

The time has lost its grip on Jack, for days he stayed with his dragon. Äwe cared for him and kept him fed as he plunged from one madness into another. Jack had found himself without any way to get a grip of situation that was at hand. He was stuck in a mind destroying loop of early mornings of being woken up sensually by his mate, and the dragon traditions that he was dragged to. most of these were nothing new to Jack but it was not all too easy for him. The dragons made up a lot of new ways during his time off, seemingly to be afraid of another him. His surroundings started to blur into something surreal for him, his sense of time lost from being dragged around. He had tried too hard to act alone, to stay strong that he ignored his own call. His own body and what his mind needed to be at peace.

It was one fateful day that Äwe put him into the place that they called home. She made sure to lock the door she could not have the same thing as a week ago. *"Jack"* she finally started, all ready for whatever may come. *"are you alright?"* she stressed the words, trying to force any answer from her rider. But he did not flinch at the words at least, but his mind was a different story at all. His mind was in an artificial state of order; one that is held in place but was full of chaos and conflicted emotions. Wounds of the soul that are still fresh enough to hurt and pierce in his soul. *"I am alright"* he lied with a voice that was shaking in both tone and volume. He could not keep a single volume and with each vowel he raised his voice just a little bit just to lower it after the vowel.

*"no, Jack you are not at all"* Äwe hissed at the stubbornness of her rider, a hiss to warn him of what to come if he did not give her a straight answer. She could not appreciate lying from anyone especially not from her rider. Even a white lie was not acceptable for her. She could not bear to feel him suffer within her, she had to help her rider or else she was not a care taker of him at all. She would fail her part of the bond if she was not there for him when he needed her; even when he did not want to admit that he needed help in the first place. *"it is hard for you to adapt to your new life, to being a king once again and let go of the past but you must do that Jack. If you don't you will be dragged into an deep pit and you will take both of us with yourself! You are not acting like a king at all, or a proud rider. "*

His reaction to her words was fierce and uncalled for, an acid that burst out his mouth and burned a hole in her mind. *"I do not care Äwe!"* he made his own strange human like growl at her. A growl half stuck between something a human can make and something a dragon could make. *"all I know is what happened: you could talk easily! You could get a proper farewell from her, I never could. I don't dare to even go near her now, I cannot stand the pain of her demise. I should have been there! I should have been stronger for her."*

Äwe did not feel anything but compassion for her rider, even when he was angry at her for no reasons; he was still dealing with deep inner conflicts, after all. *"you need to go to her, Jack, you really need to face her. But not alone, after all you are my rider and I will be here for you always."*

Jack simply shot her idea off with a single nod *"no, I have to do this alone, I have to go but alone!"* he could not continue as at this point he was cut off by Äwe, who did not sound too impressed by his words at all nor did she want to leave any room for him to back out. *"No! jack you don't! remember during the first week of being bond, the rider and the dragon cannot leave each other's mind at all. We have to strengthen the bond! We will go and we will go right now"* the last part of her words where stern and commanding voice.

"you..." He started but he could not finish his words somehow.

"me?" Äwe said in a softer, and more concerned voice, knowing the battle is already won with him.

"you, you... alright" jack finally admitted his defeat to the dragon, she had all the stubbornness of her mother. "I will go with you now" his voice was weaker than before, submitting to Äwe's will.

*"See, my rider, it is much easier to let me have my way at times, now move your squishy arse and let's go already"* she said while pushing on his derriere with her nose, causing him to stumble out of the den and almost face plant on the ground, If it had not been for Jäkai who caught him. He had been passing by and had caught the impassionate couples den at that moment.

"thank you" Jack puffed out a breath of air and looked around, passing an accusing looks at Äwe for pushing him so hard. But she was playing innocent and impassionate and wouldn't respond. Jäkai himself just gave a quick nod and moved along, not even daring to make eye contact. *What's wrong with him?* Jack wondered as he watched him leave. Though he could not ask, Äwe was already pushing his arse to get him to move.

"you know it would be a lot easier to walk if you did not poke me in the arse!?" Jack grumbled, a bit pissed at Äwe.

She pecked at him and growled *"maybe I would not have to push you in the arse if you just could get a move on, or just get on my back"* with those words she leaned down to let her rider climb on. He did not how ever refuse like she thought so, instead got on top of her without any further struggle. "Äwe, you...bloody dragon" Jack silently growled to her.

Without difficulty Äwe took up into the sky and flew off, heading to the realm of those who died long ago. The mountains great and tall faded back into the plains he once knew. Only the flapping of Äwe's wings were audible around him. Then it finally struck him, it was his dragon, he did not need to share her to any rider. He was her rider, and her mate. No one else drew her attention, it made his body fill with a strange tingle of belonging. Of knowing what is truly yours. A slow tranquillity came over him, yet his bones kept shaking with the tension. He was soon going to see his dead mate, who died so long ago.

Wind rushed through his hair as they flew over the mountains, towards the graveyard of the dragons. for someone who was about to meet his dead mate Jack was surprisingly calm at this moment. he leaned close against Äwe's body as he looked over her shoulders to see the upcoming world. Slowly each wing beat flowed into his body. Her scales rubbed against the fabric of his shirt, slowly the fabric started to ruffle as the scales cut through the material. Jack how ever did not seem to mind, or to notice, enjoying the feeling of her warm scales against his body.

His breath slowed a bit as he looked over Äwe's neck towards her head, keeping levelled with the horizon flying forwards with determination. He was only cut out from the feeling of calmness and tranquillity, as he felt something warm flowing over his stomach and legs. It took him a moment to realize that the warm feeling came from him, and another moment to realise that the warm liquid was his own blood.

“Äwe!” he hit her side to gain her attention, but his shouts where no match against the rushing wind. The only attention he got was to his hitting, but even then she did not turn her neck to look at him *“will you quit hitting me?”* her voice sounded somewhat pissed in his mind, she did not understand what he was hitting her for. She thought that maybe he had changed his mind and wanted to turn around; something she would not do.

Without the reaction he wanted from Äwe, Jack tried to concentrate once more. He tried to let his mind bind with hers, to engage in the connection. It was the first time so far that he had tried to communicate through the mind link: Throughout out his life with dragons he had never used the telepathic way of talking.

It was true that riders should be able to talk through their mental link with the dragons but it was something Jack was still afraid of. It would be yet another layer of his mind that would be revealed to her, even when he had already accepted his fate for the larger part; being one in mind was still something he was scared of.

*“Äwe! we need to land”* Jack’s words where weak in Äwe’s mind. She could barely make up that the words where his at all. His mental voice had a trace of fear in it and a hint of holding back.

*“No, we can’t land for your fear to see her! We must do this now!”* she hoped he would not start to pester her in her mind, words she could block out but mental conversations where much more personal for her to work with. *“no! you get me wrong”* Jack resumed, he tried to get some images across. It was not clear to Äwe what he meant. Something with his legs? Something with a liquid? Then it struck her...

Without any delay she descended, keeping her wings stretched out to make as least movement as possible. She did not want to risk the wounds on her rider’s legs to getting any bigger than they were even when the size was unknown to her. The most terrifying thought was that she did not feel anything: she had to concentrate to feel the discomfort from her rider she could not feel the pain. *“does it hurt?”*

*“not really”* was the reply of her rider. When they neared the ground, the grass plains stretched out all around them; like a flowing sea of green. Äwe guessed it would be an hour flight to the catacombs and they could not expect any help from the dragon city anytime soon.

Her claws spread out and her wings flared to catch the air to slow her down as she landed in a cloud of dust. Her feet dug in the ground to grind to a halt. Once still, she lowered her body to let her rider dismount her, she felt her scales touching the warm grass below them. Her rider in the other hand did not care that much for the warmth of the grass or the ground as he wanted to get off as soon as possible. In a rush he swung his legs to the right side of Äwe and let himself slide down.

As soon as his legs felt the weight of his body; he collapsed in an world of pain, his shout of pure flesh tearing pain tore through the grass plains. Äwe who had been worried about the mental link and how she could not feel his pain had a cruel realisation as she felt her legs aching like someone shot an arrow through them.

As Jack calmed down from the immense pain in his legs he could finally bare to take a look. The brown leather of his trousers was ground away, the flesh of his legs was exposed to the air and blood

flowed from the open wounds. It was not as bad as Jack had expected, only his skin was gone; he had feared for his muscles and his legs.

*"Are you alright"* he received a worried thought from his dragon; a redundant question since his dragon clearly knew that he was not alright. Jack discarded it quickly and tried to stop the bleeding. He tore the fabric of his shirt and tried to bind it around her legs to stop the bleeding. It worked for the most part, yet he could not tend to the wounds on his stomach.

Äwe leaned in to her rider ever so slowly, pulling her tongue out and began to tend to his wounds. Licking his stomach clean of blood and dirt, it was the only way she could make sure his wounds were clean. Yet the taste of his blood disgusted her, it was like a natural reflex to hate the taste of her rider's blood. But she bit through the sour apple and got her job done. Now she could just sit and think, they were in a way stranded.

She would never leave her rider alone in the waste like this but in order to get help she had to move. Flying with him was no option or she would hurt him even more. She blamed herself that she had not paid close attention and did not take a saddle before flying away with him. She was about to apologise as she felt his warm hand up on her *"it is not your fault"* her rider calmed her as if he could feel the sadness within her. *"just help me get on your back...we can't fly but we can walk to her"* his words spoke of determination.

*"No, we should go back"* Äwe was more worried about her rider's health than about facing his demons. After all they did not know what to expect from him; more that no one really knew about dragon catacombs in the first place. Nothing happened when a new body was added, but no one had been in the catacombs on their own. No one knew what would happen if powerful dragon spirits mixed with powerful tribal magic mix into one place. If she were to be caught in any way they both would be doomed and he could not run. *"no! I came here for her...I cannot back off now..."* Jack cried, gritting his teeth against the pain.

It took a moment for Äwe to consider her options, but her rider was too determined. Every time she would beg to defer him, he would strike her arguments down. In the end it was her that had to submit to his will for this time. She lowered her back to let him climb on with her help; he tried to get comfortable without his legs grinding against her flanks.

Äwe started to walk towards the catacombs again once her rider was seated. She did not feel comfortable anymore about doing this, but she had gotten so far and now her rider wanted to face it. She might never get a second chance to this again. Her feet dug in the grass as she made her way, with grass plains as far as the eye can see, and the warm sun slowly setting down on her scales.

As she made progress through the grass fields, she started to feel more at peace with the walk. The soft breeze over her body, the sun ever so warm on her scales and her love, her rider and her soul mate on her back. Telling her stories of how the dragon empire was before she was born. She had heard some stories from her mother of how it was, but to hear it from her rider was unique experience

She could feel love, companionship, fear and anger all flowing from him as he told of what had happened. How he met her mother, how he fell in love with her and how he came to be the king of the dragons in the first place. Äwe always thought Jack was someone important from the beginning,

but to hear the true story. To hear that he was once a simple stable boy, afraid of dragons and magic; it was a shock to her.

Even Jack took a moment when he told her about his past, to realise where he came from. From being someone insignificant, a lone shy boy was now a mate, rider and a powerful figure with in the dragon empire. He wondered what his parents would say to him if they should see him now. Through he probably knew; his parents were dragon haters, afraid of the dragons because they could not understand them. they would disown him if they knew what he was now, what he done and who his 'wife' was now. Not that he cared much, his mother was drunk most of the time on some wine or mead and his dad was too busy sleeping in the jail after fighting or stealing. He had basically raised himself; and then the dragons came.

His thoughts rolled off once he thought back to his first encounter of the dragons, the warm sun on his skin did not matter anymore, the breeze through his hair, the dust on the wind. He slowly ebbed away in the trail of his thoughts, under the watchful mind of Äwe who was only too happy to peak in his mind.

He had been delivering a horse to a client. It was his first real task and the first time out of the city. He was afraid of bandits and what not but he never expected to see what he did see. As the night fell over the camp he had made that night, he saw some shimmering in the distance. There was a growl and suddenly his horse was gone. As he tried to stalk the thief, he found out that he stumbled on a young rider and his dragon. He had been scared to death, he had wanted to run but the dragon caught him. She pinned him down, and then she apologised for eating both his horses. At the time he did not know what to fear the most, to fear the giant beast or that it could talk.

The rider offered him a free flight back home and promised he would try to compensate for his horses. Jack was in no position to refuse, through the rider never could fully compensate him; or return him home. In the middle of the night as he stayed with the rider and the dragon; they were attacked by soldiers. He had tried to explain he was not with the rider and his dragon, but it was too late. He was declared an enemy of the state and had to flee with the rider. leaving everything behind

Over the weeks that followed he came familiar with the dragon and her rider, the dragon became an animal of interest, or rather a person of interest to him. As the rider and dragon split paths for the day he would stay with the dragon and talk to her. They grew closer and closer and the rider knew, though he did not do anything against it. Jack recalled one night that the rider talked to him without his dragon.

He explained that many feelings the dragon felt for him would also be felt by the rider. Jack tried to ask what those feelings were but was only answered with a smile and a pat on his shoulder *"you will see soon enough"*. And soon enough indeed; three nights after they had a talk with the rider, the dragon came to him while he was watching the stars.

Emeralde walked up to him, nuzzled him on his shoulder and once he turned around she kissed him. Who thought that his first love would be that of a dragon? Her scaled lips melded with his smooth lips in a most passionate kiss. His troubles of fleeing were long forgotten as they spend the night together, kissing and exploring their love.

The warm feeling of love filled Jack's belly as he relived his first mating, Émeralde cared for him. Her sweet lips explored his body and her claws that could kill him were had the lightest touch on his skin. slowly they had explored each other's body. licks and kisses turned into soft love bites as they went further on into a new found love. Her claws made way to his jacket and trousers; and before he could protest they were ripped away. leaving him just as naked as Émeralde was. Her eyes as deep as oceans looked into his as she slowly started to lick down his stomach.

She was enjoying herself as she made her way to his member. Every objection in jack about this strange love and the beast that was making love to him ebbed away as she took his penis in her mouth. Her wet tongue licked him, tasted him and played with him as she suckled on it. The first time ever with a women and it was a dragon; not many would do that.

With his virginity came his first load, shooting his hot sperm into her mouth. The stars reflecting on her scales as she laid back in the grass. The beautiful dragoness under the beautiful sky, spreading her hind legs and invited him over.

He could recall her taste any time, he thought of the moments that he tasted the juices Émeralde made; sweet like honey, spicy like peppers. He recalled the night, the first night as they made love. He would eat her out until she squirted over his face, and then they would just go on. She licked her own juices from his face as she led him over. Guiding him to push his hard member into her warm vagina, letting her hymen be broken by none other than him.

Oh that night under the stars had been so perfect as he made love to the dragoness. Sweet trusts and juicy sounds filled his ears as he thought of the night long in the past, with a mate long dead. But none of that mattered at this moment, the only thing was his memories, the slow thrusts, the heavy pheromone rich air, the moans of the dragon *"jack...oh jack...jack...jack"* slowly the sound of Émeralda's voice changed to a more different dragon, one still close to him.

Then suddenly *"jack!"* Äwe voice shocked him out of his day dreams, slowly coming back to reality. *"I hate to interrupt your oh so erotic memories of my mother but we have arrived"* she clarified as they moved over black earth. Jack's aroused mood disappeared as dust in the wind. He got the cold chills over his spine as they walked past catacombs of dragons. slowly making their way to the centre.

Jack felt ill at ease, he felt watched and haunted as they walked further. Skeletons of dragons spread out all around them, some still had some scales on them. skulls the size of houses, wings the size of villages; dragons of all different sizes, even hatchlings. Were scattered throughout the catacombs. They passed them all as they walked up to the middle.

A great crystalline structure slowly appeared into view, at first jack thought nothing special of it. but then he realized what I really was. It was the burial place of her, of his long gone mate, of Émeralda. His emotions started to flow, slowly tears appeared upon his cheeks as he made out the form of the dragoness up from the crystalline structure.

He could not believe his eyes as they stopped in front of the structure, he could see Émeralda with in it. it was like she was sleeping, like she could wake up at any time now and scare him. Next to her, lying partially under her wing was her rider. Even in death she still guarded him, Jack only found it fitting to let them lie like that. without concern for his damaged legs, he let himself slide off of Äwe.

He growled in pain as he fell on the dirt floor below them. His legs refused to carry his weight but he did not care. He crawled to the crystalline structure and put his hand on it. Tears flowed like a river down his face. In a slow motion he laid his forehead against the crystalline, as he laid his forehead against Emeralda's forehead, he cried out in grief and pain "I am sorry...my love". Awe soon joined him, with the same grief, the same pain as him. They said nothing but the moment was shared between their minds. Jack could hear Awe's heart beat in the silence that flooded the graveyard.

Then suddenly words filled his mind. Words of someone he knew so long ago. *"look what the cat dragged in, or well what my daughter dragged in"*