

((Note: The following sections take place during [chapter 28](#).)

The encounter with the mirror dragoness was bothersome to say the least. Kakoli's attempt at catching a cat to eat had ended up in bad ways. First, his prey had gotten stolen; then there were trades of insults between him and the mirror dragoness, which resulted up in him getting zapped; and finally, Shiba's scolding at the dragoness got her mocked as well that Kakoli got so angry that he started to chase after the dragoness. Shiba didn't want the conflict to escalate any further than it has and more importantly, she didn't want him to waste any more time with that awful dragoness over the cat and Shiba's honor. So she tried to call him back, "Kakoli, come back!" But the dragonet didn't appear to hear her as he kept going after the mirror, intending to make her pay for what just happened. The aria worried about what would happen during this chase, predicting a fight between the two that would result in at least one of them being hurt once Kakoli catches the mirror. So to stop this from happening, Shiba spread out her wings and flapped as she took to the air to go after her little friend. She followed Kakoli over the buildings that they soared over, trying to keep in line with him. The chase between Kakoli and the mirror soon took closer to the streets, but enough for the two dragons to only fly over the heads of the human citizens. Shiba flew down as well, but stayed a bit higher than the other two, so that she would have better chances of her legs and tail not hitting the humans. The chase eventually had Kakoli and the mirror flying between two buildings. The aria sought to go through there as well, but then a flying blue dragon with long horns and spines came across her path. Unfortunately, she didn't have time to stop or move around him, and she ended up flying right into him. They both fell down as the blue dragon grunted and Shiba cried, "Whoa!" After they hit the ground, the dragoness stepped away from the blue dragon as he got up. She gave him an apology, "I'm so sorry, mister. I was just trying to go after my friend and I ended up bumping into you." She hoped that he wasn't as mean as the mirror had been.

Thankfully, he didn't appear to be that type as the dragon forgave her, "It's alright. There's no harm done."

Shiba smiled, appreciating his forgiveness before she took off into the air again and flew over the buildings that the two dragons went between. She hoped that the crash didn't delay her so much that it would become hard to find them. She just flew over the buildings in case she might have lost them if she flew on their elevation level. That way, she would be able to cover more ground level.

The mirror dragoness had thrown the flower pot right at Kakoli and it got stuck on his head. The dragonet tried to shake off the pot, but it would never come off. So he tried to pull it off with his front talons instead. This time, his attempt was successful as the pot came right off. Now he can get back to chasing down that dragoness. Kakoli threw down the pot and looked ahead to find where he was at and where the dragoness was. To his stunning surprise, he was faced with the wall of a building right in front of him. "Ah!" Kakoli cried in shock a moment before he flew straight into the wall and hit himself hard. The impact was so strong that he lost consciousness and fell down from the air.

Unfortunately for Shiba, she lost the two dragons anyway as they didn't appear to be anywhere in her sight. The aria flew down to the ground and tried to sniff out for Kakoli's scent, but it seems that either the mixed scents of the citizens were overpowering his smell or there just wasn't any scent at all. The dragoness tried going to other spots in the city to see if she can find her friend's smell, but still there was no luck. Well if she can't find him find by sight or smell, then there was only one thing she can do. Shiba used her telepathy to speak, '*Kakoli, where are you?*' There was no response to her question, so she tried again, '*Kakoli, answer me.*' There was silence again before the aria tried again for the last time, '*Kakoli!*' Silence was once again her answer. Shiba started to get worried to the point where she started to imagine dreadful things. Did the mirror harm Kakoli so much that he got knocked out cold? Or was he dead? She hoped none of the two things happened, but they may very well be possible. The dragoness didn't want to settle on these possibilities until she has seen her friend to confirm them. She continued to search for the dragonet and hope that she would find him.

((**Note:** The following sections take place during [chapter 31](#).)

Shiba waited outside the bounty hunter guild as her new friend, Torque, was collecting his payment for successfully hunting a bad man named Robert, or Robbie-poo as his almost-victim called him. The bounty hunter has promised her that he would help her find Kakoli after he got the gold. She hoped that with his help, she would be able to find the dragonet she's looking for. Within a few minutes, Shiba heard the door swing open and lifted her head off the ground to see Torque coming out the building, carrying a bag of gold in his hand. He smiled at the aria and said, "Hey Shiba, I just made me a whop of cash off of that Robert Bob Dole guy. So you ready to go find your pal?"

Shiba replied, "Oh yes!"

Torque's smile turned into a grin and he said, "Alrighty then." Then he asked, "So first things first, where did you last see your friend before you lost him?"

The dragoness answered, "Well, I was following after him over the streets until he flew in the middle of those two buildings. I was about to follow him there, but then I bumped into another dragon and that's how I lost him."

The man asked, "Two buildings, eh? Do you know what they were?"

Shiba shook her head and answered, "No, I didn't pay much attention to them. I just kept going to catch Kakoli before he got himself hurt. And I don't know if I can find those same buildings again, because I

don't remember them or which way they were."

"Well uh can you sniff him out instead?"

"I tried, but there's too many people blocking his scent."

Torque scratched his head and glanced to the ground, shaking his head as he was heard whispering, "This is going to be a toughie." He looked back at her and asked, "Well have you tried asking the Aquarians for help?"

Shiba looked at him quizzically and asked, "Aquarians?"

The man nodded and replied, "Yes Aquarians. I hear they're like this dragon police force that uh guard the city. Maybe they can take the time to find your buddy."

Shiba was glad for the good idea that he has given her. But she was unsure of how to find the Aquarians. She asked, "Okay, but what do they look like?"

Torque answered, "You can see them wearing these suits of armors. They're all hanging on top of the buildings like hawks, probably keeping their eyes out for trouble."

The dragoness replied, "Okay, I'll go look out for that detail. Thanks Torque, I hope they can help me find him."

"Good luck, you hear?" said Torque, giving her the thumbs up. Then Shiba took off and flew to look for one of the Aquarians.

Kakoli's consciousness awakened as he saw the darkness of his eyelids still closed. He soon smelled the scents of the world around him. There was the familiar scent of the forest, the strong smell of rock and there were two draconic scents as well. He wondered if one of them was Shiba at first, but he realized that this scent was different from hers. These scents were the smells of complete strangers. The dragonet opened his eyes and found a grayish-brown rocky wall in front of him. He looked around to see whose place this belonged to and found a white dragon and a multicolored pygmy dragon over by the entrance. The pygmy was the first to notice Kakoli as he said, "Hey Doshy-boy, the kid's awake now. Let's go give him a warm welcome." The two dragons walked over to the resting dragonet.

The dragon called Doshy-boy, or whatever his real name is, asked, "Hey there, are you okay?"

Kakoli answered, "Uh yeah, I'm okay." Well not really, he was having a headache and it must have come from when he hit that wall back during the chase. But hopefully, he will recover from that soon. Unsure

of where he was now, he asked, "So uh, who are you and where are we?"

"You're in our hideout, buddy," the pygmy answered. Then he introduced himself, "I'm Petey." He pointed his thumb at the white and continued, "And this guy here is Dosh." He explained the story, "We I saw you flying around with a pot on your head, looking like a pothead. A pothead!" He laughed at his own little joke before asking, "Get it, pothead?"

Kakoli just gave him a confused look, not understanding the meaning of what he just said. He has never heard of such a word in his life. He responded, "Uh... no?"

Petey continued on with the story, "Well anyway, after you crashed into that building wall. Dosh here tried to wake you, but you kept snoozing Z's. So we took you to our place and waited for you to rise and shine, which you did."

"Gee, thanks," replied Kakoli. He thought the mirror dragoness and the cat she stole. There was no doubt that she must have eaten it by now, given the amount of time between when he knocked himself out and when he woke up. Damn her for robbing him and getting him into this situation. Next time he saw her, he would be the one to outfox her and then he would be the one that gets the last laugh.

"You're welcome," said Dosh. Then he asked, "So how did you that flower pot on your head?"

Kakoli told them about his chase with the mirror dragoness. He explained his story from the beginning where he encountered the dragoness to the end. He continued in a slightly bemoaning tone, "And I wanted to eat that cat, too. They taste pretty good like a bird."

Petey said, "Well that's what you get for being too slow. Should've been faster, because there's always another dragon trying to steal your food." As if he was taken back to one of his own memories and is now living in it, the pygmy glared up at the cave ceiling and growled, "Damn you, thieving wyvern. Damn you!"

As Petey continued his rant, Dosh sighed at the pygmy before he said to Kakoli, "Don't worry, there's always next time to catch a cat. There's lot of them in Windfall, so you'll find one next time."

The dragonet cheered up and agreed, "I guess you're right. There's no use crying over it." He was still going to get the mirror dragoness though; he needed his revenge on her. Then he tells them, "Anyway, I got to go now. My friend's probably worried about me right now. I'm going to talk to her now."

"Okay," said Dosh. "You take care out there and don't run or fly into anything else. Alright?"

Kakoli formed a telepathic bond with Shiba and said, *'Hey Shiba, I'm awake now. Where are you?'*

Shiba found an Aquarian perched on top of a bank and had landed next to him. The armored dragon looked at her and asked, "Hm? Can I help you?"

The aria dragoness replied, "Yes, you see? I lost a friend of mine and tried to contact him telepathically, but he didn't respond. I think he might have been knocked out when chasing down a dragoness who stole his prey."

The Aquarian responded, "Okay, and what did they look like?"

As Shiba began to describe their appearances, she heard a familiar voice in her mind, one that made her happy upon recognition. She beamed back, *'Kakoli, you're alive! I was so worried about what that dragoness may have done to you.'*

Kakoli chuckled, *'Hey, no sweat! She just threw a thing at my head and then I hit a wall, knocking myself out.'*

'No sweat?' questioned Shiba worriedly. *'You could have your skull broken or something.'*

The dragonet bragged, *'Hey, at least this proves my head is thicker than a rock.'*

Thinking about how his sentence matched well with the word "thick-headed", Shiba joked, *'Okay, now you just sound silly.'*

Kakoli asked in confusion, *'Huh? Why?'*

Shiba shook her head and replied, *'Never mind. Anyway, where are you now?'*

The dragonet spoke in a fake displeased tone, *'Hey, that's my question and you stole it.'*

Shiba laughed, *'I'm sorry.'*

He forgave and told her, *'No matter, anyway I'm in some dragons' cave in the woods. They found me sleeping and took me to their home to rest.'*

'Well how nice of them,' said Shiba, thankful for their kindness. *'Well if you're ready to go, then meet me up at the city entrance that we came from.'*

'Alright, got it,' said Kakoli before they ended their telepathy.

Shiba looked back at the Aquarian, who had remained silent during the whole conversation. He seems to have understood that she was just using telepathy and didn't want to interrupt her. Shiba told him, "I

just found Kakoli, he'll be meeting me at the city entrance."

The Aquarian was glad for her as he said, "Glad to see the problem just solved itself quickly. Lucky you."

"Thanks," the dragoness responded. Despite how fast it looked to the guard, since he was just approached for help, it definitely wasn't for Shiba as she had spent a lot of time trying to find her friend. She continued, "I'm happy he's alright now. I'll going off to see him now. I hope you have a good day."

"You, too," said the Aquarian. Then Shiba spread her wings and flew off to look for the city entrance, trying to remember the exact directions she's gone up till now and trying to backtrack them to figure where to go.

Kakoli left the hideout and made his way through the forest to get to Windfall. But he had no idea or clue on how he can get there from the cave as he wasn't awake to see how Petey and Dosh took him to their cave. So he ended up getting lost after wandering aimlessly in the woods. It would do neither Shiba nor himself any good if he were to spend a long amount of time trying to get to the city. So he telepathically asked Dosh for help, *'Hey, do you know which way Windfall is?'*

The white answered, *'Just go all the way west from my cave and there you will see it.'*

'Thanks', the dragonet appreciated. Then he looked up at the sun and observed its position in the sky to determine which way was west. After knowing where to go, Kakoli set off in the right direction to get to Windfall. The journey there felt long, like it took half an hour to get there, at least that's what he guessed. But Kakoli safely made it to the entrance where there were human guards protecting the gate. The guards let him through and he entered the city, looking around at the buildings to see if it was the same entrance as the one used earlier. The shops were different, so this couldn't be the same entrance. Kakoli took and flew to look for the right destination.

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

Shiba got to the city entrance first and waited for her friend to meet her here. She laid down on her belly and looked at both sky and the street below for any signs of Kakoli. It was taking a long while for him to get here. During that time, she used telepathy to talk to him and find out what was taking him so long. It turns out that he was in search for their entrance as the other one he came in through was different. So in the meantime, Shiba passed the time she had by looking at what the busy the citizens were doing down below. She saw a small group of humans hanging out and having what seems to be a fun conversation as they were smiling, laughing and seemingly joking around. The dragoness strained

her ears to hear the conversation better, but it still sounded like soft gibberish to her. These humans sure looked like they were having a good time. If Shiba was human, perhaps she would approach them just a little enough to hear what was going on and then repeat the words to herself in her mind to amuse herself. But it was just wishful thinking; the only thing she can do was just simply watch them.

Several minutes later, Shiba got bored of waiting and started to take a nap. She curled herself and closed her eyes as she started to rest. Her nap however was short-lived as someone blurted into her ear, "Boo!"

The dragoness woke up spooked as she quickly threw her head up and opened her eyes wide, crying, "Wah!" She looked to see who had taken advantage of her to startle her like this. She was greeted with the presence of a certain mischievous dragonet.

He grinned at her, enjoying his little prank and said, "Hey Shiba, I'm here."

Smiling at him, Shiba said, "Kakoli, you're back."

The dragonet apologized, "Sorry I took so long."

Shiba forgave him, understanding the time it would take to find his way in an unfamiliar city. "It's alright; you were just trying to find your way."

"Well now that we're back together, let's ditch this place." Kakoli voiced his displeasure about the city, "This place stinks and it's been nothing but trouble!"

The dragoness disagreed, "Oh I wouldn't be so sure. I found a nice man here while looking for you."

Kakoli looked at in surprise as he asked, "Really? You finally found one?" Throughout his life, all the humans he ever came across had looked down on dragons. After hearing about Windfall and wondering if the humans have changed, he was disappointed to see the same bigotry as ever. But now the possibility of Shiba's so-called nice man may lighten his view on humanity a bit, even if only by a margin.

Shiba nodded and answered, "Yep, he exists alright. I met him while looking for you. His name is Torque; he's not like the other humans." Eager to prove her claim correct, she beckoned him, "Come on, I'll show him to you." She spread out her wings, getting ready to fly.

Kakoli readied his wings as well as he said, "Alright fine, let's go see what the deal is with him." Then they took off over the streets to go and find Torque. Shiba took the lead to find the guild where the bounty hunter was last seen. As they headed there, Kakoli decided to inquire from her, to make sure that she wasn't being deceived by the man's apparent kindness. He asked, "Hey Shiba, what is it about this human that makes him so nice?"

The dragoness answered, "Well he helped me to look for you and told me to ask the Aquarians for help."

"Aquarians? What are they?"

Shiba described them, "They're these dragons in armor who protect the city." Spotting one such dragon among the rooftops, she pointed to him and continued, "Like this one down there."

Kakoli looked at the Aquarian in his shining armor, watching over the citizens. "So that's an Aquarian? What kind of a name is that for a guard?" he asked, wondering why someone would give these dragons an unusual-sounding group name. Why not just simply call them guards, soldiers or whatever? Where they some kind of special task force or something?

"Beats me," said Shiba, shrugging as she was just as clueless as he was about that. They continued on for the rest of the flight until they reached the guild. But there was no Torque to be found in sight. He must have moved somewhere else during the time that Shiba left to talk to Aquarian and wait for Kakoli.

Looking around at the male humans in sight, the dragonet asked her, "So which one of these humans is Torque, Shiba?"

The dragoness answered, "None of them. I think he must have gone someplace else." Though common sense told her that he would leave by now, she kind of hoped her luck that Torque would be at least nearby.

Kakoli suggested, "You can always sniff his tracks and find where he's gone."

Shiba was about to tell him how that won't work, because she tried to find Kakoli by scent earlier, but then she figured that it may have that it was because he was flying and not on the ground. Maybe scent-tracking will work this time as Torque is a land-dweller. "Okay, I'll give it a try." She lowered her head to the ground and tried to pick up the bounty hunter's scent. She found a slight trace of Torque's smell, but it was overpowered by scents of other people who walked on his path. There was no doubt that finding Torque was going to be hard, but at least Shiba got the scent, however faint it was, to go by. She started to follow the path, looking like a dog as she kept her nose to the ground to smell while going. Kakoli followed behind to see where his friend would lead them.

The dragoness kept on tracking Torque down until she heard a human announcing to the populace around, "Are you dragons having trouble reading the human language? Well throw your trouble in the garbage can, because the ADR is now hosting a literacy class for dragons." Having her attention and interest caught, Shiba stopped walking and looked at the advertiser, who was promoting this class. The advertiser, who was a woman, continued, "We will teach you everything on all your reading needs. Our class will be over at the Summer Park Community Center. I repeat, our class is at the Summer Park Community Center." Shiba repeated the specific place's name in her head a few times, so that she would memorize the location and go there when needed. Learning to read human language was definitely

something that she needed to do if she was in Windfall. After all, there were humans here and their language was going to be written everywhere in this city. After the advertiser told the address of the community center, she said, "If anyone has a dragon friend, share this knowledge with them and invite them over to the class. Our session will start tomorrow at 1:00 and it'll be at room 1C. I repeat, our session starts tomorrow at 1:00 and it'll be at room 1C in the community center. Don't forget!"

Shiba and Kakoli looked at each other as the dragoness said, "Kakoli, did you hear that? They're teaching dragons how to read the humans' language."

The dragonet was disinterested about it and he replied, "Yeah, I heard everything. But what's that going to do for me? I mean it's not like we're going to stay in Windfall forever." He was more of a forest person, who liked to hang around in the woods. The wilderness had everything the city didn't: the fresh air, lots of prey and plant food, and not too many humans to hurt him. To him, the forest was the perfect home to him.

Shiba suggested an idea that she thought would interest him, "Well...you can use what you've learned to pull pranks like writing fake signs to trick humans."

It worked as Kakoli took a liking to that idea. Smiling, he replied, "Hey, you're right!" He thought about other things he could do with the new knowledge. Like write notes to insult humans or give them misleading directions to some places. He decided to give the literacy class a chance and said, "You know what? I want to be in that class. Shiba, we should go there tomorrow."

The dragoness was glad to have him with her at the class. She said, "Alright, you got it. We'll both learn together. Though I think we should find the place first today, so that we don't get lost tomorrow and miss the class." Once they find the location of the community center, they can trace it from there to where they'll fly into the city from.

"Good idea," agreed Kakoli. "But shouldn't we go find Torque first?" That was the first thing they started to do and that should be over with first.

Shiba already knew her task at hand and agreed, "I suppose we should." Then she went back to tracking down the bounty hunter. The path took them all the way to a large building with red double doors that Torque had apparently entered, because his scent went past the doorway. Shiba wasn't sure if she could simply go in to visit the man as the humans inside probably wouldn't take kindly to a dragon entering their property. She knew this, because there was no dragon scent to be smelled here.

Kakoli said, "Huh, he's gone inside. I guess we're going to have to find him through the windows." Of course, he won't be helping to search as he had no idea what that Torque person looked like. Shiba was going to be on her own for this, while he would just follow her around until she finds the man.

"Yes, let's do it," replied Shiba. Then they walked around the building as the dragoness looked past some

of the windows into the building's interior, searching for any signs of the man she was looking for. The rest of the windows showed the same place, so these were ignored. Torque wasn't there at the entrance room or the hallways. He wasn't even at the dining area, where a very few number of people were eating. After checking the entire ground floor, the search resulted with no success. Shiba spoke, "I don't see him anywhere. Let's check the next level." Then the dragons flew up to the windows on the second floor and looked through them. They hovered at each window as the dragoness looked through each one, each holding a different, yet identical room. Some of these rooms had only the beds, the chairs, the stands and a TV; while others had other things like those fabric boxes the humans carried with them and sometimes humans sitting inside. At one of these rooms, there was a man and a woman undressing themselves and throwing their clothes to the side as they looked at each other romantically. Shiba and Kakoli had no idea what was going on or why the humans were doing this. The humans were about to take off their undergarments next, when the man caught sight of the two dragons and alerted the woman. The woman became angry and she picked up one of the clothes to use as some kind of whip. She charged towards the window with the apparent intent to harm.

The dragons knew that they were in trouble as Kakoli cried, "Quick Shiba, let's get away!"

Then they flew away as the window opened and the woman shouted, "Don't you ever come back here again, you nasty-looking freaks!" Shiba's concern about the building's stance on dragons was now clear. The fact that woman chased them away meant that dragons weren't welcome there. How sad, considering that Shiba was going to ask someone inside where Torque was after the window search.

The two dragons flew away from the building and landed around the corner of the intersection. As they were recovering from their scare, an irked Kakoli asked, "Geez, what's her problem? We were just looking."

Shiba sighed, "I don't know, Kakoli. Maybe they don't want dragons around."

The dragonet grumbled, "Well that's just great. Now how are we supposed to find Torque without another human screaming at us?"

The dragoness suggested, "We can just take a faster peek this time before anyone notices us."

Kakoli was slightly skeptical about this. Shiba was a few feet bigger than him, thus she would be more likely to be spotted than he would. He asked, "You think that will work?" He hoped that she knows what she was doing.

Shiba replied, "I think so. We won't know till we try." They flew back to the building and went back to searching, avoiding that one window where they encountered the mean woman. After the last window on the top floor was searched, the search came out empty-handed. This disappointed Shiba, because she was so sure that Torque was inside and her hopes slightly grew for the last rooms, believing he would have a higher chance of being seen there. The dragons landed on the roof and Shiba said, "I guess

he's not here. Where could he have gone?" How could one man be inside a building and not be seen anywhere inside?

Kakoli guessed, "I don't know, maybe he left before we got here."

The dragoness sighed, "And I really wanted you to meet him."

The dragonet cheered her up a bit, saying, "Hey, don't worry about it. There's always next time to see him. I can wait."

Shiba smiled slightly and said, "Well, if you say so."

Beckoning to her take flight by throwing his shoulder up, he said, "Now let's go check out that community center place before we get some food." Then they flew off to look for the community center. They even asked an Aquarian for directions to the place to make their flight easier.