

Chapter 43: Rina Finds Out

Kathia found herself a few feet above a white mass and screamed as she fell onto it. The landing felt like it was in somewhere between soft and hard. The girl pushed her upper-body up with her hands on the scales. Then she looked at what she was on. It was a white dragon. She assumed that this creature was Axle, the one she had chosen to be warped to. But she wasn't here to be buddies with him; she was here to run on back to either Sundown or Windfall, whichever was the closest. The girl looked for a way to get off of him, so that she could skedaddle. Kathia found his tail, which she could use to get herself down to the ground. Before she could move to there, she heard Axle ask her, "Who are you?" He however sounded a bit weak when he said that.

The girl looked at him and answered, "No one important. Now if you'll excuse me. I got to go." Then she crawled over to his tail and grabbed a hold of it. She used the spikes on the tail as handles for getting down like she would a ladder. Once she reached the forest floor, Kathia quickly ran away from the dragon before they could talk some more. She was the destined dragon slayer and she could not afford to be friendly to creatures such as them, even if they did care about humans.

But this wasn't going to be the last time she saw of him. Kathia heard running footsteps behind and knew that the dragon was following her. His four legs gave him the advantage of running faster than the girl would on her two legs and pretty soon, he got ahead of her and stopped right in her path. Axle asked, "Oh no. You smell like sulfur, almost like you came from another realm. So want to tell me who you are and where you just came from?"

The girl growled, "My name is none of your business, dragon! Now leave me alone!" She ran to the side, trying to escape this creature and continue her way to a human settlement. But once again, she got cut off. Not by the dragon, but by an angry-looking man.

He glared at her and said, "Fine, you do not have to tell me who you are. But for you to suddenly appear out of nowhere and land on my back without an explanation and think that is fine, you are sorely mistaken." Upon recognizing the voice, Kathia realized to her shock that this man was Axle and somehow, he had taken the form of a human. It seemed he would not leave her alone without answers.

Her shock quickly died down and was replaced by her annoyed emotion for the dragon's persistence to bug her. The girl let out an angry groan and yelled, "Fine, I'll tell you where I came from! I was captured by Spinx and taken to another dimension where he would keep me there until it was time for him to use me as a hostage against you. His good side in there and his friends helped me to escape and that's how I ended up here. There! Does that answer your question?"

Sounding a bit more concerned for the safety of the girl, Axle said, "Kind of. But what makes you think Spinx won't just come after you again? Think about it, he wanted to use a hostage so he could get the upper hand on me. When he finds out, you think he's just going to sit around and let you slip right

between his figures?"

Now that she thought about it, the "man" was right. There was no doubt the wicked necromancer would try to retrieve her. That means the girl needed reach civilization soon or else. But she was too prideful to accept a dragon's help, even if he was a good one. Kathia huffed and scoffed, "I think I'll have you know that I can take care of myself, scaly. I have magic powers and ghosts to watch over me. I don't need no overgrown lizard to protect me. So scram, scoot, get out of here!"

Suddenly, there was a snapping sound of someone running through the forest with much haste. What came from around the tree was the young girl who had been with Azera. She ran towards Kathia and cried while babbling, "Kathia help. Azera, he's hurt badly and he's heading back to the mountain where that necromancer is at. Please, you have to stop him." Axle seemed to recoil at Azera's name and soon headed in the opposite direction, back the way he came from.

Kathia didn't know what his problem was, but she was thankful for whatever the girl said that scared him. Turning to the younger girl, the redhead assured her in a soft tone, "There, there, don't cry. I'll go save his life." Oh bummer, now that means the redhead will have to put herself in danger to save someone's life. As much as she hated going back to the abominable necromancer, the hunter just couldn't say no to the young girl in need. Abandoning a fellow human being to die would be a really bad thing to do. Hopefully, Azera didn't get too close to Spinx, where he could see her and try to capture her again. "Show me where he is," she said. The little girl nodded her head and then she led her back the way in a quick pace. As she led, it was evident that she was tired, almost like she had yet to rest at all. The redhead saw her panting and how slow and weak her running was. The child must have been in a hurry to find help quickly before now. If Kathia had a bottle of water with her, she would have used her magic to turn it into blessed water to revitalize the girl's stamina. But unfortunately, she didn't have one on her as the containers were back at the camp. But still, having a tired person around would slow her down before she could make it to Azera. Perhaps it would be better to have the girl stay in a safe place while the redhead went on ahead. Kathia said, "Hey, you look pretty tired. Want to me directions where he's at and I go follow on that?"

They stopped running, so that the girl can catch her breath. She simply pointed towards the mountain and said, sounding very weak, "That is all I know he went to. The place we were staying at last, where Azera was healing up, was just ahead, but he started to walk closer and closer to the mountain. Afterwards I ran back to the camp you were at, but you have disappeared; so I panicked, running through the forest to find Azera. I never found him though, that's when I saw the white dragon landing in the clearing. He had with him a woman in a purple collar, soon dispersing from her and heading on his own. I thought he might be here to hunt Azera, because Azera has a detailed sketch of the one dragon in his pocket. That is all I know. Please find him before that dragon does or before Spinx does."

The redhead started to wonder if the campers were looking for her and if they organized a few teams to search for her in these woods. The teen's cellphone was back at the camp, Mrs. Merryweather might have called her to see how she was doing and got worried by now when the maid didn't get a response.

Kathia didn't like having to worry everyone like that. She'll need to come back in one piece to put everyone's concerns to rest. Then the little girl said a white dragon landed with a woman in a purple collar. Kathia wondered if she was talking about Axle. Then she learned that the dragon may have been hunting Azera down. This raised the redhead's eyebrow; if Axle was going after Azera, then why did he turn tail and ran away like a scaredy cat? Well, the little girl did say she thought the dragon might have been doing that, so her guess could be wrong. Maybe it was the other way around considering Azera was a mercenary and that he may have been hired to hunt down the dragon. Who knows? Then after the little girl begged her to find the man, Kathia put on a bravado with a confident smile on her face and made a thumbs up. She assured, "Don't worry, I'll make it in time before any of these two bozos get to him. Don't you worry." Then she turned and headed in the direction the mercenary had been at.

Kathia ran towards the mountain and out of the girl's sight. Figuring the given direction may not be enough, the redhead thought to use a ghost to aid her in the search. One who knew their way around this place. While on the move, the girl began to summon such a spirit. Using her magic energy, she said, "Oh soul of a person who knows this part of the wilderness and the mountain well, I summon you to come here and help me."

Within moments, a glowing white transparent form of a hiker started to appear in front of the girl who now stopped. The chubby mustached man made a hearty smile at her and said, "Hello lassie, it's nice to be back in the real world again. So how may I help you?"

Kathia told him, "I need you to help me find a man named Azera. He's got silver hair, scars on his face, he carries weapons and he wears a black sleeveless shirt. Have you seen a guy like that?"

The hiker nodded and answered, "Oh yes, I've seen 'em walking by here. He looked like he had a bone to pick with that feller in black I saw walking by here last night. I can take you over to 'em."

"Please do," the mage replied.

The ghost said, "Alrighty then, follow me." The girl followed the hiker's spirit on the way to the mercenary.

Kathia thought about the little girl she left behind and didn't want her to be all alone. Somebody needed to watch over her. The mage summoned another ghost, this time a woman in her mid-twenties. Kathia told the female ghost, "I need to you to look for a black-haired girl over there and watch over her while I'm gone. Let me know if anything happens." The woman agreed to do this task and floated herself over to where the little girl was left behind.

After a while of waiting, David came out of his room with a updated blueprint. He showed it to Ronan and Minerva and said, "It's done, guys! I've made it bigger. So, what do you think now? Looks perfect or

what?" He flashed a confident toothy grin at them.

Minerva looked at the layout and examined the dojo room. It was just the right size. The woman nodded and said, "I think so." Then she looked at her boyfriend and asked, "Ronan, what do you think?"

Ronan nodded with a smirk. "Excellent. I say we're ready to move forward," he said, looking to Minerva.

"Okay then," said David. He held out his hand as if he needed to take something. "Give me the payment and I'll give you the blueprint."

Minerva took out her wallet and opened up the zipper to take out some coins. She gave them to the man and said, "Here you go!"

"Great!" said David as he took the money. "I hope that place gets build. I want to see what it's like."

Ronan smirked and asked the blonde. "Shall we go?"

Minerva nodded and replied, "Of course!" Then after saying goodbye to her friends, they walked outside over to Drake and got onto his back. Next stop would be the city hall, where the Aquarians were to get assistance for the construction of their new school.

After a short while later, the horde was close to finishing their spars when Aeolus was contacted by Juna, *'Aeolus, here after about thirty minutes of fighting, I have finally made it to the top of this damn prison. Now do you mind teleporting here and taking me and my new band of misfits. So if you do not mind coming and getting us, like now would be great.'* She sent him a full 360° image of the place out in the middle of the ocean.

It looks like Juna had done the horde's job of rescuing herself and made it convenient for them. The horde leader told his sparring partner to stop fighting for a moment, so that he can talk to Juna. Aeolus replied to her, *'Very well, I shall send one of us to fetch you.'* Then he chose a dragon for this job and told him, *'Kekul, I need you to teleport yourself over to Juna and her company and bring them back to the village.'*

'Got it,' the magma magi replied. After receiving the ocean image from the leader, he warped over to Juna and teleport every single prisoner back to the village.

Juna and the other three girls stood in the middle of the desert with the sparring horde. The halfling lord was in a gladiator outfit and they all had the same slave collars around their necks. The horde stopped training looked at the new guests. The human girls screeched, but Juna and the female halfling did not. Tavurth's ears were hurt by that loud noise that the annoyed brute growled under his

breath, "Damn screaming apes."

Salvo was just as peeved off with the noise and growled, "So annoying! And look who decided to bring them here." He was referring to Juna the "human-lover" whom he did not like.

The lord turned her head to the girls. "Will you two stop that damn horrible screaming? It is rather annoying," she said calmly, but her tone sent chills down the girls' backs, which stopped their screams. *'Aeolus come here, now. And while you are at it, bring my brother with you, if he's somewhere close by,'* Juna thought to the horde leader, sounding a bit cold, almost like she was annoyed.

Aeolus, unnerved by her tone as he expected her to be like this all the time with him, replied, *'I'm right here with the others, but Mekarth is still building the Shadow Wind replica. I'll call him as I come.'* The horde leader could see her 30 meters from where he was at; reaching Juna wouldn't be too far. Aeolus went towards the lord as he telepathically called her brother, *'Mekarth, Juna is back in one piece. She's with us outside the village where the horde sparred yesterday.'*

Juna pinched her nose and said in disappointment, "You can't telepathically talk to him. You may not have noticed that, but me and Axle speak with him out loud because we have no way of talking with him any other way."

"What?!" the leader asked, sounding surprised and in disbelief by what he just heard about her brother. All dragons had the ability to use telepathy and it was very much unheard of for one not to do it, so why can't Mekarth do it?

The "halfling" turned her attention back to the collar around her neck and warned, "Aeolus, if you or anyone in this horde touch these three, you will be sorry. I have to go find my brother now, simply because he needs to do something for me."

As Juna walked away from the group, the horde leader narrowed his eyes in contempt and murmured, "Don't worry, I have no interest in harming any of them." In his own thoughts, he added, *'Yet.'* Once the war against Dracul was over and the Vulture Horde was strong enough in both strength and numbers, he will see to these humans slain. For now, these women will be in the horde's protection until then. Aeolus said to Yopple, "Yopple, lead these women to the village. We can't have them get in the way of our training." The cassare picked the women up and moved towards the village.

Aeolus was about to resume his training when he heard another telepathically message, this time from Rina, *'Aeolus.'* However, something was off; she sounded dead serious this time, the coldness in her voice clearly sipping through. *'I want to ask you a question,'* she continued, *'Not a while ago, Raven told me something interesting. I want you to answer truthfully: is it true that you are planning to wipe out every single human in the entire world?'*

The horde leader made an angry frown and narrowed his eyes. After he had told his horde not to let

word of his intended plan slip, they had to tell someone. What if they had let Mekarth heard them, too? Thankfully up to now, the black dragon didn't seem like he knew. But it was still possible for Raven to tell him about it, provide that the Eternal Wind clan dragon met the former lord. Aeolus decided to give Rina his honest answer, knowing that she wasn't anywhere near the dragon lords. In a calm tone, he answered, *'Well Rina, I'll have to confirm your friend's words. Yes, I am. But we'll be holding that off for now since we have other things to attend to.'*

'I see,' replied Rina. *'Let me be clear with you on one thing, Aeolus. No matter whether it's a human we are talking about or not, I draw the line at the genocide of the sentient species. Nearly all of our clan members do. Or did, seeing as what happened to our clan. So why do you want an entire species wiped off the planet, besides the obvious?'*

There it was, that not-all-humans-are-bad belief he had been expecting; just like with Atlas, Zedita and the Incarus family. Just why were these dragons so lenient towards humans? Going back to the question at hand, the horde leader answered, *'Rina, have you ever watched your family get murdered right before your very eyes?'* He already knew the answer considering that the dragoness had told him that her clan had been slaughtered. *'Have you ever been taken away from home at a young age and then forced to live grueling miserable days of slavery for centuries long? Have you watched your mother suffer through work, pain and tears until she got weaker and die?'* His telepathic voice started to get a little bit bitter when he mentioned his mother's death. *'Have you heard about how the beautiful woods of your birth has been destroyed and turned into a polluted wreck of industrial factories for greedy billionaires?'* His voice grew more resentful as more memories of his past poured into his head. *'Have you ever been raped by one of your masters? Have you given your trust to a few seemingly-nice humans and then end up getting stabbed in the back? Have you ever been used in painful experiments? Have you been torn apart from your children before or after their births when they're given to someone else to be slaves for them or butchered to killed for food or clothing? Because all these things are what these humans exactly did to me.'*

The Eternal Wind clan dragoness said, *'The only things I've suffered through my life is living through the siege of our village, being isolated and cut off from the rest of the world along with my friends and family. Humans destroyed our village and killed most of us. However, I already had my revenge by killing those dragon hunters, and that is clearly enough for me.'*

Aeolus said, *'Then surely, you know how vicious and wicked humans are.'*

Rina continued, this time with a strange tone in her voice, *'These reasons are not enough for me to change my opinion about this, Aeolus. Genocide is a genocide, no matter how you look at it and no matter who is involved. Yes, I do dislike humans, and Raven hates them more than me. However, this is not a valid reason for us to suddenly up and go around slaughtering them left and right. I don't care if we are going to protect them, and I most certainly do not care who am I fighting. I won't try to change your views about humans in general,'* she added, her voice slowly shifting to threatening. *'It's clear that I can't do that, no matter how hard I'll try. So let me put this up front, Aeolus: we are enemies now. We will do*

whatever is possible to stop your plan from progressing. If you try to attack any innocent human or settlement, we will fight back once we learn about it. And we won't be merciful to either you, or any member of the Vulture Horde who will participate in attacks. Do not say later that we did not warn you. Farewell.'

The horde leader's feelings were mutual; if she tried to stop her, then he will defeat her. *'Very well then, my enemy. Let's see if you can try and stop us,'* he thought coldly. He was now more resolved in making his horde stronger to destroy all opposition, whether they be human or dragon. Aeolus went back to his sparring partner and said, "Alright Firefry, let's get back to training." The crimson flare got to his feet and took off speeding into the air at the horde leader, who was prepared to defend himself and strike back.

Doubloon was chatting with two dragonesses about a daughter. The chief listened to the morningstar dragoness speak in a fond manner, "And that's when my daughter met this nice young dragon. She would see him for a few days before she got invited to join his clan. My daughter would tell me through telepathy how sweet he was and how he protected her from humans. Now they're mates and they have three adorable little hatchlings." The morningstar was proud and happy for her daughter having a loving mate and a nice family.

The canopy dragoness smiled and said, "That's so wonderful. I'm glad your daughter's living the good life."

Doubloon was content as well. He was about to congratulate the morningstar, when he heard an urgent message from one of his guards, *'Chief Doubloon, we're under attack by humans. They've killed Quartz, we need to activate the trap crystals now and get ready to fight for our lives.'*

The chief frowned, knowing that his village was in danger and that action must be taken immediately. *'I'm on it, I'll get the village prepared right now,'* he said.

The two dragonesses stopped smiling when they noticed the serious expression on his face. They became concerned as the canopy asked, "Chief, what's wrong?"

Doubloon answered, "We've got human intruders. We need to stop them now." Then he telepathically spoke to the crystal-maker dragons, *'Lhove, Rivet, I need you to activate the trap crystals. We're under attack by humans. They've already killed Quartz and I fear the same might happen to his friend. I'll alert the other dragons so that they can act as backup in case the traps fail.'*

'We're on it, chief!' the crystal-makers said. Then the chief telepathically told the other dragons in the village to let them know of the situation and told them to get ready to fight.

Danielle and Kylie were playing with their hatchling friends when they heard feet running outside the room. They turned to the entrance and saw dragons running right by. The whiptail hatchling asked, "What's going on? Why are they winning?"

The autumn dragoness, the baby sitter for the hatchlings as the other mother dragons were out, answered, "There's humans outside, dearie. The dragons are going to fight them. We need to stay inside this room right now. Do not leave this place."

Pendra the imperial fleshcrowne hatchling looked at the dragoness with confident eyes and asked, "They're going to win, right?"

The autumn nodded and made an appropriate response to keep the hatchlings from being fearful, "They will." She exaggerated the dragons' capabilities and said, "They're big strong dragons. They'll be able to squash those puny humans."

The imperial fleshcrowne smiled in enthusiasm and said, "Cool! I want to see them fight."

The dragoness shook her head to deny him permission to leave and said, "No, you are stay here where you'll be safe. Besides, you might get in their way." She also didn't want his life put in danger of the crossfire or for him to be exposed to any bloody violence and death.

Pendra insisted, "No I won't! I'll just stay to the side and watch."

The autumn still refused to let him out and spoke sternly, "You are going to stay in this cave, whether you like it or not. And if you try to get out of here, I will let your parents know, so that you will be grounded."

The fleshcrowne hatchling groaned and pouted in response. "Fine, I'll stay here in this crummy cave," he said.

Pinky yelled at him, "Hey, my cave's not crummy!"

Her sister, Smasp the autumn hatchling, yelled, "Yeah!" The room they were in belonged to Pinky and Smasp. The autumn dragoness was their mother.

Pendra didn't mean to insult his friends; he was just mad about not being allowed outside to see all the action. He sighed an apology, "Sorry."

Mevelle the albino hatchling bounded over to him and assured, "Hey, don't worry. The grown-ups will tell us about the fight after it's done. Maybe they'll show us it through telepathy."

The autumn dragoness growled at her, "Mevelle, don't give him any ideas."

Pendra liked the albino's idea and thought to use it to his advantage. *'I should ask,'* he thought. He formed a telepathic communication with his father and asked, *'Dad, you're fighting, right? Can you show me how you're fighting the humans?'*

His father gladly agreed to do it, *'Sure thing, son. Your big strong papa is going to show you how he whoops their butts.'* He used his sight-sharing spell to let his son see what he was seeing. Right now, the villagers were standing a distance away the cave entrance, right where the trap crystals were placed between them. Pendra smiled as he was eager to see fight and action that would take place soon.

Once they reached the city hall, Minerva got off of Drake and went inside the building. She went over to the receptionist's desk. The woman behind the desk talked into the phone for a few seconds before she hung up. Then she looked at the approaching pair and asked, "Hello, how may I help you?"

Minerva asked her, "We came here to get the Aquarians' help on building a fighting school. We brought a blueprint to show them how we want it built. Will they have time to help us?"

The receptionist nodded and replied, "Mm-hmm! They should get your school built quickly on time. I'll go over to their office and get them." Then she left the desk and went on her way. After a few minutes, she returned with an armored falconiform wyvern.

The falconiform asked, "So where do you humans need this school of yours built?"

Ronan stepped forward then the falconiform approached. The man asked, "Do you possibly have a map of Rudvich? I can better point out the location that way. I have a decent memory."

The falconiform looked to the receptionist and told her, "Ms. Benton, can you get a map for this gentleman right here?"

Ms. Benton nodded and replied, "Of course, sir." Then she went behind her desk and pulled out a brochure from the shelf. She returned back to them and gave Ronan the brochure, which had the map of the city inside. "Here you go, sir," she said.

Ronan took the map and said, "Thank you." He opened up the map and turned it for the falconiform to see and pointed to the spot on the map that he found. "Right there. A decently large area perfect to set up the school."

The Aquarian soldier studied the location on the map for few seconds before drawing his head back and saying, "Very well, I'll call in one of our magis have him gather a few earth dragons to help build the

place. Now do you have a blueprint so that we can know what you want your place to look like?"

Minerva nodded and answered, "Of course! We have it with us." She held a rolled up blueprint to show.

The falconiform was content to see that they came prepared. "That's good! Show it to the earth dragons when you get there," he said. Shortly, an Aquarian magi appeared next to him via teleportation. The falconiform told him, "You see the empty place on this man's map? I need you to take this couple over there and get some earth dragons to help out on the construction."

The magi replied, "Yes sir." Then he teleported Ronan and Minerva over to grassy area in the city.

"Whoa!" the woman cried out. She and her boyfriend were taken by surprise by the sudden transition from being inside the city hall to being outdoors in a heartbeat.

The magi looked around at his surroundings and asked, "Is this the place you wanted your business built at?"

The man nodded and curiously asked, "Yes this is the spot. How fast can it be built?"

"In just a few minutes," the magi answered. Nodding once, he added, "Yes, our magic works that fast. Now if you'll excuse me, I'll be bringing some earth dragons here." Then he teleported out of their sight.

Minerva looked to Ronan and said with a smile, "This is it; we're finally getting our school built. Isn't this great?"

He looked at his girlfriend with a smile. "We'll still need to get supplies for training inside. those won't be so quickly obtained."

Minerva agreed with him and added, "And we also need someone to design our logo for us and make advertisements." Without them, their school would just look bland and boring and not many people would know about the place. Their business would be in the red. She thought about more what they would need and figured out what to get. "And we might need someone to paint our walls, too," she suggested.

Ronan nodded and said, "I think we can figure that out." Then he asked, "How will we get advertisement though? The most we could probably do right now is banners."

Fortunately, Minerva had thought of a second way to advertise. "We can also tell people about our school and have them spread the word," she suggested. She made a plan to tell her friends and coworkers and get them to talk to other people about it.