

Chapter 9: Dangerous Errand

After sometime later, the two made it to the ruined city and went to search for the grocery store. Since the electric lights were no longer working, Atlas had used her fire aura to give light to her sight in the dark evening. Henry took surprise to see himself covered in flames and cried out in panic, "Oh my gosh, I'm on fire!" He tried to beat down the fires with his hands.

Atlas felt what her friend was doing and told him, "Relax, this is my fire aura. It doesn't hurt anyone I cast it on."

"It doesn't?" asked the confused boy, who had calmed down now. "Well, I guess that explains why I'm not burning at all," he said before putting a hand on his back and laughing embarrassed.

The dragoness said, "Glad you figured that out. Besides, it'll help us stay clear of danger." During her flight, Atlas saw that there were dragons who decided to make their homes in the buildings as prize of their vengeance against the humans. Because most dragons around the world hated humans, she had to be careful not to run into any of them, or else they would think that Henry has made her his slave and try to kill him. Soon, Atlas heard her niece's question and replied, *'Like I said, the Spell is supposed to be permanent. That means all the human tech, if the Spell really did get the harmless ones too, will never work again.'* She came across a destroyed power plant that had been burned to the ground. *'Huh, I guess that's why Henry's household stuff isn't working anymore,'* she thought, now knowing it wasn't the Spell that was behind their misfortune. She told Kylie about the power plant before telepathic communication was over.

Her thoughts were interrupted by the boy asking, "Hey Atlas, have ya ever noticed how the city looks like it's been in a war zone? What do you think happened here?"

The magi asked, "Huh? You don't know?"

"Nope," Henry answered. "Yukki and I had been watching anime all night long yesterday. We didn't get to watch news or anything."

"Oh..." Atlas replied. "Remember that Spell I told you about?"

"Yeah, why?" asked the boy. The dragoness told him that every dragon around the world went on a rampage to attack their oppressors to vent out all the anger and suffering they had gone through under the hands of their masters. Henry was surprised and in awe as he said, "Whoa! That kind of anger sounds much more dangerous than my sister's."

The magi replied, "Yep! That's what a lifetime of pain and frustration can make you do."

Henry said, "Guess I shouldn't get on a dragon's bad side, if I value my life."

"Or better yet, stay away from dragons in general," said Atlas. "I and some others may trust you, but I know a lot of others who'll want to kill you just for being human." She thought about such dragons of the latter such as Aeolus, who deemed all humans a threat to dragonkind, no matter if they were good or bad. After a while, Henry found the grocery store and told the dragoness to land in front of the building. She lowered herself to let the rider off as she told him, "Alright Henry, we're here. Go get what you need and come back."

The boy hopped off and asked her, "Okay, but first could you unflame my body? What if the foods I touch burn?"

"Good point," Atlas said matter-of-factly, because she knew the fire aura would burn all those outside of its protection. She used her magic to dispel most of Henry's fire aura until only his head was blazing, so that he could see through the darkness inside the store. The boy thanked her before he walked towards the supermarket, where he went inside through the now doorless entrance. Atlas could see the light of his head getting smaller and smaller through the window as he went down the aisle. She stared out into space as she let her mind wander on thoughts of what her new home would be like. Perhaps a cave on the ground, a new dragon village, or in the mountains. Then she noticed a flying dragoness in the sky, but didn't care to give her much attention for now as she moved her view down from the sky. Soon, she saw snow falling down and became curious. *'That's strange. The sky's clear and it's summer time, but yet it's snowing. What the hell is going on?'* Atlas quickly had an idea on what, or rather who, was behind this as she looked to the dragoness who was clouding up the sky and making it snow. *'Oh, I guess that must be her work. Don't know why she's trying to make it snow here though,'* the magi thought. The snow quickly blew hard and fast, causing the parking lot to get covered in its white cold blanket. Atlas had to intensify her fire aura to make the flames bigger and warm herself up against the increasingly cold atmosphere. Any snowflake that touched the fires or landed in the uncovered black asphalt that bordered the magi was instantly melted.

Henry drooled at the sweet things in the store. Marshmallows, chocolate, juice and all other kinds of sweet things that hadn't been touched during the attack were still in the store. "It's like Heaven!" he exclaimed. He snatched a bag of marshmallows and hugged it. "You are very squishy, marshmallows," he said to it playfully. The boy filled the basket with sweet things, until he saw the frying pan. He stared blankly in silence as it reminded him so much of his sister, although it was mostly because he was hit with pots daily. He slowly took the frying pan and placed it in his basket before towing off to obtain other supplies. "Now All I gotta do is buy some food where you can easily eat it and... oh, hey, is that instant noodles?" Henry said and quickly rushed over to fill his basket with beef-flavored ramen, chicken-flavored, and shrimp ramen. Then he went over to the pharmacy aisle to take the bandages, medicine, and other useful stuff. With the basket being nearly food, all the boy had left to buy was the ice cream. But chances were that they had melted and probably spoiled over time.

He'd simply leave and make it easier on his time and energy, but what would Yukki say if she found out that the frozen desserts were still there. Letting out a sigh, Henry said, "I guess I better go check." He made his way over to the frozen desserts aisle and found no light shining in the freezers. Also, the teen felt no chilly atmosphere coming from the freezers. In an attempt to deny these observations that were telling him the bad news, the boy opened one of the glass doors and took out the one of the ice cream boxes. The package felt like it was at room temperature on his hands. Henry knew what disappointing thoughts he was thinking, but still fought to deny the truth. He thought, *'Come on, please don't be what I think you are.'* He removed the lid and saw exactly what reality had been screaming to him; the melted pink liquid of what used to be strawberry ice cream. "Oh..." the boy moaned in disappointment. He thought the same fate might have happened to the other boxes of ice cream and the frozen snacks, but he didn't want to give up just yet. He took out every box, checked them, and threw them to the side if their contents liquefied. It went on until every box of ice cream, popsicles, sherbet, and Italian ice was out of the freezers. Tired and defeated, Henry slumped over and sighed, "Aw man, my sis is going to kill me."

"Not if I kill you first," said a low-pitched demonic voice behind him.

The boy straightened up in a panicked surprise and turned around as he asked, "Who said that?!"

"Me!" said the black & white vampire dragon in an echoing tone. His eyes were glowing eerily red, making the boy jump and yelp in fear. "What are you doing here, human? You know this city's dangerous now that we've taken over your homes," he asked as he walked towards Henry, who was walking backwards scared.

"I-I-I was just t-trying to get some ice cream for s-s-sister," Henry stuttered. "Th-that's all."

"Ice cream?" the vampire dragon asked before laughing at the boy's stupidity. "You simple-minded fool! Don't know you know your city's in an eternal black-out? You think you'll find ice cream here?!" he asked, stomping his foot as he thrust his head forward, making the human more scared than ever.

"W-w-well I..." Henry tried to come up a reason to explain himself without looking like a fool to the killer vampire. "I was hoping the blackout wouldn't do anything to this part of town. I... So I thought the ice cream... would be okay."

"Well you thought wrong, human," the vampire said. "There is no ice cream here. But if you're that desperate to find what you're looking for." His mouth turned into an evil grin and said in a louder and startling volume, "Then maybe you can find your precious ice cream inside me!" The dragon lunged his open jaws at the teenager, who screamed and turned around to run away. The vampire pursued after his prey through the street of the refrigerated foods.

Henry made a turn into the canned food aisle and soon felt his feet step onto what felt like a flesh. He

looked down and saw a dead ash gray hatchling below him; its body looked like it had been weak and sickly at birth. The eerie sight sent chills up the boy's spine and made him shriek; he was now more determined to escape the supermarket right away. As he moved along, more dead hatchling bodies appeared, all in the same state and color as the first one. *'Oh cripes, this dragon's a heartless killer. If I don't get out of there, I'm going to end up looking like these baby dragons,'* Henry thought, trying to avoid stepping on the bodies as best as he can. A few times he accidentally did so, nearly making him trip and slowing him down a bit for the vampire to get closer. At the end of the aisle, a pairs of tiny red glowing eyes appeared in front of him, from the sides, and on the shelves behind him. They belonged to the vampire dragonets who were leering at his hungrily and smilingly open-mouthed to show off their pointy teeth. "Y-yikes!" Henry cried.

The adult dragon finally caught up to him and let out a triumphant laugh as he said, "Ha ha ha, you thought escape would be so easy, did you?" The boy hesitated to turn his head around to look at him and speak. "It's a good thing I had stolen some eggs to make minions from. They help trap our prey easily."

"Heh... I can see why," the human replied, distressed that he couldn't find a way around them.

The vampire said, "But anyway, enough talk. I think it's time my children claim their reward for a job well done. Everybody feast!" The dragonets were all too eager to drink the boy's blood, so they immediately leapt and flew at him.

Henry used his arms to shield himself and knocked back the first two, a black male and a white female. The boy let out a desperate shout, "Atlas, help!"

It had been a short while since Henry left to do his search in the supermarket and Atlas was still waiting for him to return. By now, the cold dragoness had flown off away out of sight over the building. The magi was still clueless about the snow being dumped at the parking lot, but she brushed that aside and focused her attention at the doors and windows of the store. Her patience was finally rewarded with the sight of Henry's flaming head shown in the darkness, but he was accompanied by many pairs of red eyes. Atlas became alert and worried for what hostility the dragons would have against the boy. After she moved in to get a closer look at the scene, she lowered her head to the window's level and saw through it to see the dragonets swarming and attacking the human. "No!" the dragoness cried desperately. She had to save him fast before he would get eaten. Using her magic energy, she powered up her body to be strong enough to break through against the hard shell of the supermarket. After she was fully charged, the magi rammed into the building and broke through, destroying the entrance and leaving a big hole there. The vampires stopped their assault to look at the furious flaming beast in surprise. Atlas yelled, "Let him go, you bloodsucking bastards!"

Henry lifted his upper torso off the floor, but not standing up. He looked at her with a bit of relief on his

scratched face and said, "Atlas, you came."

The vampire asked, "What's this? A dragoness who allied herself with a human?" He let out a short laugh in amusement and said, "Well what a surprise! I guess you must not care so much about our suffering caused by these humans."

Atlas growled, "You leave him out of this, scumbag! I bet you he didn't do anything to us dragons."

"'Bet', you say?" the vampire asked. He grinned at her naivety and continued, "That sounds like an assumption. I can't believe you'd risk your life for a someone you barely know, especially a human. You might either be noble or a half-witted fool without a brain cell." Some of the dragonets snickered while covering their smiles with their paws.

The magi growled, taking offense from the vampires' ridicule and laughter. "Don't insult my intelligence, you long-fanged freaks!" she snarled. "I'll have you know that I was a champion in the dragon fighting tournament for nearly a century in a row and not once have I ever lost a battle!" she yelled to warn them of her ferocious might. She was going to use it if those vampires don't let go of Henry or keep infuriating her further. "So if you know what's good for you, you better scram before I go ape-shit on you!"

"Making threats are we?" the dragon said, completely unfazed. "Well you should know that being a long-time champion doesn't mean that you're invincible. Let me be the one to remind you that magi dragons such as yourself have an aversion to darkness much like humans have to lead." The vampires walked towards Atlas like a pack of wolves getting ready to attack. The magi stood her ground as fearlessly as she can be. These vampires were not going to intimidate her no matter what their element may be. Plus, all of them were smaller than her, so she had the advantage in being physically stronger. The head vampire made a ghastly smile and said, "So tell me, have you ever survived this?" All at once, the vampires blew out their black flames at the dragoness. These flames became mixed with her flame aura that it started to burn the user it had once protected. Atlas roared out from the excruciating pain.

Henry had gotten scared by how his friend was getting hurt. With his arm stretched out as if he was trying to reach her, he shouted worriedly, "Atlas!"

The magi turned and retreated out of the building to avoid any further damages. "Mwuahahaha!" the head vampire laughed. "What's the matter? I thought you were a champion? Can't handle the heat? Well, stay out of my lair!" he mocked her.

Atlas dispelled her aura so to prevent any more harm before she glared at the vampires and growled, "You bastards..." Within the next second, she cast a more protective cover in the form of a light aura. The horde all screeched and snarled from the blinding light hurting their eyes as they turned their heads away. Vampire dragons had a natural negative phototaxis to light, because light magic was one of the breed's weaknesses alongside garlic. "You're going to pay for this!" the dragoness yelled. Then she

cast a barrage of light lasers at the horde. The spells burned off the dragonets' flesh and filled the air with screams so loud that Henry had to cover his ears to keep himself from becoming deaf.

The vampire leader squeezed his eyes tight and roared, "Aaah, it burns! It burns!" No one could not handle the intense pain from the lasers. The head vampire had to save his horde quickly, so he issued the order, "Enough! Everyone, retreat." The vampires turned tail and ran off into the darkness to avoid any more of the barrage. Now it was only Henry left alone in the light and safe from his would-be predators. The dragon's voice boomed from the shadows, "You win this time, magi. But next we see your human; he will become our lunch and we'll make sure you don't ever stop us. Go human, go back to your dragon."

The boy picked himself up off the floor and walked over to Atlas. He shielded his eyes with his hand to block out the light aura's harsh glare. After he was outside, the light aura dimmed itself and disappeared. Henry dropped his hand down as he said, "Thanks Atlas. If it wasn't for ya, I'd-" He stopped talking when he saw a sight that he thought was gruesome. His eyes went wide and his mouth dropped agape. "Atlas, you look awful. Is that what the dark element does to ya?"

The magi's body had been covered in severe 3rd degree burns that exposed the pink of her flesh and destroyed her eyelids. There were some dark burnt spots on her body and a few bones of her wings were seen amongst its flesh. The dragoness answered, "Yes, Henry. That's what it does to me. The fire just added more fuel to it." She winced when she felt her burns sting. "I've suffered attacks like that many times in the tournaments. So that's nothing," she continued.

"Yeah, but how do ya get healed afterwards?" Henry asked. "I don't think even my pot sister can treat all those burns."

Atlas explained, "My slave masters used a white dragon to heal all those wounds. That's why I always look unscarred after a battle."

"Well that's cool," said the boy. "But where can we find a white dragon? We hardly get much dragons around these woods."

The magi recalled the dragonet from this morning and thought about asking her help. She could ask her for her location and teleport to there in a jiffy. Before Atlas could ever think to do that, a male dragon voice sounded from somewhere asking, "What happened here?" The dragoness and human looked to see some dragons approaching them. Three of them were using the held flames in their mouths as torches to light the way.

They stopped 15 feet away and stared at Atlas's hideousness. A shocked aqua-colored dragoness asked, "Oh my goodness! What happened to her?"

"Look at those burns!" a brown dragon said. More dragons joined in and babbled about the magi's

burns.

This started to get on Atlas's nerves. She scowled at them, but no eyelids to show her emotion, her mask looked less angry than she was trying to be. Then she roared over them, "Shut up!" The ramblings immediately turned into silence. She yelled, "What are you all here for anyway? To gaze at me like I'm some freak show exhibit?! Well, this show's over! You all better run on home before I tear your asses up."

The dragons were taken aback by the magi's rage; they hadn't mean to offend her at all. The leader of the group apologized, "We're sorry, ma'am. We didn't mean to hurt your feelings. We only came because Frostfire saw a human riding and thought that you might have been his slave. So she cast some snow here for us to landmark where you were."

The magi thought back to the cold dragoness from earlier and thought, *'So that's why she snowed on me.'*

The leader continued, "We were only going to free you from him. I mean look at what he put you through."

Henry took offense to being accused of abusing Atlas, while the magi growled at the dragons' ignorant assumption. The boy defended himself, "I didn't do this to her! Those dragons inside did!" He pointed to the grocery store, where the real culprits lived.

"That's right!" Atlas snarled. "I risked myself to save him; not have him made out to be a criminal! And for your information, he's not a slaver, he's just a nice kid living alone out in the woods with his sister. I only took him to the grocery store to get what he needed!"

"Oh sorry, my bad," the leader said as the magi's anger made him feel bad about making a wrongful accusation against the boy. "I didn't know he was innocent. It's just that most humans are bad."

"Yeah well, Henry's not a BAD human," the magi emphasized spitefully. "Now if you'll excuse me, I got a white dragonet I need to see right now!"

Before Atlas could use telepathy, a voice shouted from the crowd, "Wait! I can help!" The dragons moved aside to let the white dragon through to her. He guaranteed, "I can heal all your burns and you will good as new."

The magi's anger subsided and she felt glad that there was a healer among them. "Well good, that makes things a lot easier," she said, knowing how much time and energy he would save.

The white dragon nodded and said, "It certainly does. Now still and let me work my magic on you." Atlas stood and froze intently as she watched the white dragon use his healing magic on her, covering her in a

light blue aura. The pain gradually subsided as burns disappeared and new flesh tissues and scales grew in place. Soon, the magi was back to her former self.

Atlas blinked her eyes to get the feel of her recovered lids. "Ahh, now that feels much better," she said at the joy of feeling relieved.

Henry walked up to the white and showed his scratches and bites on his skin and torn patches of the cloth. "'Scuse me sir, can you heal me too?" he asked.

The white looked at the human's wounds and said, "Sure." He worked his magic on the boy as well until he was healed, save for the clothes as healing magic had no effect on inorganic things.

The boy smiled at the healer and said, "Thanks!"

"You're welcome," the white replied and returned the smile.

Atlas looked to the boy and said, "Well Henry, it looks like we're done here. Sorry you didn't get what you need. But you can always try again tomorrow morning, because that's when the vampires will sleep." The vampire breed was known to sleep permanently during the day until dusk. Well, "sleep" as in being frozen in their state of looking like they were dead. No sound, scent, or touch would ever wake them up.

Henry became disappointed and sighed, "That's just great. What am I going to tell Yukki when I get back home empty-handed?"

The magi knew that there was no doubt that the girl was going to abuse her brother for failing his errand. But she was not about to let her lay a hand or put on him. She had an idea and assured him, "Don't worry, Henry. I won't let her attack you again. We'll just explain what happened and tell her it was too dangerous to get them."

The dragon leader overheard what they said and decided to be generous as he offered his help, "Don't worry, I can go get your supplies if you want." He told them why he was the perfect candidate to do it, "I'm the chief on this side of this city, everyone should respect me. I doubt the dragons who attacked you will lay a tooth or claw on me." It was reasonable, because any individual who attacked the dragon chief or king/queen would be committing treason against his/her horde. The chief looked at Henry and said, "Now come with me, I'll escort you to whatever you need."

The boy replied happily, "Thanks, mister!"

"Why you're welcome, young one," the chief replied. He looked to the one of the firebreathers and told him, "Flame, come with me. I'll need your light to help us." The red dragon approached his leader and then the three went into the grocery store. Atlas and the dragons sat outside and waited for them to

return with the groceries.

A few minutes passed by until the light of Flame's fire was seen coming out of the supermarket. Henry had returned and he was carrying the basket he had lost inside. "Atlas, I'm back!" he called.

"Yeah, I can see that," the magi said. "So how did it go? No trouble with the vampires, right?" she asked.

"Of course not," the chief said. "I told them to let us through and they did just that," he spoke proud of how easy it was. "Besides they looked too wounded to be do any fighting."

Atlas cracked a cocky smile and boasted, "Hah! That will teach those bloodsuckers for trying to mess with me and Henry."

The chief agreed and said, "I'm pretty sure they won't try to harm you again. Well just as long as you stay out of their lair, that is."

Atlas looked down at the boy and asked, "So Henry, are you ready to go?"

"Yes, I am," he said. Then he looked to the ground nervously and continued, "But I'm worried that my sister will whack me for being late."

"Then I'll hit her back to see how she likes it," the magi said with her tail swishing to and from as if she was itching to whip a certain abusive girl.

"Yeah... uh... don't it, please," Henry said, disagreeing with her idea. "I know she doesn't like me, but she's still my sister. And I would never want to see her hurt."

"Alright fine, I won't do it," sighed Atlas who stopped moving her tail. "But still, you don't need to take all that pain your sister gives you. You got to learn to stand up for yourself, otherwise she'll just keep giving you the frying pan," she advised.

"Well okay," the boy said.

The magi said, "Good, now let's get back to the house now." She pictured Henry's house and yard in her mind before she cast her teleportation spell to warp herself and the boy to there.

Henry was surprised to see that Yukki didn't seem too taken aback by the news of the grocery store no longer being able to support frozen desserts. That was because the hatchlings had already told her. Yukki decided to make up for her displeasure by dragging her brother to her room and make him do something humiliating. The Firestar sisters pressed their ears closely to the white wooden door to hear

what was going on inside. There were sounds of movement going back and forth, dropping soft things on the floor, and some shuffling that they couldn't make out exactly. They could hear the boy whining, "Come on, sis, I don't want to do this again!"

Yukki ignore her brother's protest and said, "Shut up, baka! We just lost ice cream forever, so now I need something fun to do. And that's where you come in. So stay still and let me dress you up." A zipping sound was heard.

Henry replied unhappily, "Well dressing me up as a princess isn't exactly fun, you know."

Danielle looked to her sister and asked, "What's a pwincess?"

Kylie shrugged, shook her head, and answered, "I dun know."

After a few minutes, the hatchlings heard footsteps coming towards the door and then felt the door swinging away from them. They looked up to Yukki, who looked surprised to see them, "Oh, I didn't know you guys were here," she said before smiling afterwards. "Well doesn't matter, because I was going to let you see my brother in a dress." She turned to the side and told, "Oh Henriette, get over here!"

The sisters glanced to each other confused as to who the new stranger in here was. Danielle asked, "Who's Henwiette?"

The Henriette person, who was Henry's feminine alter ego, did what his sister commanded of him and showed his glamorous new self to the hatchlings. His blonde hair looked like it had grown really fast to the point where it reached his chest. On the top of his head was a silver tiara adorned with a few rubies. He wore long white silky gloves and a glittering pink dress with magenta ribbons. His pink lips were now a crimson red color. Henry sighed and put a hand to his face. He said to himself, "This is so embarrassing."

The hatchling didn't seem to think so and were instead, fascinated by his appearance. Danielle commented, "Henwy, you wook pwetty!"

The girl nodded and said, "I know, doesn't he?" She grinned and snickered at her brother. "I could dress him up in another cute outfit if you want."

Henry shook his head hard at the sisters, gesturing them not to make this dress-up game go any further. But they ignored his plea as Kylie replied enthusiasm for another beautiful display, "Yay, I want to see him in another dwess!"

"Me too!" the whiptail said.

"Okay then," Yukki said as her brother dropped his mouth open in displeasure and betrayal. She grabbed him by the back of the dress and said, "Come on, Henriette. Let's put you in a maid outfit this time." She dragged him into her room as the boy cried a long "no". Then the door was closed and the outfit change took place. Pretty soon, Yukki brought the boy out in new apparels consisting of a black dress, white stockings, black dress shoes, white gloves, a white Victorian maid hat, and a white apron. His hair seemed to have gotten short again for some reason. "So what do you think?" the girl asked.

The sisters squealed and Danielle answered, "He's cute!" The balloon hatchling agreed.

The girl said, "I know, right? He looks so kawaii in these outfits!"

Henry, not amused, dully murmured, "Yeah kawaii, sure."

Yukki took her brother back into the room and said, "Alright Henriette, let's dress you some more." So Henry was dressed up in a bikini, a geisha girl outfit, a fairy costume, a catgirl costume, a foxgirl costume, and other effeminate clothes. Each time he was earned praising comments from the sisters.

Atlas, who had stayed outside to sleep for the night, could hear her nieces' joyful cheers. *'Sounds like they're having a good time. It's nice that they have friends to hang out with, if only temporary,'* she thought. The Firestars would live with them, but Atlas knew that they couldn't stay here in the Northeast region. Safety for the nieces came first before friends. Tomorrow morning, they would have to leave to travel again after breakfast.

By the end of the day, the dragon village was finished being built and all the traps were set. Aeolus, the one who took part in the Spell's invention, was offered the second best cave in the village, since the leader already took the best one. The disaster dragon gladly took the cave and went to sleep in it tonight.

When the people went back to the city, Kathia was moved into a hospital for better recovery. She laid on the bed with an IV attached to her bloodstream for support. All day, she had thought about how her battle would have been much easier and that she wouldn't be in this mess if she had magic powers like those mages. *'I have got to find a way to learn magic. Maybe there's a school for that somewhere,'* she thought. Tomorrow, she was going to start learning before she would ever hunt again.