

((**Note:** The following sections take place during [chapter 13](#).)

After Strider came out of the Magic Emporium, Akuma looks at the scrolls in the man's hand with a bit of a smug smile. The hybrid idly asked, "Looking for anything else then?"

Strider looked at Akuma and said, "I got everything we need. After you're done with buying stuff you want or need, come back to the tavern." Then he started to walk back. The crowd kind of moved out of his way as he walked back to the tavern. Just out of sight of Strider was a chipmunk on the roof watching Akuma. It was up on the roof watching with its golden eyes. "And don't be out during night time," the swordsman yelled back to the hybrid.

Akuma replied, "It's only mid-day." Marc the chipmunk followed Strider back to the inn that they were in and then decide to go back and find the hybrid boy. Which was not hard as he followed him over roof tops as well, wondering what was so special about him that those two are sticking around with him. The same goes with Akuma, why stick with those two. It puzzled him a bit, but soon he forgot it and then remembered his job he had to do. The boy went to a bakery and came back out with a sandwich. Marc followed him back to the inn as Akuma nibbled on his sandwich.

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On the way back, Strider was feeling a bit hungry and stopped at a stand that had a nice honey roast and some potatoes. The swordsman asked how much the roast and the potatoes was and then paid for them. He walked back to the Golden Pony Inn. The smell of the roast was so good, but Strider told himself to wait until he got back, for Axle was most likely going to be awake now. When he opened the door, the person who owned the inn yelled at him for bringing food with him. Strider just looked at him, which got the owner to shut up after he said that the swordsman needed to pay a fine for it. Strider did and then walked to the room. Just like he guessed, Axle was awake now. He looked at his friend and then looked back at the window. There in the window was the chipmunk again with its golden eyes and brown fur. It was there for a bit before it ran off. "Hm," Strider said. "Either this town has lots of chipmunks or that one been following us for a bit."

Axle looked at him and then notices the sweet smell of a honey roast. He eyed Strider and said, "Tell me you got lunch." The swordsman pulled the honey roast out and some potatoes. Axle pulled some bread from his bag and passed it to Strider. He said with a smile, "Well it's better than eating bugs or some random fruit that you find." Strider opens the honey roast and opens the bread bag. He made some sandwiches and handed a potato to his friend, which was still a bit warm. The swordsman finished making the sandwiches and handed one to Axle, who has started to eat it. "Never thought I would taste roast again," he said. Strider nodded his head as he started to eat his own sandwich. He only used about a 1/8 of the roast so they could have more later if they liked. They sat in the room quietly eating their sandwiches and potatoes, waiting for Akuma to come back. Soon, they saw the hybrid quietly enter the room and go to his bed. Akuma sat down on it before he fell back on it. He stared at the ceiling, a small

thrum escaping from his draconic voice box. He stared blankly at Strider and Axle for a bit before his cheeks flushed in a visible blush. He rolled over on the bed to hide his face from the others. Axle ran to go over and ask what was up, but then thought that it best to wait. The hybrid let out a small sigh as he sat in silence. He reached up and touched his face gently.

Strider finished his sandwich and looked at Axle. He got up and walked out the door as he said, "Axle, we need to talk out in the hallway."

The brunette soon followed him and closed the door. He asked, "What, Strider?" He was still eating his sandwich when we asked that question.

The swordsman said, "I think they found us."

Axle about choked on the bit when he heard that. He asked, "What, how?"

"I don't know, but they did," Strider said.

Axle looked at the wall, wondering what they brought Akuma into. He looked back at his friend and asked, "So what are we going to do with Akuma?"

The swordsman looked at him and shrugged. "I don't know. We could just leave him here, but you won't leave him here, will you?" he asked Axle, who shook his head in a no.

"Damn, I was hoping we lost Spinx, but he never gives up," the brunette said as he walked to the door. Before he opened the door, he asked, "What do we tell him?"

Strider shook his head, "Don't know." Axle let out a breath of air and walked into the room. Axle did not say anything; he just sat down on his bed and looked out the window. His friend soon followed and sat in his chair, keeping an eye on the door. Strider knew one thing: If Spinx was after them, he had found Marc as well.

Akuma looked at the pair as they remained silent before he looked out the window as well. The hybrid bunched his hands into fists on the bed, taking a handful of bedsheets. He opened his mouth faintly before piping up casually, "You know, Windfall is a bit of a hot spot right now. Big city. Lots of things to do around here. You know, outside?"

Akuma teetered his head in anticipation as Axle started to say, but sounded a bit depressed again, "You're right. It's a big city, but it..." The hybrid leaned forward slightly as if he wanted to hear the rest. In the window again was the chipmunk, watching them with its golden eyes again. Akuma's eyes slit as he looked at the chipmunk. Axle got up and drew the curtains over the window, making the room darker. "That chipmunk is creeping me out. That's the third time in an hour it came back," he said as he sat back down on his bed. Strider did not take his eyes off the door, nor respond to the hybrid.

Akuma cleared his throat, "Well then..." He slid off the bed, standing up. He moved around the bed and towards the door. "I'm gonna... go out again... since it's still broad daylight," he said, pointing over his shoulder. He opened the door and left the room, closing it behind him. Neither Axle nor Strider moved from their spots nor said a word, as though they are statues. They just sat there in the darkness of the room as though waiting for someone or expecting someone.

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Marc saw the hybrid boy leave the inn with a quiet sigh and decided to follow him outside the city. He watched as Akuma laid down in the grass with his eyes shut. Then Marc got the idea of messing with him. He ran up to the boy and sat down right next to his head, where he started to nib on his hair. Akuma opened his eyes and sniffed. He sat up as Marc started to run around him and then back to the city. The hybrid fumbled to a standing position and yelled after the rodent, "Hey, wait!" He ran after the chipmunk before he lightning-dashed ahead of the creature and blocked his path in less than a second.

Marc simply looked at the hybrid as he blocked his path. *'Learning the way of your targets,'* the "chipmunk" thought to himself.

Akuma paused to crouch down and look at the small creature with interest. He mused quietly, "You're just a chipmunk... Why are they so terrified of you?"

Marc took advantage of the hybrid's crouching form and jumped on his head before bouncing off. He was now on the closest thing that was high and ran off again across rooftops and building. After going so far, Akuma started to follow him through the same path using his lightning dash. The chipmunk thought, *'So light fast speed is one. Requirements needed are Stun or sleep arrows.'* He ran into an alley way and found a cat. Even in chipmunk form, he simply jumped on the cat and bit down on it, getting its blood, and transformed. He knew his scent changed and so did his body. Even his eyes changed. Now he was a cat. Marc ran out of the alley way and disappeared into the crowd. Akuma appeared to have lost sight of him as he was trying to look for the chipmunk the man used to be. The boy sighed and sat down on the roof for a bit.

Marc watched Akuma climbed down from the rooftop and walk through the crowd. The hybrid cautiously approached a black anthropomorphic wingless dragon sitting on the edge of the center fountain, eating a cup of strawberries. The boy sat a few feet from the other hybrid. Suddenly, Akuma looked jumpy as he looked over at the black hybrid. The older hybrid had already stopped eating. His blood red eyes drifted over to the boy. Marc could not hear them or what they were talking about, but he could see them. And if he could get closer, he could hear them. So he ran up to a trash can and sat there, but they could see him now. Nothing was going to make him move from his spot until Akuma leaves. He sat there looking like a clack cat with white paws. He simply watched the two with his green eyes. The boy flinched and lowered his head before the black hybrid went back to eating strawberries. Akuma looked around nervously as the two sat in silence. He spotted the cat and frowned. Then he

looked back to the black hybrid and asked, "So... where's your human? You always seem to be together..."

The black hybrid flickered his eyes and growled, "Why should I care? Probably off hunting." He finished his treat and looked over at the boy, "And where's your human, pipsqueak? You've certainly done your fair share of mooching."

Akuma's face heated up, "Easy for you to say. You're strong. No one bothers you... Who passes up free food and a place to sleep anyway?... I don't know...that's over now..." He looked at the ground.

The black hybrid snorted again, standing up. "That's one way to use someone... I have a brother to pick up. The human lover," he sneered. He walked off without another word. Akuma turned, watching him disappear into the crowd.

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Spinx was wandering the forest looking for anything that could be useful for his dead army that he now controls. Each species he had, he added a type of poison to them. Then he came across a battlefield covered in dragon corpse and man alike. Even though there were humans left, only he needed his dead soldiers to deal with them. From the comfort of the shadows, he risen the closest dragons and humans, making them zombies to his will. He sent them to distract the army, even if the number of soldiers outnumber his zombies by 1400. The dragons and human zombies were up front dealing with them, while he was going through the bodies, picking what he wants. It took 20 minutes for him to go through all the bodies. About 20 of his zombies were destroyed, but he did however get his new "recruits" to join his ranks. Out of all the bodies he has selected: about 50 men that were not torn to pieces from the dragons, some of them being mages, and about 35 dragons. He sent them back into holding of the earth to wait until he called them back out. Even though he did not know how to eat souls, he did however know how to collect souls and could find someone to buy them more likely. Each vial he had was filled with a soul of someone or something. He kept walking on and passed back through the forest and not looking back.

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((Note: This section takes place during [chapter 14](#).)

The day started to shift into late afternoon, the sky turning orange and tinting the water of the fountain. The crowds in the streets started to thin out as people started to head home from work. Akuma brought his legs up to his chest, turning and using a free hand to drag his fingers in the water. Marc looked at the hybrid and thought to himself, *'What a disappointing kill. I'll just do the main job and see where this goes from there.'* The "cat" walked back to the Golden Pony. Out of eye shot from Akuma, he changed into his human form and walked through the door.

The owner of the inn said, "Hello sir, how may I help you?"

"Yes, I'm looking for two people," Marc said as he handed the photograph of the three: Axle, Strider and Akuma. The former two were the only ones he was interested in.

The owner shook his head and lied, "Sorry sir, I have not seen them." It was his last when he got a sword through his neck.

"I'll just go and look, shall I?" Marc walked up the stairs and burst open the door to Axle and Strider's room. Both of them looked at him and did not hesitate to draw their swords. Strider got hit right out the window and was sent flying down the street, right into the fountain. Axle soon followed hitting the trash can. There was no one in the window, but a cat running across the rooftops. Akuma stared at the two for a minute in their strange positions. He cocked his head in confusion.

The blonde swordsman got up out of the water, looking around, "Damn it, that was Marc." Strider looked at Axle to see the brunette had smashed the trash can. He was very much groaning in pain.

"So I guess you were right, Strider. They did follow us," Axle said as he got up from the crushed trash can. Akuma stared blankly at them in alarm. Strider walked out of the water and stepped over the wall. Water was dripping off him and his sword, making him shine a bit.

The swordsman said, "Ya, I guess I was right. Come on we need to get our stuff and get out of town." He put his sword back and walked to the Golden Pony Inn. Axle soon followed him. When they open the door to the inn, they saw that the owner dead and the inn empty. "Well, that explains one thing," Strider said as he ran up the stairs and into their room and grabbed their bags and Axle's other sword. He came running back down stairs where his friend was waiting for him. "He's playing games right now for he did not take our stuff," the swordsman said as he passed Axle's bag, sword and sheath to him. Then the police came into the inn and told them that they were under arrest for the swords they have and they were suspected of murder. The two looked at each other as Strider tried to dispute the conflict, "Now look, we just came back to get our things and we are leaving."

The officer would not listen to him and pulled out his club. He said, "I said drop the swords." They were outnumbered, but not by much. The officers did have armor and swords of their own, even pepper spray. The officers that were inside now had them a bit blocked from leaving the building. Without saying a word, both Axle and Strider ran up the stairs and the police soon followed them in a full chase. They ran into their room and jumped out the window onto the roof of the building across the window. Then they changed direction and ran to the center of the city with the police running on the ground. Strider slid down the building into the street, running right at Akuma and grabbing him by the back of the hoodie. He passed the brunette boy from the woods when he did that. The robed boy lurched forward and tried to grab onto the hybrid, but missed. Axle soon joins them in a full sprint.

Strider said through his gasping, "Axle, change now and get us out of here." The brunette took off his bag and swords and handed them to the swordsman, who took them in his free hand. Strider slowed to let Axle get ahead of him and then jumped on his back when he changed to a dragon. The dragon lord took no time to take to the air. Running across the roof top was a black cat with green eyes watching them. With a pop of light, the robed boy teleported across the rooftops, following the dragon as well. Strider set Akuma down on Axle's back and looked at him. "Sorry pal, but you are very much in danger now. Ever see anything watching you or following you around? Because if so, Marc is after you as well."

Aggravation filled the hybrid who complained, "They're after you, not me! I didn't do anything!" He bared his fangs before he rolled off Axle's back, shifting to his gold dragon form and gliding to the ground. He landed softly, folding his wings against his body and shook his body like a wet dog.

Lowering his hands, the mage followed, glaring at Strider and Axle as he ran by. The mage landed on the cobble below and stumbled to catch his footing, making the gold dragon snapped his head at him in alarm. Marc followed suit and landed on his feet before going over to a tree to climb up on. He made it to one of the branches and continued to spy on the hybrid. Akuma raised a paw, rubbing his neck where he'd been yanked briefly. His wings fluttered in a flustered manner as the mage approached. The hybrid watched the human cautiously and the boy asked, "What was that about?"

Akuma answered, "A serial killer is after them...they think he wants to kill me, too. But that doesn't make sense..." His voice trailed off as his face heated up. His claws extended, slicing at the ground.

The mage just shrugged his shoulders. "They came off to me as a bit odd," he confessed. "It wouldn't surprise me if the person who was after them was crazy too. You know, being a serial killer and all." The hybrid gave a half-nod. More silence filled the gap and he kicked at the ground. He stuck his hands in his pockets and questioned, "So... What have you been up to?"

Akuma glanced back at Strider and Axle in the distance. "Staying with them," he said blandly. He rubbed his neck again and said, "I mean they offered... A dragon cut my throat open and Axle healed me..." He stood silent for a minute before inching forward towards the mage. His pace increased in a jolt, seeming like he might run the mage down in the process. Akuma shifted to human form just short of pummeling the other boy to the ground and grabbed his shirt, nuzzling his face against the mage. He made a small draconic purr of content.

The mage was shocked at first. He recovered quickly though and wrapped his arms around the hybrid, pulling him into a hug. A small smile creeping onto his face and he asked, "So you'll be coming back with me then?" Akuma quelled his purring and waited for his blush to disappear before pulling his face away from the mage's robes. He nodded in silence, giving a brief look of puppy eyes before nuzzling back into him. His purring started up again. He turned his face, gently nibbling at a loose piece of the mage's robe. The mage smiled again. Letting go his hug on Akuma, he gave him a soft nudge on the top of his head in between his horns, rustling up his hair a bit and making the hybrid smile sheepishly. "Come on now," he said, chuckling quietly to himself. "It's getting late out, have you had a proper meal yet today?" he asked

the hybrid boy as he lightly pried him off of him.

"Sort of..." Akuma murmured before his expression flattened. The mage turned to leave, ushering the hybrid along to follow him. Akuma followed along after the mage only to pause again as he saw the cat.

"Now who said I'm crazy?" Marc asked as he transformed from a cat into his human form in a tree nearby them. "And for the fact, they are right. I'm an assassin and you have a price on your head, but not as much as they do. So if you excuse me, I'm going to leave you alone to whatever the hell you're doing and go after my bounty, then come back for you. Oh before I forget, your price is 3,000 on your head and I don't know why, maybe because you're a hybrid, but who am I to ask," Marc laughed. He very much like telling his target or letting them know that he was hunting them. It made it more fun to hunt them down and kill them.

The mage looked at the bounty hunter and narrowed his eyes. He threatened, "It will be a bit hard to collect your bounty when you're a smoldering pile of ash, because that's what you'll be if you harm even one hair on Akuma's head."

Marc was unfazed as he said, "And I'll tell you one thing, the person who hired me is a necromancer." He bounced away from them and grabbed a vial of blood out that was the blood of a wolf and mixed into the rest of the wolf pack not far from Akuma and the mage.

As the "wolf" went away, he heard the hybrid say to his friend, "No, you're right, he's most definitely crazy. All bounty hunters are in my experience. They'll do anything for money. Probably would give his soul away for a pretty penny. More like STUPID!" The last word had been yelled angrily, apparently at Marc, but the wolf didn't care anyway.

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((**Note:** The following sections place during [chapter 17.](#)))

Axle been flying from the time he left Windfall to the time of it, morning, and he was starting to feel the effect of his exhaustion. Strider was sleeping for the past several hours and the dragon lord knew it. He looked down to the forest and saw a town coming into view and wonder what town it was. He thought to himself through his fog of exhaustion, *'Maybe Strider knows, but I'm still not walking into town as a dragon, that much is for sure.'* Then he said, "Strider, get up. There's a town not far from here and I don't have much energy left to stay awake. I need to land and it's not going to be nice either." He took a breath and let it out.

The swordsman woke up and looked at the town as Axle dived down to the ground at fast speed. The dragon crashed through some trees, which came with loud snapping sounds, and hit the hard ground with a thud. He slowed himself down a bit before hitting the ground, but it sent Strider off his back and

on the ground not far from him, leaving him gasping for air for a bit. It took them a minute to catch their breath and Axle took a bit to switch forms as well, which took way too long for the lack of energy he had. Strider went to the brunette, looked at his heavy eyes, picked up him up and flung his arm around the "man's" shoulder. *'Damn it Axle, why a crash landing?'* Strider thought as he carried the lord through the forest to the city they saw to the north. He more of dragged Axle about half-way after the lord fell asleep on him, until he noticed a wolf was trailing them. He did not think twice and placed Axle on his back before he took off running. Just seconds after the swordsman started to run, he heard the laugh of someone they thought they had lost. It was Marc. This sent chills down Strider's spine when he ran to the town. It did not take him long to burst into town with Marc not far behind him.

The bounty hunter was gaining on ground as he pulled his sword and still ran at his target. Strider had no choice, but to set Axle on the ground and pull out his own sword to block Marc's attack. The sound of steel against steel was enough to make people scream and run in panic to bring the police to come. One of the four officers came to stop them, but Marc took his free hand and grab another sword he had and sliced the man's throat without a care in the world. The bounty hunter brought the other sword down on Strider, causing him to fall to his knees as Marc's strength started to overwhelm him. Marc said, "You wake, pitiful excuse of a human being. Just die and let that be over with." The other three officers drew them swords and started to attack the bounty hunter. Marc pulled his swords off Strider's sword and went to attack the officers, giving the blonde a split second to grab Axle and vanish into the crowd of people as Marc killed every officer that came at him with speed and a swift death. The bounty hunter ran in the opposite direction as more guards and officers came after him, following him to the edge of the woods.

Strider took off in one direction to escape the officers that was coming at him and the 'under the dream effect' Axle. He took off more into the forest again, knowing that Marc was on the other side of the city. He kept on running at full speed and looked around for a few seconds to see if Marc was around. Sure enough, he was still on their trail. All it took was that few seconds of look and Strider ran right into a magi dragoness without releasing it until he ran into her. She turned her head to see them as she asked, "Uh! What the hell?" The swordsman let go of Axle as he hit the ground with a soft thud, still not awaking from his slumber. A sword came from his sheath as Strider scattered to get a hold of it, just before he saw Marc again in the treeline stop and slowly back away into the shadows. He stabbed his sword in the ground to brace his weight as he started to gasp for air from the running and the small fight he had. He already felt the weight of exhaustion on him, just as Axle had, and there was no way he could hide it. The magi looked to Strider and Axle warily and asked, "Alright humans, are you dragon slayers or not?"

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Strider nodded his head in agreement right before they and the deer got teleported. They were teleported to the main hall in the center. The blonde looked around for any sign of life, but the only thing he saw was a sleeping Axle, a freshly killed deer, and a crap ton of dust, which made him about sneeze. He could barely see inside the dim hall. Strider placed one of the two bags on the ground in

front of him and opened it up. Inside the bag, he grabs out a flare and pulls it, causing a green flame to escape from it. He grabs another five more and sets them down on the floor and then close the bag up. He sat down on the cold floor and removed the swords from his back, still in their sheath, and sets them on the floor. He looks around one last time before leaning against a pillar.

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Spinx came to the edge of the Windfall. He took off his robe, placed it inside his bag and pulled out a potion that covered his scent so no one would know he was a necromancer at all. His tan skin seems to glow a bit and his black hair was short. He wore black clothing and has a long sword strip to his side. It was a silver sheath and has a green hilt on the sword. He had a scar across his face on the right side that goes across his red ruby eyes. He walked into the alchemy shop and looked around a bit. Then he grabs some potion vials, some books and a large amount of stuff to use in alchemy. He walked to the front desk, dropping a large amount of gold on the counter. It was way too much for the items he took and walked out, not caring for the remaining gold he could have got back. He shoved the stuff he got in his bag and vanishes into the crowd, passing the carnival and out the other side of the town in a matter of a hour at a very fastest pace.

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"Find somewhere to hide, and try and reach the magi dragon, as Axle calls it, your aunt. Stay hidden no matter what you hear," Strider said to Danielle and Kylie as he grabbed the other three flares and lit one and throw it as far as he could down the stone hallway. The flare was instantly put out with one swing of a sharp sword, one that looks like the blonde's sword.

Scared, the sisters said, "Okay, we will!" Then the hatchlings ran away through the hallway to get to the king's chamber for safety.

Marc's voice was heard, "Do you know how hard it is to get into a castle though tunnels and sewers. Now, are we just going to make a mess of this whole place or can I just take your head, Strider, and capture you, Axle."

Both Strider and Axle pull out their swords in sync. The latter growled, "Never will happen."

Strider looks at his friend and said, "Go, now." Axle vanished into the shadows and was soon followed by steel clashing together. The blonde stomp on the flare, putting it out, and vanished in the cover of darkness. Sparks of their swords clashing was all that could be seen in the darkness.

Marc was very much holding his own against both Axle and Strider as their swords clashed against stone and steel. The bounty hunter simply jumped back and shook his head. "Can't have witnesses around when I do my job, can I?" he said as he raised his hand and drop it down as a sudden and large number of shadows moved from where they were standing. Their scents were covered by mud and stone, so

Axle did not pick them up. "You eight go after the hatchlings; the rest of you deal with these two with me," Marc orders the men as they all understood their orders and went after the hatchlings. The rest entered the fight with Marc against Axle and Strider.

Strider said to the dragon lord, "Axle, go protect the hatchlings. I'll hold them off the best I can." Axle changed course and went after the eight dark figures.

As Marc and his men attack the blond at full force, he said, "You, against all of us? Well, I would say you are insane, but we all know why. You are just trying to be brave and hope to kill a good amount of us and save Axle's life, like he did for you before."

Strider took his sheath and threw it into the air as all five of the other swords dropped from the air, stabbing into the stone floor. He snapped back, "No, I will kill every one of you, if it's the last thing I do." The blonde blocks the swords and kills Marc's men. Every time he blocks one, he grabs a sword from the ground and ran it through the next, combining it with his main sword as it got larger and heavier. Blood splattered across the ground from the fight against the large number of men from both sides. Strider's back was sliced open from a blade of Marc's and his shoulder was injured as well. They still well outnumbered him by 50 to 1 and there was only one thing he could do. He took his final blade he has yet to combine and combined it with the other six as the blade started to glow yellow. One of black figures was sliced down as he swung his sword at Strider.

As Marc's blade crash with his target's heavy blade, he said, "That only works against seven targets, Strider. You can't kill us all."

"I was not planning to use it on you or your men," the blonde snapped as he threw the bounty hunter back with his heavy blade and then flicked his blade up. All six of the combined swords flew out of the center one, still glowing bright yellow. The swords stopped next to six pillars that connect to the roof. "I plan to bring the roof down," Strider said as he vanished from sight, leaving a light of where he went to. Suddenly as if sound had broken, pillars came crashing down one by one until there was only one left. Marc looked hard at Strider as he stopped right next to the pillar.

"You won't," the bounty hunter sounded a bit surprise by what the blond was doing.

"I would and I will," Strider said as he swung the blade at the pillar, shattering both the blade and the pillar. Rubble from above started to fall as the shards of metal hit the ground from the impact. He felt Marc's sword pierce his chest.

"You fool, you just not only doomed, me, my men, your own life, but that of Axle's and the hatchlings," Marc growled into Strider's ears. He pulled his blade out before he felt the blonde's own blade though his chest.

"It was very much worth it, Marc," Strider said weakly as he fell to the floor, just seconds before Marc's

own body fell. *'Axle will survive; he's just like that,'* he thought as the light started to get darker.

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Axle laid there on the hard cold ground as the blood flowed from the still-in-his-back daggers. His hand twitched a bit before it started to slide across the ground. His other hand moved in sync with that until they came to his back. Then he gripped both daggers in his hand and then he pulled, ripping both daggers out his back, causing blood to kind of splash around him before he dropped the daggers on the ground with their metal ring as they hit the ground. The Firestars turned their heads to look over at him as Kylie said, "Hey, Axle's alive."