

Chapter 7: The Quest for Home

Aeolus was now farther into the desert. He laid down beside the small lake and drank water to quench his thirst and cool his body down a bit. The dragon rested in the water for a while until his body had enough energy to resume his journey. Aeolus got out of the lake and took off into the air to resume his journey. Hours later, he saw a forest on the horizon of the grassy plains and flew eagerly towards the woodlands over a clan of running whiptail dragons. He reached his destination and landed in the clearing between the trees. He had now found his homeland, but the only thing need to do left before he could truly start his peaceful life as a free dragon was find a home somewhere.

Kathia finally made it back to camp, where a few people saw her bleeding with burns on her body. A shocked woman asked, "Oh my god, what happened?!"

Kathia answered, "Dragon attack... I tried to fight her off and she did this to me." Then she groaned in pain as the wound stung her.

A man shouted, "Somebody get her to the medics, quick!" One of the men helped Kathia over to the hospital tent, where she was laid on the bed. The nurses put medicine on her burns and wrapped her wounds with bandages to stop the blood loss.

As soon as the huntress was out of sight, the black dragoness managed to stand on her feet, her body was shaking violently from losing blood. With one unbalanced step she collapsed back onto the ground, her body too weak and mangled to move. The sight of her was awful. Dirt and blood were smeared across her black scales and most of her hide was torn from the girl's sword. She closed her eyes once more and prayed for someone to save her from this agonizing state. With a final attempt of someone helping her, Darkness reached out with telepathy to anyone that would be willing to help her, hoping that someone hears her plea.

The Firestars had traveled for like a good 25 minutes after they left the graves. They stopped next to a river to drink and take a short rest. That was when they heard a distress call in their minds; it was the black dragoness from before and it sounded like she was badly hurt. As Atlas thought about whether to help the dragoness or not, she remembered how the black helped her against Ramkot's gang and how she went against her to help the hybrids. She was quite thankful for having her niece's lives saved, but she was still upset at the fact that she allowed the other hybrids to live. Despite the latter, Atlas believed the black was a good dragoness who may have been misguided about the hybrids. So the magi came to

a decision to help and replied, *'Hang on, I'll be there.'*

Getting up, she looked down at her nieces, who had stopped drinking when they heard the distress call. "Aunt Atwas, we have ta go help da dwagon in twouble," said Danielle, concerned and wanting to do the right thing. Kylie nodded in agreement with her sister.

The magi replied, "I know, and that's what we're going to do. Come on, we have a life to save. Her nieces climbed onto her back and the aunt walked through the woods until she heard a song that sounded like 'lalala' and hums. The trio approached some more until they saw a halfling-like figure with pink skin, black horns, a black tail with pink underneath, fuschia wings, magenta hair, black dragon feet, and she smelled of dragons, too. "Hybrid," Atlas growled under her breath. Setting her nieces on the tree branches for safety and hidden under the leaves, she told them, "Stay here." Then she walked towards the hybrid. She saw green glow around the hybrid's hands over the black dragoness's wounds, but failing to noticed that she was being healed. She would have impulsively gone to attack the girl, remembering her vow to her enemies at the city, she decided to interrogate the hybrid for answers on as to what happened before she could have an excuse to go in and attack. Once near the two, Atlas growled, "Alright, what happened?! Why is she hurt and bleeding to death? Did you do this, half-breed?!"

The girl turned to see the magi and cocked her eyebrow. "Would seem a bit counter-productive to attack and then heal someone, wouldn't it?" she asked, rolling her eyes and before she went back to healing.

The magi growled, "Not if you went into hunter's mode in the first place." That was probably what happened; the hybrid went berserk and then attacked the dragoness. Maybe then the black would listen to the magi about hybrids being dangerous.

The hybrid laughed and shrugged as she said, "Don't mean to bust your bubble, but I'm quite harmless even in my hunter mode. I have a bit too much white dragon in me, see."

"But that doesn't mean that whites aren't capable of fighting back, stupid!" Atlas countered. It was true that white dragons were pacifists by nature, but if they were driven into a corner, they would use their strength to fight back. "And about you, being a white dragon. Yeah right!" the magi yelled, not falling for the obvious lie. "If you had a lot of white genes in you; you'd be white, not purple! I'm still sure you're behind this, you uncontrollable freak!"

"But I didn't do this to her!" the hybrid cried defensively. "She was like that when I got here!"

"Really now, huh? Let me here what this dragoness here has to say before I take your claim true," said the magi, not believing the hybrid. Then she looked to the other dragoness and asked, "Hey you, what happened here and how did you wind up injured and all that?"

After all her wounds were healed, the black dragoness walked over to Atlas and stopped just a few feet away. She told her story, "I was in a quarrel with a huntress for she attacked me out of cold blood while I was resting. Seeing fit I chased after her hoping to injure her enough to leave me be, but the tables turned and she had the advantage with her sword leaving me in a devastating state. Knowing that I was close to fainting if not death, I called out for anyone who could help." Her tail flicked towards the purple hybrid. "She had nothing to do with my accident as previously stated, she came here because of my plea just like you did."

The magi mumbled to herself, "So the humans have resorted to weapons from their past. This is unbelievable!" Then looking at the pink hybrid, Atlas figured that she might have been right about not being able to attack in hunter's mode. If she could, the black dragoness would have been dead by now. "Alright, I believe your story. But why those damned scientists made you without a hunter's mode, puzzles me," said the magi.

The girl shook her head. "Ah no, I have one. I'm just one of the 'duds' running around. My killer genes were a flop. Which I guess is a good thing by anyone else's standards," she said, looking around.

Before Atlas could say anything, a familiar and hostile voice sorted, "Oh look, the sadistic psycho bitch. Shouldn't you be spitting on puppies?"

Atlas turned her head around to glare at Akuma, who had come into the picture with a mouse on his human head. She growled at the hybrid and said, "Shut up, half-breed! Go play with your damn rat pet or something!"

Akuma smirked at the rat comment. He slowly started to chuckle until he burst out laughing. "Hear that? You're my pet rat," he said smugly to the small animal. Atlas was puzzled by the hybrid's jeer at the rodent and wondered what was the meaning of this. Apparently, it seems like hybrids don't have respect for animals either.

The mouse narrowed its glaring eyes and stood up straight on its hind legs. "Who you calling a Rat you psychotic monster!" Continuing to stare down the dragoness it leaned forward, using one of Akuma's horns for support as it did so. "Why don't you leave before I have to hurt you again?" the mouse threatened.

Atlas was surprised to hear the rodent talk. Its voice sounded quite familiar too. "Oh let me guess, you're that human boy from the broken down city, aren't you? If you want a fight, I'll be happy to deal with you!" she growled as her body became ignited with fire aura.

Back at the tree, the nieces watched their aunt afar and Kylie whispered, "What's going on?"

Danielle replied back in a whisper, "I dun know, but I think Aunt Atlas is going to have a fight."

Before any move was made, the black dragoness stepped between them and roared, "Enough! Now is not the time to settle differences." She looked at the blazing magi. "If you are done investigating the situation then I suggest you leave. I thank you for coming to my assistance but another fight should not break out so soon, settle your differences another time. I'm sure the two of you have other important things to do than fight each other anyway."

Atlas's fire aura disappeared and she grunted, "Right. I wouldn't want to waste my time here with a puny little pipsqueak rat human. I got things to take care of." She walked away from everyone and went back to the tree where her nieces were.

The boy-mouse stuck his tongue out at the leaving magi and called out after her, "Come back when you learn more than a few kiddy spells! Maybe I can show you what real magic looks like then."

Atlas growled at the mouse's taunt and thought, *'Don't tempt me, chimpanzee. If you want me stronger than ever, you're going to regret what you have just said.'* Boy, would she loved to do things to the little brat such as stomp him into a pancake, burn him to ashes, or eat him up like prey. Once she gets to the Northwest region, she would take the opportunity to learn a lot of magic spells that she never got to learn as a slave. Then after Danielle and Kylie grow up and become independent, she would return to the Northeast and beat the human at his own game of magic. Yeah, that would show him! She made it back to the tree. "Come on, girls, let's go," she said as the hatchlings jumped onto her back. The magi walked off through the woods and resumed her journey for the Northwest region. Then she sent a telepathic message to all the dragon slaves she knew in her life and said, *'Hey guys, I just learned that magic isn't the only weapon the humans have resorted to. They're also using swords and probably some other old weapons to kill dragons as well. If you see one of them attacking you with those, get ready to fight for your life.'* As soon as her warning was over, dragons started spreading word via telepathy to tell their friends and brethren to be on guard around such humans.

Snively, who was badly disappointed, moaned, *'Oh... And here I thought we were going to live in peace for the rest of our lives. Now those humans are trying to kill us again.'*

Atlas said, *'I know how you feel, pal. One of their wizards attacked me and a hunter nearly killed a black dragoness. It looks like even without their tech, those scums won't give up dragon-hunting anytime soon.'*

Aeolus had found a bunch of dragons that were building up a village specifically for their own kind. They were digging holes in the ground to form caves and tunnels. Trees were melded together with hardened mud and dirt to form entrances and covers over the holes leading to the tunnels. The green dragon approached the villagers and some of them turned their heads to see the newcomer. "Aeolus?" asked a familiar navy blue dragon in surprise.

"Hello Bam, it has been a long time, hasn't it?" said the disaster dragon, who was glad to see to see his distant cousin was still alive.

"Yeah, we haven't like seen each other in so long. I always wondered what you looked like now," said Bam. "And now here you are, a grown handsome fellow," he said, eying his cousin's appearance.

Aeolus chuckled and said, "And I can say the same thing about you."

The blue dragon felt complemented and replied, "Gee thanks!"

The disaster dragon looked at his surroundings and said, "I see we're rebuilding our civilization already. This is a good thing if we want to defend ourselves from the humans and their medieval weapons." Aeolus had caught word of the news after Atlas told him and several others spread the news all over the world.

Bam nodded and said, "Yeah, totally. Plus, we're going to need to set some traps too, so that the humans don't get us."

"How so?" asked the disaster.

The blue dragon pointed to pile of crystals where two dragons were infusing magic into them. "See these crystals over there?" he asked. "You just go up to Lhove and Rivet and ask them to put your powers into the crystals."

"Understood," Aeolus replied. Before he could approach the blue-winged green dragons, Bam stopped him with a paw to his chest.

"Wait, before you talk to them. You should let our chief know that you're here to help," the blue dragon said.

The green dragon asked, "Where is he?" Bam answered by pointing to the orange-winged light brown dragon, who was helping the others push the trees together. "Thanks, I'll go talk to him." Aeolus walked over to the village chief and asked, "Excuse me, you're the village chief, aren't you?"

The dragon turned around and answered, "I am. And you are?"

"Aeolus," the disaster answered simply.

Upon hearing the name, the other dragons close by stopped working and looked to Aeolus with interest. "Aeolus? The same dragon who, along with Arcaon, invented the Spell?" asked the chief.

"Yes."

"Well it's an honor to meet you, o' savior of dragons," said the chief smiling. "I'm Chief Doubloon, the leader of this village," he introduced himself. "Well, it's not a village yet until it's completely done."

"Which is why I'm here to help," said the disaster. "I'm going to see if the crystal makers, Lhove and Rivet, will put my lightning breath into the crystals. Then I can help out with other duties."

Doubloon liked the idea and said, "Ah yes, lightning crystals to zap the humans dead. It's quite more effective than flame breath if you ask me."

"Glad you see it that way, chief," Aeolus replied.

With a short nod, the chief said, "Please do help out." Then Aeolus turned and headed over to the two dragons.

As he walked, he was bombarded with telepathic questions from the other dragons. *'Wow, are you really the Aeolus who made the Spell?'* *'How did you and Arcaon come up with a brilliant plan to free us all?'* *'What does Arcaon look like? I want to talk to him, too.'* Question after question filled his mind until he felt overwhelmed and annoyed.

Aeolus said out loud for everyone to hear, "Enough! I'll answer your questions after we're done building our village." The questions stopped coming, leaving the celebrity at peace.

The green dragon reached the Lhove and Rivet, one of whom stopped what they were doing to look at the stranger. "Can I help you?" he asked.

The disaster said, "Yes, I'm here to give your crystals the power of my lightning breath."

"Okay, very well. Just blow your lightning at the crystals I hold and we'll seal them inside," Lhove instructed as he picked up one of the empty crystals. Aeolus breathed in and blew out lightning bolts at the crystal. The object glowed with a light green aura as Rivet used his magic to trap the electricity inside.

After traveling for 80 miles, the Firestar family decided to take a rest. Danielle and Kylie got off their aunt's back and started playing with each other. Atlas looked at her little nieces and said, "Don't stray too far from me. I want you both right where I can see you two." As long as the hatchlings were nearby, Atlas would be able to protect them from dragon slayers, hybrids, and predatory animals on the hunt.

"Okay, Aunt Atwas," they said. The sisters bat their paws at each other before Danielle pushed her sister over and pinned her down on her back. Kylie retaliated by kicking her feet into the whiptail's stomach to

push her off. Soon the hatchling stopped playing when they noticed a figure in the distance. A young male human was lying face-flat on the ground.

"Aunt Atwas, there's a human over there!" cried Danielle as both sisters were scared.

"What's that?" asked the magi, getting up. She walked by her nieces and told them to hide behind a tree in case the human was hostile. The magi walked up to the blonde boy and noticed that he was armed with arrows and a quiver. Her first assumption was that he was a dragon slayer, but then she remembered her the story about the dragon sympathizer who freed John, who was armed like that boy but friendly. But just in case he really was a hunter, Atlas stood on guard and watched the teen's reaction for a sign of good or bad.

The blonde boy stood up and tried to clean himself from the dirt he had gotten. He checked the ground for a moment before he sighed in relief, "Oh...good, there really isn't any dead bodies of those insects..." He was just about to move when he saw the dragoness was near him. He stared at her for a bit before he cried out some unintelligible words in surprise, "Gyablablaba!" Then he fell back on the ground. "Ah! Hmmm!" he said as he wiped out some more dirt after he got up. "Well, at least it's better than my pot sister..." he muttered for a moment before focusing his attention back to the magi, who found him to be quite a klutz on the first impression. "Ah, right, umm..." the boy said as he instead slowly raised his left hand and made a peace sign with it.

Apparently, the guy wasn't hostile at all. But to make sure, Atlas asked in a calm, but firm tone, "Speak up, human. What are you doing in this forest and why do have bow and arrows with you?" She looked to the boy's weapons.

"Uhhhhhhhhhhhhh... wait... why did I bring my bow and arrows with me?" the boy asked himself. "Why.... why.... why, why, why, why, why..." He pondered for a bit, trying to remember his reason for his possessions. "Maybe it's for practice?" he guessed. "But I got bored very easily, so that's probably not it." He guessed his second answer, "Maybe it was for hunting? Hmm... but I didn't even need to eat... I don't count meat as snacks either... plus, it would take like 10 minutes to cook rabbit meat..." He scratched his head and asked himself, "Wait, why is there a dragon here anyway? I don't see them often..." He thought for a moment. "Maybe something interesting happened! Aww, that means I missed out..." He sighed. Eventually, the boy just faced Atlas in silence for a few moments. "I have no idea," he shrugged.

'*What a strange human,*' the magi thought feeling awkward about the man. "Well, whatever... So human, you got any medicines and bandages to heal me with? Because these wounds here are slowing me down on my journey," she asked. During her travel, the family had an encounter with a bunch of men wielding spears and shooting arrows. She got stabbed on the shoulder, her hind leg, and took a few arrows on her back. Atlas disliked having to deal with pain while on the journey to the Northwest.

"...A-actually, I don't have anything to heal you. The only thing I brought is my bow, my arrows and my

quiver," the boy said, not reacting to the bloody wounds. "Although I think there's an apple inside my quiver..." He quickly took off his quiver and rummaged through it, dumping all of his arrows to see if there was an apple.

Atlas felt it was stupid and thought, *'How exactly does an apple heal me?'*

After finding no such fruit in question, the teenager said, "Nope. Never mind, I don't have any apples. I'll refill my supplies of fruit later then." Then he looked around. "Maybe I should of put all my arrows in one place instead of dumping them and scattering them all over the place," he said as he started to collect them. "Yeah, sorry, I, uh... don't have anything that would really help you," he said to Atlas calmly.

Atlas replied in disappointment, "Oh, okay then." Looks like she was going to have to carry on with her wounds... unless. "Well, what about your home? Do you have any supplies there?" she asked. Humans always kept lots of their stuff at home, much like dragons do. Perhaps there was a good chance that the magi would be able to heal up there.

"A-actually, I think I do have some supplies. Although..." the boy said and sat against a tree trunk. "T-t-that would mean going through my pot sister..." His head drooped sulkily.

"Pot sister?" asked the magi, wondering who this was. Was this 'pot sister' abusive or what? Maybe she will find out who the sister really is once the Firestars get to the boy's home.

The boy looked at the dragoness with a depressed face and lifted his hand slowly and "glitched" like a robot while doing so. He was about to say something about it, but instead just lowered his hand and just stared at the ground with a fearful and regretful face. "S-s-s-she's... my... y-y-younger... s-s-sister..." he stuttered like he was in terror.

"Hmm... From the way you talk about her. I guess she's not a very nice person," said Atlas, as her assumptions were confirmed about the pot sister. "Well don't you worry human or whatever your name is. If that sister of yours tries to hurt you, she'll have to answer to me, alright?" she said. She was going to protect this friendly human from domestic abuse, no matter what.

"She's nice to strangers, actually. She just hates me. Or maybe she's a Tsundere..." the boy sighed. "She does care for me... it's just that she has a habit of throwing soiled pots at my head whenever she has the chance... or maybe she'll hit me with a frying pan..." he sighed again.

'A sun-der-what?' asked Atlas, having no clue what the strange word meant.

"It just hurts so bad!" He rubbed his head. "The only good thing about it is that I get to mess around her... which leaves me with a frying pan mark..." Then he said, "Oh yeah, by the way, she likes plants. She's a flower addict, so don't bring her picked flowers, she'll rage."

"Well then, I'll go ask her so that you don't have to. Where does she live?" asked Atlas, coming up with a solution just for everyone to get out okay.

"Not too far from this forest, I think," the boy said.

"Alright then," said the dragoness. Then she asked, "Anyway, what is a tsundere? I've never heard of one before."

"Since you don't know what a tsundere is, it's basically a term to describe a female. There are two types of tsunderes. The first type is a girl who is generally cold to males, or lovers. Those types eventually reveal a caring side and blush while at it; they try to cover it up though. Type two involves a sweet, kind and caring type of tsundere who later on becomes very bitter and mean at you, but still cares about you. Which type do you think fits her better?" the boy explained and asked at the same time.

Atlas thought, *'Never knew there were female humans like that.'* Then she replied, "That's a good question, because I don't know that much. She's just a stranger to me. But I guess your sister might be a Type One, because I've never seen human siblings be nice to each other and then mean later on." Some of her human families, who once owned her, had children who fought over petty things such as toys or made fun of each other, but then to some degree, developed tolerance of their siblings.

"Haha, sisterly and brotherly bonds are like that. Smaller siblings are supposed to annoy you until you pretty much die, while the bigger ones are more mature and usually smarter," the boy smiled. "To be honest, the reason why she's mad at me most of the times was when I played a prank on her at school. Flipped her skirt at the end of school and the first thing she did was punch my face. Ah, memories..." he chuckled. "Things would've been easier if I was a girl..." he sighed.

'She must be a Type Two then,' Atlas thought after listening to the story. "Well probably..." said the magi. Then she asked, "So kid, what's your name, kid?" She figured she had to know his name after learning some things about him. Danielle and Kylie had been watching and listening to the conversation the whole time. When no signs of hostility showed between the dragoness and human, the sisters thought that this boy was a nice human like the one who freed their father.

"Henry," the boy replied before looking around. "Tsk... I didn't expect this place to be so... fruitless. Then again, I come to this forest all the time, why have I not noticed this before?" Henry hungrily licked his lips and said, "If only this place was fruity..." Then he stared at the magi for a bit before asking, "So what's your name then? And where didja come from?"

"I'm Atlas," the magi answered. "I was taking my nieces out of the Northeast region to go live in the Northwest, because I didn't want them getting torn apart by hybrids. You know, those bipedal dragons and those that look more draconic than halflings?" Hopefully Henry wasn't going to berate her about her prejudice against hybrids like that annoying magical human boy did. But her reason sounded more like

protective of the hatchlings than hostility on hybrids, so it was most likely that she wasn't going to earn any ire from him.

"I didn't know there were such things as hybrids... Are they friendly?" the boy asked.

"Well some of them..." Atlas replied grudgingly, while hoping he wouldn't get the wrong idea of placing himself in danger by trying to get buddy-buddy with those things.

Then Henry started to have a debate with himself as he asked questions that countered the others, "Wait, the dragon said she was taking her nieces away in hopes that hybrids wouldn't kill them. Does that mean their aggressive? But shouldn't at least one be friendly to others? Hmm... what I want to know though is, how and why are they so aggressive if there aren't much dragon hybrids who aren't?" He slowly moved his head to face the dragoness. "Why are they so aggressive then?" he asked.

She answered, "The reason they're that is because they're born with the ability to go into hunter's mode at the smell of blood. Once they go into that mode, they won't stop attacking until you're dead. That's why I don't want my nieces around them in case they bleed."

"Oh, okay," the boy calmly said. "Wait, you said you were bringing your nieces, right? So that means...." He started to scour around with his eyes to see if anything out of the ordinary. He didn't seem to find anything though. "Huh, I guess it's either that you hid them in a very good spot or that it's my eyes are just horrible at seeing and paying attention," Henry said.

"Oh they're here alright. I just had them hiding somewhere in case you were a dragon slayer. I'll bring them out for you," Atlas said to Henry. Then she looked over to the tree and called, "Danielle, Kylie, get over here and come meet Henry." The whiptail and balloon sisters left their hiding spot and scampered over to their aunt's side. "Henry, meet my nieces, Danielle and Kylie. Danielle's the whiptail with the black stripes and Kylie's the magenta one with the black face," Atlas introduced her nieces.

The hatchlings looked up at Henry curiously, wondering if he was nice or not. "Hi," said Danielle, while her sister just looked on.

Henry waved at them. "Aww... they're so cute! I wish I could take a picture of them on my home and send them to my sister... If I had one!" he laughed. "Man, I can't believe how technology seems to evolve over time. I never bothered to buy a phone for some reason." He scratched his head. "Heyo! I have totally forgotten your names even though they were announced a few minutes ago! Seriously, what are your names again?" he asked them.

The sisters felt flattered when Henry called them cute. They smiled back and the whiptail answered, "I'm Danielle!"

The balloon hatchling said, "And I'm Kywie."

The aunt laughed heartily, "Yeah, they're cute alright. I can't wait to see what they'll look like when they grow up. I bet they're going to be beautiful."

"Heh, I'm sure they'll look pretty," Henry smiled and said. "So... I dunno, have you eaten yet?" he asked. "Cause I now have almost nothing to say since I'm guiding you all to my house." He laughed nervously.

Atlas answered, "Well we had breakfast this morning, but no lunch yet."

"Aunt Atwas, I'm hungry," said Danielle, now having an appetite for food after Henry mentioned lunch. The magi, having heard the whiptail, felt that now would be a good time to eat.

Looking back at the boy, the dragoness said, "Well you heard her. Let's go over to your place and..."

Then Henry suddenly asked, "Hey wait, didn't you say they were your nieces? Then where are their parents?"

The magi started to look mad as her claws dug into the ground and growled quietly, "They were killed by hybrids in cold blood. Those monsters would have gone after my nieces next had I and another dragoness not killed them first."

Henry stared at the the dragoness, "Oh. I guess the hybrids... were... well... aggressive."

"That's why you got to be careful around them, Henry," warned Atlas. "Don't ever go anywhere near them."

"Okay, got it," said Henry as he nodded. "Why don't we try and forget this for now and distract ourselves then? Despair and regret probably won't help us except turn us into witches, if you know what I mean," He said and did a nervous smile.

Atlas agreed and said, "Right, it ain't good getting my thoughts pent up about it now." Henry started to walk towards his house and turned his head around to see if the dragoness and her nieces were following him; they were.