow. She landed slightly unbalanced, due to her new shoulder wound that continued to throb and bleed. In a self-defense attempt, the black surrounded herself with a fiery vortex, keeping close attacks from doing any damage. She watched the hunter closely, her eyes never leaving her. The girl backed away slowly keeping her eyes on the winged reptile and tried to figure out her next plan of action. She could throw her sword at the dragoness, but that would be losing her one and only weapon. She circled around the dragon to look for an opening, but the fire wall had turned out to be a protective circle of flames to keep the hunter from coming in close to attack. *'Damn it, now what am I going to do? I can't get in close and I can't throw anything at her. What am I supposed to do, stand watch here all day, waiting for her to kill me?'* she thought, not liking and wanting to go through with the last 'suggestion'. For now, she would just keep her shield up and wait for an opening to attack.

Taking this time while the hunter was held at bay, the dragoness inspected her wounds, most were deep and would most likely leave a scar. Her gaze fell off the human when she twisted her neck around to lick her side wound, wincing in pain as she cleansed the open gash. Taking advantage of the monster's distraction, Kathia backed away until she turned tail and ran. Maybe now that she's inflicted some damage on the dragoness, the monster would be slowed down by its wounds and allow the hunter an easier escape back to the city. Or better yet, camp would be where she needed to go to get her burns healed since there were doctors, nurses, and other medics to heal the survivors of dragon fire. Kathia's arms, hands, and upper part of the torso hurt as she ran. Maybe her own wounds might slow her down too, and if that dragoness caught up to her, she could always fight again.

After running far for what seemed like a while, Kathia's throat and chest felt lump with exhaustion. She stopped and panted to catch her breath. The girl looked behind to see if the dragoness she tried to kill was chasing her. There was not a silhouette of the big black beast anywhere in sight. Feeling relieved, Kathia decided to take five for a short while before she would continue on back to camp. She couldn't stay for long though or the dragoness will come back to attack her. After a good three minutes, the black dragoness came out of hiding and slowly padded up to the girl. "Eek!" Kathia screamed in alert. Taking up her sword and shield, the hunter yelled, "Damn dragon!" Then she went to the dragoness and thrust her sword at her before she backed away in case the beast tried to surround herself in flames again. This time, Kathia was staying here to fight for good until one of them ends up dead. And if she was lucky, the dragoness would probably retreat after taking much damage.

The black hissed and side-stepped away from the huntress before the sword could make contact to her hide. With a leap she ascended to the sky, hovering in spot for a while before attacking. With a strong stroke of her wings, she raced towards the human, jaws opening again as she shot out bursts of blue flames at her opponent, scorching anything in its path. Kathia raised her shield over herself and blocked the burning attack. No way was she getting set on fire again after being burned. She held on against the flames until it over. And when that happened, the huntress would go in for another strike against the

dragoness.

Seeing that the fire had no effect, the dragoness roared and glared at the girl below her. In a swift motion she launched herself at the hunter, her claws ready to tear into the girl's flesh as she raced towards her at a high speed. As soon as Kathia let her shield down to see what the beast was up to next, she got clawed deeply down from the chest and onto the side of her abdomen. "Ouch!" she yelped as blood started oozing out. Kathia clutched her wounds as she winced and glared at the dragoness. She retaliated with another swing of the sword at the underbelly. The blade ripped deep and long, making the blood flow out at a rapid pace.

The creature crash-landed on her side; her wings somewhat torn from the ungraceful landing. The black dragoness breathed heavily as she was losing blood rather fast, unable to move for she could make matters much worse by straining herself. Her eyes locked onto the girl's; the crimson orbs filled with sorrow before she closed them and waiting for the human to strike. Kathia held herself in pain for a few seconds before she walked over to her unconscious foe. With her blade raised up, she made one final thrust at the side in an attempt to end the beast for good. "Hiyah!" she yelled. The blade sunk in and she let it sit there for a few seconds before she pulled it out and walked away from the dying dragoness. She looked back for a while to make sure the beast didn't get up to pursue her again. The dragoness made no movement or attempt to get back up again; she eventually disappeared from sight after the girl moved farther away. Kathia turned around and looked at the path ahead of herself. She clutched her claw wound to stop the bleeding and gritted her teeth in pain. But nonetheless, her mind was filled with pride at the aftermath of the heated battle. *'I can't believe I did it. I put down a dragon bigger than me,'* she thought. It was a scary fight, but if Kathia can win against a large creature, she can take on any dragon in the world. But of course, she'll need to learn magic to make her next hunts easier. Once she gets treated and healed, magic will be her next step in becoming a dragon-slayer.