

Chapter 51: The Distrusting Daughter

Hewey appeared right next to Juna. Bam's right front foot jumped in surprise by how the healer appeared in a flash. The navy blue cried, "Whoa!" Hewey saw how pitifully weak Juna looked in her injured state. He began to use his healing magic on her to restore the body tissue and close up the wounds. While the healer was working, Bam asked, "Hey Hewey, did you see where Atlas and the others went?"

The healer answered, "We were with Axle. We found out that Juna and Mekarth aren't his real siblings."

Jarilo asked, "They aren't?"

Hewey confirmed, "No. It seems like he was mad about living a life of lies this whole time. Now he's gone off to find the truth about himself." Aeolus didn't really care about this little family matter of the siblings, though it was disappointing that they will be losing a third healer for the fight against Shadow Wind. Now come to think of it, the horde only had over 150 dragons and only two of them had healing powers. This small number was a disadvantage for the horde and they needed to recruit more healers to treat its dragons faster and help them last longer out in the war. Aeolus better get help from Kekul to find more healing dragons later.

Akil looked at Atlas when she came into view. She had a low pitch growl in her answer. "Ya just peachy," she sarcastically replied back. "And exactly who are you?"

Atlas answered, "I'm Atlas, I'm a friend of Axle's." Then she turned back into a dragoness as she continued, "And also a dragon." She transformed herself so that her next words would sound more understandable. The magi explained her story, "I once had an egg, but it was taken away from me before it could hatch. A girl named Violet said that my daughter had scales the same color as yours as well as the same eye colors. I don't know exactly how she knows this or if she's just messing with me, but that's all I know about my lost egg that's hatched. I think you might be my daughter because you kind of smell like someone I know and was forced to breed with." The dragon she was talking about was Aeolus, whose green color and red eye that Akil inherited from. If Akil was really Atlas's daughter, then the magi would have some good news to share with her friend.

"Ya right, like I would believe that bullcrap," the green dragoness snarled at the magi. "A dragon I just met says she my mother, yet does not prove it, makes you a liar."

Atlas was peeved at the tone Akil had directed at her, but she knew that Akil was kind of right. There was no evidence other than Violet's words and the mention of Aeolus's scent known to the greenish dragoness. Akil must want physical evidence to prove it. With having mentioned scent, the magi

demanded, "Oh yeah? Well, why don't you try smelling yourself and then me?" Their scents had to have some degree of similarity. If Akil didn't smell too much like her mother, then Atlas was just going to have to bring Aeolus to their daughter and have him try to confirm the blood relationship.

"Smell myself? Do you know how hard that is to do?" Akil snapped back.

Garin suggested, "Well if you can't do that, then how about this guy here?" He looked to the spring dragon.

The spring asked, "Me?"

The halfling nodded and goaded him, "Yeah, you. Go ahead, check their scents." The spring looked a bit worried about going up into people's personal spaces. But regardless, he went to do the task at hand. First, he sniffed Atlas's wing and then he went over to Akil and got her scent before she snarled at him. The spring took the hint to get away from the green dragoness before he would get hurt. Garin asked him, "So, do they match?"

The spring answered, "They almost smell like each other."

Atlas told Akil sternly, "There, you hear that? You are my daughter, so you better start treating me with some respect."

The greenish dragoness growled as if she was not happy and was still refusing the bloodline between her and the magi. She growled, "Let's say you are my mother; does not explain why you never came looking for me over these years. Maybe you can tell me the color of the egg I was born from, the date I was laid, maybe even country I was hatched in."

Atlas retorted in an equally irritated tone, "Your egg was green and you were hatched in Shadow Wind, which I don't know which region in Rudvich that place is in. As for that date, I sure as hell don't even remember exactly, because that was over one hundred years ago when I was a slave."

The spring dragon looked at the two of them and noted, *'Their attitudes sure resemble each others. I guess that's one thing they share in common.'*

Akil snarled, "You still neglect of telling me why you never came looking for me."

"Because I didn't know what you looked like," Atlas snarled. "I can't teleport to you if I've never seen the egg I've lost hatched." This dragoness was getting frustrating to deal with. How the heck was Atlas supposed to convince Akil when she is so much readily to deny the blood relationship?

Akil's collar around her neck started to slightly glow before she yelled back at Atlas, "And what kind of bullshit excuse is that? If you know what the egg looked like, you could have easily started there and

follow up on the clue, but you did not. Instead, you ignored it for a hundred plus years." She stood up, even though it caused her pain, but the pure adrenaline was suppressing it to the point where it was bearable. "But evidently that is okay with you."

"I did try to track you down. I've had friends from other places who tried to watch out for you and their friends who tried to help as well, so that one day after the Spell I would try to find you. But then somewhere along the way, they all lost track of you," Atlas explained. "That's why I could never find you all these years."

Garin interjected, "Atlas, calm down. I don't think she's going to trust you if you keep getting mad at her. You're her mother, aren't you? She may be suspicious of you, but you should be more gentle with her." Then he looked over to the white and continued in concern, "Anyway, Axle looks like he's having a fit. We shouldn't be wasting time like this; he needs help fast."

The halfling was right; Atlas had been too foolish with her emotion while trying to get Akil to see the truth. She probably might have ended up making Akil see her as a big fat liar trying to claim motherhood for some malicious purpose, while making the dragoness hate her even more. Letting go of her temper, she glanced away for a bit and sighed heavily to get all that anger out. She sincerely apologized to Akil, "Look, I'm sorry I wasn't there for you. I wished I could've escaped early and prevent all these bad things from happening to you. But the damn slave collar and the other circumstances never let me. Think of what you will of me, but know that I didn't want any of this to happen to you." With that said, the magi started to get on to the business of saving her friend, "Now come on, we got a healer dragon to see. He needs to help Axle and you." Getting her daughter's cuts healed was one of the first things she was going to do to make up for all these lost years. Then she warped everyone over to Aeolus's group.

Aeolus and the dragons with him looked to see Atlas's group and their eyes immediately turned to Axle and Akil, but most of that attention was on the former due to his panic attacks. The horde leader asked the magi, "Atlas, what happened?"

Bam asked about Axle, "Hey is he going to be alright? Looks like he's freaking out." Without needing to be told, Hewey began to heal Akil's cuts. The look in her eyes when she stared at Atlas, was that she was still in a sort of denial about the magi begin her mother.

Atlas answered, "I don't know. Marks suddenly appeared on his body and he started to fall. Akil tried to catch him, but they both fell through the trees. Now Axle's having panic attacks and it might be due to these marks."

Aeolus asked, "Marks?"

The magi answered, "I don't know why they came up like that. That's something you'll have to ask Axle about."

Then Juna started to get up off the ground as she said, "Damn that hurts still." She placed her hand on the tree to just add a bit of stability for herself. When she saw Axle in the state he was in, her mouth kind of dropped a bit before her eyes suddenly widened with fear. "GET AWAY FROM HIM, NOW!"

Everyone looked to Juna and then at Axle, wondering why she would tell them to get away from her brother. Bam asked, "Why? What's wrong?"

Aeolus got the hint that something bad was going to happen. He answered, "Whatever it is, we must listen to her and fall back now." Then they all backed away from Axle, keeping their distance from whatever incident was about to happen.

Both Atlas and Aeolus figured that these marks on Axle were related to the white acting this way. The magi wondered, '*Axle, what is going on with you?*'

Akil stood where she was at still near her adopted father, "And why is that Juna? Is there some hidden agenda, something you know?" Juna remained silence for a second before the green dragoness snapped, "You know what these bronze marks are and you know what is happening. So explain what the hell your family did to him."

Juna stood there again before she spoke, "It's a suppression spell, and if anyone tries to heal him when that spell is degrading, it would ruin his mind. The spell was designed to suppress memories that should stay locked away for his whole life, but now since he found out about his pre-hatch life, the spell is degrading and at a rapid pace. Right now though, we have bigger problems than that. The spell had a second function to it as well, to suppress his animalistic instincts. I'm sure you seen it, Atlas. Though Excab could not seal it fully away, he was able to suppress most of it." Atlas wondered what the silver meant by her friend's animalistic instincts and tried to think back to when she saw such cases, if she ever did that is. Was it during the battle on Trident Mountain? Axle did seem strange during that time, but she rubbed it off as some kind of magic he used to power himself up. That is until she remembered seeing the three claw marks on his body during that time. Perhaps these were the source of the white lord going primal and becoming stronger.

Akil snapped, "So he was some kind of weapon?"

Juna explained, "Sadly yes. What was recovered from the place we found his egg at, was that his egg was design with the idea of an ultra-healer, using the white dragons' natural gift and enhancing it. The downside is that animalistic instincts that rage under his skin. Now we don't have time to be discussing this matter right now."

Aeolus concurred, "Agreed, it's best we leave right away until we're at a safe distance. Atlas, Kekul, one of you teleport us back to the lake." The two magis began to teleport everyone, except Axle, back to the lake. Atlas was hesitant to leave the white dragon behind. Even though he was in a ferocious state, she wanted to be around to help him just in case anything bad happened. The tracking spell that was still

lasting on him would let her know if he was going to be safe or not. Perhaps leaving him behind might not be so bad. After all, the distance between here and the lake was just about a quarter of a mile. After everyone was warped, the magis joined them at the lake.

Azera had slumbered for a long time. Kathia had been reading her one of spell books the whole time as she waited for the swordsman to wake up. She discovered a few new spells that she wanted to try out later when the rain stopped. One of them was the beauty bath spell, which enchanted the water and soap to make the person affected by them more attractive. If Kathia got the chance to return back home, she could try out the spell to see if it will work. If it does, she would use that spell to stay pretty. The other interesting spell was the sleep spell, which would put someone to sleep. This spell was great for when she needed to render an enemy defenseless and strike them down with ease. Just then, she saw Azera suddenly shot up into a sitting position and was panting like he just had a nightmare. He was covered in sweat and breathing heavy. He pressed his hand against his chest and noticed the wound was gone mostly. He even appeared to be in shock that he was alive. Kathia said, "So you've finally come to. Looks like that nap of yours gave you a nightmare. I guess it's appropriate considering that girl, who's actually-" With scorn, she spat the words, "a halfling-" Back in her normal tone, she continued, "brought you here looking like some kind of damaged doll." Then with teasing grin, she said, "I guess those dragons you were chasing gave you quite a time." She was still mad about the rude tone he had taken with her after the rescue from earlier. It must have been karma for abandoning the halfling child.

Azera never looked at her when he spoke, "It was not a nightmare, but memories. Also, it was not the dragons who put me on the verge of death, but the necromancer Spinx that did. They seemed to not have the slightest interest in me whatsoever, but were more focus on Spinx." He said as he clenched his fist, "He's also responsible for my memory loss, that much I know."

Kathia raised one of her eyebrows as she looked at Azera like he was nuts. He gets defeated like twice, now thrice, and he's still obsessed with going after Spinx. The girl would think that after all these fights, he would learn to avoid the necromancer, but that wasn't the case. She said, "Seriously? You're risking your own life to get back some memories he stole from you? I'd rather stay away from him until I have a better idea on how to take him down. One that doesn't involve rushing head first into him."

"Like you would understand," he said coldly before he got up from the bed, grab his sword and proceed to leave. "Unlike you who base their actions on their past, I do not know my past. I know nothing past a few years. If I die to uncover my past, then so be it," he said as he opened the tent curtain.

"Seriously?" Kathia responded to his last sentence. She wondered why on this planet would a past be worth dying for. To her, it felt stupid. It was waste of time when there may have been other means of getting his past back.

Standing in front of the curtain was the woman from before, yet this time she did not look like anything

close to a halfling, but her clothing was a bit odd, like leather. Azera did not get a second to react before a spell was cast on him and he fell limp. The strange woman caught him and laid him back on the bed. She turned and looked at Kathia, saying, "Sorry for the inconveniences about me coming into your camp. I understand your discomfort towards me. But I could not let him freely walk out of the camp, he still isn't fully recovered." She turned the swordsman's arm and showed the black veins on his arm. "He has poison in his blood stream, and it's effecting him more than what he shows. His heart is pumping harder than normal and his breathing is slightly more rapid."

Worried that Azera could die from it, the girl cried, "Shoot! We got to do something!" She began to rummage through her spell books hoping to find a spell that would cure him of the poison that Spinx inflicted.

Kathia heard the woman spoke weakly, "Thank you." Then there was a soft thump as if the woman had fallen on the ground.

For each book she couldn't find a useful spell, Kathia would check the other one until she found what she was looking for. Pretty soon, her eyes fell upon the cure poison spell from the book titled "Spells of Magic". "Yes!" the girl beamed triumphantly. With this spell, she was going to save the same life thrice in one day. After reading the spell's instructions on how to perform it, Kathia held her hands above Azera's chest and said, "I expel the venom from this body." The aura around her hands were glowing a light purple color as the spell was being cast. After she used her magic to rid the poison in Azera's body, she looked over to the halfling woman and noticed that she had just collapsed. Chances are that she had been poisoned too like Azera was. Kathia didn't care much for the woman's well-being and thought to just leave her to die, until she realized that this woman apparently had some kind of connection with the swordsman. Perhaps she may know a thing or two about his past, so that Azera doesn't run off recklessly to fight Spinx for his past. The mage decided to keep the halfling alive for now and went to use her cure poison spell on her to cure the poison. After the deed was done, the rain had finally stopped.

A guard came by to Kathia's tent and said, "Kathia, I heard you came back in one piece. One of our guards found you and has told us about you." Then he looked down at the halfling woman and asked, "And who's this?"

The girl answered, "No one I know. She just came here to bring this man in for help." She lied about her familiarity with the halfling, so that she would avoid explaining the woman being the same little girl who accompanied Azera. It was also to keep the man from getting the wrong idea that they could be friends.

"Man?" the guard asked. He noticed Azera lying on the bed.

Kathia explained, "He was poisoned, so I used my magic to cure him."

"And what about the woman?" asked the guard. He looked at the halfling as he explained, "Why is she lying on the ground?" Then he suddenly realized something about the woman as he squinted his eyes at

her and asked, "Hey, is that a halfling?" He must have noticed the "clothes" on the woman's body were actually her wings.

Kathia answered, "Yes, it is. But don't you kill her, at least not yet. She's an important prisoner of mine. I need her help to keep this guy here from getting himself killed. Just leave her here with me, I'm going to interrogate her when she wakes up."

The guard said, "Okay then, I'll go let everyone know what you're doing, just in case this goes wrong." Then he left and walked away. The girl started to look through her spell books to practice minor spells, so that she can develop her magic energy until she was exhausted.

Atlas and the others arrived back at the lake. Danielle and Kylie stopped playing with Ohimia and came bounding over to their aunt as the whiptail asked, "Aunt Atwas, did you find Axle?"

Atlas answered, "We did, but we had to leave him behind, so that he can calm down. We'll be back for him soon." She hoped her friend would return back to normal soon.

Ohimia asked, "What about Mekarth, did any of you see him back there?"

"Mekarth?" asked the magi. Looking around, she did not find the black dragon in sight. He must have gone off into the woods, probably to check on his siblings, even though they did that for him.

Juna looked a bit scared before she told the green dragoness, "Akil, I need you to head to Shadow Wind, enter the record tome, and retrieve the sealed records named Variable. Once that is done, find Luco as he would be useful in training this bunch at a much faster pace."

Akil was a bit annoyed by the silver's request, but she still bowed down, apparently agreeing to the mission. "As you wish. Pardon me asking, but what do we do with Axle in the meantime?"

Juna answered, "I have yet to plan that far about him, but in the meantime, he is not near the group. I also want Atlas to go with you in the case of an emergency that may arise." She then looked at the magi and asked, "You will go, won't you?"

Atlas nodded and said, "I'll do anything to keep Akil safe." Aeolus looked at the magi wondered if her concern for the messenger general had anything to do with Akil possibly being her daughter, considering their almost similar smell. But for some reason, the green dragoness looked somewhat displeased as if she didn't want to be around Atlas. Something must have happened to make Akil upset with the magi.

"Thank you, Atlas, but mostly you will only be there as a support to Akil for you will be treading in enemy territory, and many things will happen. For the most part, Akil is in charge of the mission, but if

things start to get too heated, get both of you out and scrap the mission, but do not teleport back here. If that does happen and you have to teleport out, my recommendation would be to stay away from the group for about a week and keep on the move, don't stay in one place for too long or they will find you," Juna said as she turned her head to the left to look at nothing but air. "There's a safe location just outside the city that mages can't see into, but it's a bit of a walk to get out of that cave. It's really the only place you can teleport to without being detected. I would also recommend finding a protection collar, so you are not seen when you cast magic in Shadow Wind. If you don't have one before you cast magic, you might blow the mission."

Atlas understood every word and replied, "Alright, got it."

The silver gave a mental image of the cave to the magi, so that she could teleport both herself and her daughter there. "That's about it, any questions?"

Akil quickly asked, "Ya one, why her? Why not someone who is a bit smaller frame and a bit more leaner?" Atlas shot her daughter a disgruntled look after getting the idea that she was being called fat. Juna's response was that in Shadow Wind's language, meaning what she said she wanted to be kept hidden from the group. "Tsk!" Akil sounded before she turned and started to head away.

Juna then turned to the other magi and calmly asked, "Could you retrieve my brother before he gets to Axle? Any unnecessary bloodshed should be avoided right now."

Kekul replied, "Okay, I'll go get him." Then he teleported to wherever Mekarth was.

Atlas looked to her daughter and asked, "Ready to go, Akil?" She asked in case Akil wasn't ready to accept going with her, the dragoness she didn't like.

"Let's get this over with," the green dragoness snarled as she continued to walk away from the group.

The magi was about to warp them both, when Juna sighed a bit and warned, "Atlas, one more thing. Do not allow Akil's emotions get out of control. If she starts to get aggressive, just stand down to her and let her calm down. But if she starts to panic, piss her off quickly or shit's going to go to hell faster than you realize. That is all."

Atlas replied, "Okay." Pissing her off during this situation was going to be easy, considering that her own daughter dislikes her. Then the magi teleported herself and Akil over to the cave.

Juna turned to the group and cleared her throat a bit. "Aeolus, get your group ready near the replicated sector because training will start when Mekarth gets back."

Aeolus replied to Juna, "Alright." Then he telepathically told the whole horde back at the desert, *'Vulture Horde, we are about to start our Shadow Wind training soon. Everyone is to go to the replicated sector*

and wait for us to return.' After some responses from his horde, the leader waited for his magi subordinate to get done with his task.

In the meantime, Garin went up to Danielle and Kylie, who got a look at his draconic features on his human body. The first thing that the sisters could think on their minds was hybrid. As the boy smiled at them as he opened his mouth to say something, but scared sisters screamed, "Hybrid!" They ran behind Ohimia for protection and peeked at Garin to see if he was going to attack. But he just stood there with a confused look on his face.

Ohimia giggled at the hatchlings' naiveté and said, "Relax you two, he's just a halfling. They're different than hybrids and nicer, too."

Garin grinned and assured, "Yeah, I don't harm kids. Trust me." Danielle and Kylie walked around the lumina to see if this halfling was truly safe like she said he was. Their movement was half-slow as they were cautious about the boy. As they got near, their anxiety was gone and replaced by curiosity as they looked and smelled his scent. No attacks were made, which confirms that the halfling was alright.

But they never got a chance to play with him as Kekul warped back to the others with Mekarth, whom he brought back. The magi reported to the silver, "Juna, I brought Mekarth back with us."

Juna nodded her head in agreement, "Okay, we can go back now." Her brother must have said something quickly, to which Juna from her expression must have said not now.

Aeolus looked to Kekul and said, "Kekul, take us all to the replicated sector."

The magma magi obeyed, "Yes sir." He warped everyone back to the desert where the horde was awaiting their leader's return. The dragons nearby noticed the 2 new people among them, who were Garin and Ohimia.

The halfling and the lumina looked back at the great number of dragons, eyeing them with interest. Ohimia said, "Wow, that's a lot of dragons here."

"Indeed," said Aeolus. "This is my horde, the Vulture Horde. We are being trained to help our fellow dragons-" Then he included another race to avoid being suspicious, "and humans from the wicked lords who oppress and enslave them."

Garin looked at him in confusion and surprise as he asked, "Wait, I thought the Spell would free all the dragons. Why are there still slaves? And why would humans use each other as slaves for that matter?"

The horde leader answered, "It's true that the Spell was meant to free all dragons, but our horde had found some dragons too weak to free themselves. So we rescued them and recruited some into the horde. So it's possible that there are others still being enslaved like what's going on in Shadow Wind." To

the next question, he had this to say, "But as for the human slaves, I have no idea what possible use they can have. Perhaps they're just food for the dragon lords there or they can do things not a single breed of dragons can."

Garin sighed, "So even after the Spell, some people are still stuck in slavery. That's pretty bad."

"It is," Aeolus agreed, though he had more sympathy for his kind than he did for humans, which for them was none. He noticed that his dragons were spread out like a crowd before a stage in a slightly disorganized way. Juna looked at the leader with a bit of annoyance. He remained unfazed as he silently said to her, *'What? You never told me how they were supposed to set themselves here.'*

The silver spoke up loudly enough that all the dragons could hear, "Listen Up, vermins. Training starts today, so everyone lined up based on size. That includes you, Aeolus."

Bam, Hewey, Kekul, Jarilo and Evony left their leader's side to get themselves organized somewhere in the line. Though Garin and Ohimia weren't horde members, they joined in on the training session anyway. Aeolus ordered his horde on where to start, "Pygmies, start at the entrance." The pygmies began to sort themselves out by height with the tiniest one taking the lead. Dragons that found themselves bigger than the ones behind them had to rearrange their position and set themselves behind their comrades. After all the pygmies were lined up, the bigger dragons started to join in with the dragonets going first. After a few minutes later, the line was formed and it was extended past the side of the village. Aeolus had this thought on the line, *'This is one long line.'*

Juna look down the line and told Mekarth to go into the "city" it seems. Then she started from the front and started to count numbers from 1 to 5 and then repeated. Aeolus, Bam and Pyro were made number 3, Garin had number 1, Ohimia and Salvo were number 5, Baltia was one of the number 2s, and lastly Sargoth is number 4. Once she was done, she then yelled at everyone, "Everyone with the number five, you are responsible for feeding everyone tonight. Group One, you are to go to the north side of the section. Group Two, you are to go to the east; Three to the south, and Four to the west. Once you get to your location, your mission is to find Mekarth and capture him. The first group that brings him back to me will get their pick of food tonight first, and trust me, you will want to be first. Now go and wait till I say go. Rules: no tracking or teleporting. If you are caught cheating, your group will not eat tonight. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes ma'am," everybody answered.

Aeolus and a few others didn't say a word, but they did understand their tasks. The horde leader thought about Fakoo and how he was making her hunt alone as her punishment. He telepathically told her, *'Fakoo, remember your punishment. Forget what number Juna gave you and go aid Group Five.'*

The albino replied, *'Don't worry, sir. I'm already in Group Five.'*

This was a perfect coincidence in Aeolus's opinion. He said, *'Well then, since Juna has sent a portion of the horde to hunt along with you, I'm changing your punishment to make you do 100 push-ups after the hunt. Also, you will be the last to eat. I will tell one of the horde members to watch over you to make sure you're doing what you're supposed to do.'*

'Yes sir,' said Fakoo, sounding unhappy with how the punishment was set against her.

Everyone went to their respective groups and gathered at the location they were assigned. Group 5 went out to hunt in the meantime. After all of Group 3 were at the southern part of the sector, Aeolus looked at everyone in his team to see which dragons were with him and how he could use them to win. He had several pygmies, including a crimson flare dragonet whose fast flight would be good for catching up to Mekarth and a honeycomb pygmy who can use his bees to search places no one can fit through. There were several cassares and though their breed's special ability was useless against Mekarth since he can't use magic, they can however deprive the other group's magic to keep them from using their spells to win. Another big advantage to the team was Hewey, who can use his magic to heal anyone who got hurt trying to catch Mekarth. A spring dragon on the team was also a big help due to his sleep pollen. And lastly, there was a kai dragon, a breed that powers up their strength to dish out heavy damages. With him, they could subdue Mekarth in a short amount of time.

Bam looked at his cousin eagerly like he had high hopes for him and asked, "So Aeolus, what's the plan to catch Mekarth?"

Aeolus answered, "We will go separate ways around in the city replica, so that we can have better chances at finding him. Once you see him, use your telepathy to call Bron and Rever if you don't think you can get him alone. These two will be the best for knocking him out for capture."

Bam replied, "Alright, sounds good to me!"

After a short while Juna was heard roaring into the sky for everyone to hear, "BEGIN!"

The horde leader said to his team, "Let's go." Then they went into the city replica to start their search.