

((Note: The following sections take place during [Chapter 33](#).)

The moment fire aura suddenly appeared around the Solomese woman, Raven quickly tensed up; he was always at odds with combat magic. One of the dragons approached her to calm her down, and soon the aura around her disappeared. Part of their ensued conversation reached the black dragon's ear and he slightly tilted his head. *'Resuscitation?'* he thought. He was already familiar with this procedure as his clan's medic performed this technique a lot with fallen comrades and most of the time it worked. *'And only a handful of them know how to do that. What a great team these dragons are,'* he snorted, watching as the woman tried to resuscitate her friend.

It was several attempts at CPR from the woman before she stopped and brought her head away from Axle. There was a slow raise in his chest as he started breathing, but he still remained pale a bit. His breath was shallow and seemed short. There was a flick of bronze stripes going across his left side of his face from his eye heading towards his neck, almost like claw marks. This seemed to change his skin tone to a tan color and his breathing became normal as well. He seemed to be in that state for a few minutes before he opened his eyes. His eyes open slowly and revealed their royal blue eyes treasures. He looked at the woman for a second and sat up a bit. His eyes looked like they were puzzled by some sort of events that have just happen. The woman was overjoyed by his revival and she cried with a smile, "Axle, you're back!"

Shortly after the Axle was revived, Raven asked him, his friend and all the dragons who they were and why they were here in his clan's territory. Vulture Horde, the name of this large group of dragons, told him that they were training to help Axle and his family defeat Dracul and take back Shadow Wind from his control. "Evil dictator, huh?" said Raven, noticing with a corner of his eye that Axle and the "woman" called Atlas has teleported somewhere else. "And he is named Dracul and he also has an army... Alright then, I guess that is a plausible explanation and a good enough reason for you to train here." He shrugged and then thought, *'That's probably a noble reason to fight for them, but that telepathic message is still striking a damn nerve. I guess I'll just be around for a while and wait for their leader to return, so I can ask him about what he saw while visiting. Solitude is all good and everything, but I kinda miss my old pals now... And now that I think about it...'* Raven looked at the albino dragoness again. "Also, before I forget about it, your leader probably saw someone from our clan and I do intend to ask him about it, but did any of you see them? They had this ideal cut on wing membranes like these." He unfolded his wings, revealing one vertical cut on each one, situated on middle membranes and perfectly straight.

The albino and the charcoal dragon looked at the cut on the black dragon's wings. The dragoness shook her head and said, "I have never seen a dragon with wings like that."

The charcoal dragon said, "Neither have I." The rest of the horde never saw these cuts either.

"Figures," harrumphed Raven. "Alright, guess I'll have to ask the head himself about it, when he comes back. I'll be on my way getting the rest of the stuff. You have this telepathy thing, right?" he inquired, question directed at albino.

"Yes, we do," she said. "All dragons have it."

Then the black dragon said, "You can notify me about his arrival, if you want. So long, now..." With these words, he headed towards the rest of the caves located in the village. He had no idea just what was going on there, thinking that Aeolus was outside the village and much farther to the east, right where the human town used to be.

((**Note:** This section takes place during [Chapter 34](#).)

Raven was nowhere near as close to the place where Aeolus was, although he could have sworn he heard some noises in the distance. He stopped there and thought for a bit, whether he should go there, where he probably could meet the leader himself, or do what he initially decided to do and examine his last cave on his list. After a while, he decided that the albino will call him when they return, so he went on his business.

While approaching the cave, Raven couldn't help but think about something. After he gathers the last bits of items left behind by his clanmates, what will he do? Travel to Rudvich, the continent he heard so much about? Or look for the clan here in Solomos? He shook his head. Now wasn't the time to think about this, only when he is done here. Then as soon as he took a couple of steps inside the cave, he heard a familiar telepathic voice, *'Our leader's back. He's with us now.'* It was the albino dragoness from before and now she's instructing, *'And also, to use telepathy, you must picture someone in your mind and use your thoughts to communicate with them.'*

"Perfect timing, blast it..." Raven growled under his nose in annoyance. Fine, the cave can wait. The black dragon did a U-turn towards the place where he met the albino and others and headed that way, all the while muttering something about telepathy and time management. Upon his return, Raven could immediately notice that there were more dragons now than before. Nearly all the newcomers were tired and everyone was resting. *'A break from training, huh...'* he thought. His eyes sought out the albino that contacted him, and once noticing her, he approached the group that she was with. "Alright, I'm here," he said, trying his best to not sound annoyed. "So you said that the leader is here now. Where is he?" he asked, looking around the crowd of dragons.

Raven learned the survivor Aeolus met was Rina. The horde leader offered to let one of the magi dragons teleport him over to her, but the black dragon declined, "I still have some unfinished business here, it won't take too long. I'll come back here after I'm done with it."

Aeolus patiently replied, "You may take your time." Raven nodded, turned around and headed back to the cave he wanted to check. At first, he was walking while everyone saw him; but once he got out of their sight, he bolted towards the cave as fast as he could. While he remained visually calm in front of the leader, he was actually glad to hear that one of his clanmates is still alive. And if it's Rina, then no doubt she is somewhere looking for the others. Why else he wouldn't be able to locate her near the destroyed village?

The black dragon reached the cave in record time. Not looking tired in any way, he delved inside the former home of the clan member, looking around for anything useful to take along with him. So far finding nothing of the sort, he was about to turn and leave in frustration, when something caught his eye; it was a small ornate box in the corner. Curious, Raven approached and tried to open it, but noticed with frustration that it was actually one of those human puzzle chests. He considered breaking it apart to retrieve whatever was inside, but then he changed his mind, clearly not wishing to invoke the wrath of one of his clanmates, to whom this box probably belonged. *'And besides, it looks pretty nice to the eye,'* he reasoned and decided to just take the chest with him. He put it inside his bag and then after he went out of the cave, he sprinted back towards where the dragon group was. He slowed down at the sight of the more larger dragons and when the leader saw Raven, he was already calmly walking towards him. "I am done," he huffed, once he stood before the green dragon. "Whenever you are ready."

(**Note:** This section takes place during [Chapter 37](#).)

Rina was heading towards the gates. Literally minutes ago, she found herself a job as the huntress at a local butchery store in order to make herself busy with something and to get more familiar with surroundings. After all, she was probably here for a long time and she had that time to gather information from the news, gossips and direct conversations. She was looking for survivors of her clan, and her chieftain was the first one on her list. Every mention of a dark violet dragoness with a perfect cut on wing membranes, every gossip about dragons that were unfamiliar with this continent, even though some of these were about herself, she listened to all of them. In the process of mulling all this over, Rina's mind wandered and she lost herself in thought, up until she accidentally walked into a man dressed in strange grayish-blue clothing, who quickly caught himself. She quickly apologized, "Sorry, wasn't looking where I was going." Then she thought, slightly irritated at herself, *'Darn it, I need to stop letting my mind wander. Since when did that start to happen?'*

The long brown-haired man with a scar running from the right side of his forehead to his left cheek was quick to forgive, "No apologies are necessary." He looked the dragoness over and asked, "Are you a

slave or free?"

"No, I am not a slave. Never was," replied Rina. She took her time to regain her thoughts and inspect the man she accidentally bumped into. *'Huh, so it seems like he is a traveler of some sort... maybe?'* she thought. "Is there a problem?" she asked, taking the man's question in mind.

The man smiled with a chuckle and replied, "No, no problem at all. I hope the folks here treat you well. I am Rick Hunter, a warrior from the far east." He bowed respectfully.

"Well met," the dragoness nodded deeply in response. "Name is Rina Windcutter. I am from the south." Then she thought, *'So he is from far east... Another continent?'* Just now it came to her mind just how huge this world was, especially since back then she had to use a teleportation stone to warp herself to Rudvich in moments. She still had it, but it was drained of its energy and she had to find a mage to refill it, and so far, she didn't bother looking for one. *'Maybe I should visit one on my way to the forest, so I could return back to the city in case of emergency,'* she thought, making a mental note. "So what brought you here to this city, senior Hunter?" she asked, feeling that it was only polite to hold a conversation.

Rick explained, "I am a wanderer of sorts. I've traveled to many lands and many continents. If I find a reason to stay for a time, I shall. If I don't, I'll continue on my journey as always."

"I see," nodded Rina, thinking over his explanation. *'So he is a traveler... I wonder if he had been to Solomos...'* she thought. Speaking of Solomos... "I have a question," she said. "While being here in Rudvich, you didn't happen to see a purple dragoness with wavy horns, a cape, a bag like mine is and with her wings cut perfectly in the middle membrane?" She unfolded one of her wings to show her new acquaintance the said cut. "Or at least any dragon with a cut like this?"

Rick looked at her wing before he replied, "No, I have not. If I had, I would've asked who did it. Who wounded you?"

"Nobody wounded me," explained Rina. "It is a cut made specifically in such a way that it won't hinder our flight abilities. Sort of our calling mark. It is very difficult to make and it takes years to master." While speaking, she glanced up into the sky and then remembered that she has an assignment to do: hunting for a local butcher. Besides, it was already getting dark. "Well, it was nice to talk to you, but I need to go," the dragoness said. "I am going hunting in the forest. You can follow me if you want. If not, then goodbye, and let the fairest winds guide you on your travels." With that, she headed off towards the Windfall gates as the man bowed to the dragoness with great respect before he moved on.

(**Note:** This section takes place during [Chapter 39](#).)

After the evening hunt, Rina sat near the shop at the center of the city, carefully studying the map she bought with her earned money. After fully checking it for umpteenth time and making sure she memorized important parts, she folded it and put in her bag. *'So I guess now is the time to familiarize myself with the forest,'* she thought. She wanted to familiarize herself with surroundings and local wildlife, so that she would have better chances at hunting. Before she caught what the butcher called a "deer", she spent a lot of time trying to catch it, failing every time either with her inability to sneak up on it or by being unable to catch up with it due to forest's density. Rina came back only at evening and thought the butcher reprimanded her for being inexperienced at catching prey, he gave her a couple of hints and payment anyway. Thinking it over, the dark blue dragoness stood up and headed towards the gates. She didn't notice a human clad in black clothes watching her from afar.

((**Note:** This section takes place during [Chapter 43](#).)

Raven stood near Rina in the middle of the forest clearing not far from Windfall, while she was communicating with the disaster dragon with a cold expression on her face. She telepathically said, *'Aeolus. 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?'* Right after Raven arrived to the set destination, Rina introduced him to Windfall, a city where both humans and dragons could live together. Of course, he immediately disliked the idea of humans being there, but he knew all he could do is just grumble on about it. What actually impressed him was that she managed to find herself a job at local butchery as a huntress. His clan-mate told him about the local wildlife and the environment. Never seeing nor hearing about that before, the black dragon listened on and on, memorizing almost everything the blue dragoness told.

And when he wasn't occupied by talking or exploring the city, he was connecting the dots made by what that dragoness said. After some thinking, he managed to connect them and figure out what the disaster dragon was actually after. Raven remembered that the albino wanted him not to tell anyone, but he wasn't going to keep that from Rina. At first, she didn't believe what he said, but then he told her why he came to that conclusion. He watched as her expression slowly changed from disbelief to confusion and then turned into a stone cold. She then told him to wait for a while and closed her eyes to use telepathy. Raven only today realized that all of the Eternal Wind dragons *did* have the ability to communicate via telepathy, but they never used it due to not knowing how to do it. And now after some local dragons told the duo how to do it, they slowly, but surely got the hang of it.

In a calm tone, Aeolus 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. She sighed, solemnly nodding to Raven and confirming his suspicions. She was not

looking forward to telling Aeolus her opinion about that. But she already started this conversation and she couldn't just up and back down without an explanation, and she didn't even have one. And so the dragoness pressed on. *'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?'* While waiting for the disaster dragon to answer, she looked at Raven and said, "Raven, we both know how to use telepathy now, correct? I want you to contact every single clan member of the Eternal Wind you can remember and tell them to head to Windfall. You saw the world map, you should know the directions."

The black dragon snorted, "Right, and how am I supposed to pull it off by myself while you have your pow-wow with the disaster dragon? And need I remind you that most of our clan mates are, y'know, DEAD?"

"I'm perfectly aware of that, but we still have to try. Include the instructions on how to perform telepathy in case you find a survivor and they don't know how to do it. I'll join you after I'm done with Aeolus."

"...I do not like any of this," Raven sighed. Then he nodded, "Alright, fine. You are probably going to get the rest of us killed for all I care, but fine." He added with sarcasm, "You can cremate me after I die from acquiring an aneurysm from all these psychic shenanigans."

Rina just rolled her eyes at his remark, but ignored it. "Thank you, Raven," she nodded and returned to her conversation with the leader of Vulture Horde, while her partner started to reach out to his clanmates one by one.

She eventually heard Aeolus answering, *'Rina, have you ever watched your family get murdered right before your very eyes? 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.'*

Rina carefully listened to each and every one of Aeolus's questions, feeling more pity for the dragon as he progressed. Did he really suffer through all of this? That would explain his hatred for the humanity. No, she couldn't understand him; she didn't go through most of what he listed. So she 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.'*

The dragoness spoke again, 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 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 I am 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.'* With that she cut off her communication with Aeolus and looked at the Raven, only to find him griping and shaking his head. "What's wrong?" she asked, prompting him to raise his head and stare at her in annoyance.

The black dragon growled, "What's wrong? Sending telepathic messages to a lot of dragons in short amount of time may cause mild headaches; *that's* what's wrong!"

Rina just rolled her eyes in reply. "Maybe because we are not used to using it so much?" she rhetorically asked. "Alright, then it's my turn to contact the others. Who you tried to contact?"

In response, her clanmate listed 14 names. "None of them replied," he said.

The dragoness only sighed and closed her eyes. 62 others to go then. "Rest for now, Raven," she said and proceeded to send messages to other members of the clan, hoping that at least one of them replies back before her head starts to hurt, too.

"By the way," said Raven, once his headache subsided, "What did you tell Aeolus?"

"I told him that we are enemies now," replied Rina, before resuming what she has been doing.

"Alright then... Hold on, WHAT?!" Raven suddenly leaped and slapped the dragoness across her head. "*You bloody idiot!*" he growled. "Did you *really* have to go and declare war on Vulture Horde?! There are only two of us for now, and it will be a while before survivors even reach Windfall! And even then, the whole thing will kill the rest of us! What were you thinking, Rina?!"

"Raven, calm down. I thought about this before I said that," said Rina, rubbing her cheek and pausing to send another telepathic message to next clan member.

"Really now?" Raven snorted. "Alright then, Ms. I-Thought-About-This, I'll humor you here. So why did you think it was a good idea to tell him that?"

"You saw Vulture Horde members, correct? Do you know how well in combat they are?"

"...They were still training, as far as I'm aware."

"Good," the blue dragoness nodded. "Think about this, Raven. Nearly all of us have experience in combat, while they still have days of training ahead of them."

"Uh huh, and you also forgot about magic. I don't want a fireball in my face, you know," grunted the black dragon.

"I don't think they all are experts in magic. Besides, we can find means to counter it."

"And you forgot about teleportation."

Rina opened her mouth to reply, but then closed it. Raven made a good point here; she didn't know how many dragons in the horde knew teleportation spells, let alone how powerful they were with them. But then again, there were many dragons that are yet to receive enough training to fare well in battle. So perhaps... Her train of thought suddenly was interrupted by a voice in her head. It sounded very familiar and... *'Hello? Rina? Are you there?'* said a male voice. It was a member of the Eternal Wind.

Rina smiled and said, "Raven, we got a survivor!" She telepathically replied, *'Yes, it's me. Where are you?'*

'Thank the winds, you are alive! I'm still in Solomos. When humans attacked, I laid low before making a run for the eastern lands.' There was a short pause, before the voice continued, *'Hard to do this telepathy... You said Rudvich, Windfall?... I'll try to get there... as quickly as I can! Who else... is with you?'*

'Raven.'

'Oh. Well, until next time, Rina... Stay safe there!' With that, the voice stopped.

Rina looked at Raven, who surprisingly enough was grinning. He said, "Well then. Seems like it isn't a lost cause after all." His grin turned into a frown, when he continued, "However I still don't see how all of this is a good idea."

"I'll continue later. I think all these telepathic communications are getting to me," replied the dragoness, feeling a weak. She cleared the throbbing in her head and then she listed everyone she contacted. Raven shrugged and took his turn sending telepathic messages.

Soon, Rina and Raven were already over half of the sent messages. With each turn, more and more survivors were showing up, including some the duo personally knew, and things were looking up for them. Now there were just 24 clan members left to contact. The dark blue dragoness, having just received her turn, thought about the rest. They still haven't contacted their chieftain and some of their best friends. So far, they counted 12 survivors and it was unknown whether they would be in the list or not. Rina sighed, silently gave a prayer and proceeded to send a message to another dragon. However before she could finish it, Raven spoke up with an even bigger grin than the one he made earlier, "Rina, I got contacted by Geron."

"...Huh?" The dragoness looked at the black dragon in surprise. "Geron? The shaman?"

"The very same."

"But we haven't contacted him yet. Does that mean...?"

"Yeah. It seems like they figured they could help us out, eh?" Raven chuckled. Rina just shook her head in disbelief and growing happiness. Forget that the Raven was happy, which was rare; the clan is still alive!

And then she heard a very familiar voice that she really wanted to hear again, *'Rina! It's me, Itakira! Are you there? I know you know telepathy, please respond!'*

'Kira!' exclaimed the dark blue dragoness. If she was less calm by nature, she would be in joyful tears. 'I am so glad you are alive! Where are you?'

'Heh, you will be surprised even more when you hear the answer. I am on Rud...vich, that's how they call it, right? And the chief is also with us!'

'Wrong guess, I am more surprised that the chief is with you,' grinned Rina. 'Can she speak right now?'

'Uh, no, she is busy checking other members of the clan. And thank you for telling us about telepathy! I really feel stupid now that we learned about it only now and not when we were under the siege...'

'Like most of us do.'

Raven looked at Rina mentally chatting with Itakira, while he himself reached out to the remaining dragons. And just now, he was talking with another dragon that Rina would be glad to hear too. A female dragon said, *'So my daughter has avenged the dead?'*

Raven answered, *'Yeah. Said she killed around 120 or so herself, and the rest were killed by other dragons. She did feel bad when I learned about it. She was in a state of rage when this happened. Can't say I blame her, though. Would've done the same with those damn humans.'*

'I'm just glad she is alive and well. That is plenty enough for me.'

'Sure. So, Louran, what will you do right now?'

'What else? I'm heading towards this Windfall city you were talking about. And, Raven?' Louran's voice suddenly became solemn. *'Do you think we should remind her about, you know, her?'*

'Let's not,' harrumphed the black dragon. *'She still considers her a traitor, Louran. She would just kill her right where she stands if she even shows her nose here.'*

There was a brief pause before Louran sighed, *'I see. Thought I would bring this up. Alright, I'm setting off. Stay safe, Raven.'*

'Same to you,' Raven stopped and put a paw on his head, trying to ease the discomfort.

Once Rina was done talking with her friend, she looked at Raven and asked, "Did we get all of them?"

"With the help of others, yeah, we did. 22 survivors, us included," he replied and stood up. "I've also heard from one that our chieftain will contact you, since you technically have more authority than I do. And by the way, barring whatever she'll say to you, what are you planning to do before the group arrives?" he inquired. "Some can arrive hours later and others will take a week, and I'd like to make myself busy during that."

"I will contact someone I know," replied the dark blue dragoness. "After that, we will try to find someone who is the most influential in Windfall."

"Oh, so you want to raise awareness about the Vulture Horde?" huffed Raven. "Well, it is smarter than trying to warn everyone by yourself, but what are the chances that we even find that someone? Plus, Aeolus could've already sent spies after our tails for all we know."

"No point in worrying about that anymore. I talked with him only twice so I know little about him, but I highly doubt that he won't figure out that I'll try to do this. He is the horde's leader, after all." Rina looked at the sky. "Either way, after El-Naise speaks with me, I'll contact one more dragon, then we'll head back to Windfall."

"Right. Then that means only one thing is left: to find a job. They do have jobs, right?"

"I work as a huntress there, Raven. Of course, there are jobs," said the dragoness, who rolled her eyes. "I know you excel at watching out for trouble, so how about registering in patrol duty?"

"Patrol duty? Phah!" Raven snorted. "No thanks, I am fed up with those and I'd like to have a break once in a while. I'll save that skill for when those extremists actually start attacking."

"Suit yourself," shrugged Rina.