

Part 3

Walking the several miles to Askolov would take a while especially with the stallion in tow, but it was down hill all of the way and would take a lot less effort than heaving his great form up in to the air. Katal had not made an attempt to glide after his near fatal encounter with Sir Frankworth, let alone fly the many miles that he used to. His damaged wing had at first grounded him and while that healed quickly, his physical strength gradually faded as his more severe injuries continued to heal. Now here he was, unsure about whether or not he could still fly in his unfit state.

His pace slowed as he started to feel a stitch coming on. It had not been long since he had gorged his now swollen belly on fish, which was now putting a slight strain on his back and swung gently from side to side as he trotted through the trees. He had only eaten but a minor meal and even so it was taking a toll on his stamina. There was a time when he could gorge on enough food to last a village a whole week; his belly distending until he thought he might burst, yet still with his great strength he would take to the skies and soar majestically like the world was his own. Now here he was, out of breath and exhausted. Unable to carry his own weight plus a meal without tiring.

Katal felt embarrassed and peered around for any other dragon that might jump out from the trees and mock him, not that that was likely as dragons these days were few in number and liked to keep their distance from each other to avoid conflict, it had been a long time since there had been any true society amongst dragons.

What he did spot however was a calm stream running through the undergrowth. He looked behind in to the forest to find that Fray had fallen behind, not surprising considering he had probably been marched a long distance just to reach Katal's cave, this was not a worry as he had been compelled to follow and follow is what he would do. Katal's own aching limbs and a parched throat urged him to take a rest. The still water suddenly became a torrent of small waves, dashing about in confusion as Katal stuck his great muzzle in to quench his thirst. After taking his fill he sat down on his haunches with a thud.

The water was not the only thing that rippled as his rump made contact with the ground. Katal stared in to the stream as it gradually calmed and revealed his reflection. He had been a dragon of the high mountains once upon a time, a cold a desolate place that required a bulkier form to stave off the cold nights. Most dragons were born with a massive appetite and given the chance would eat until they had a paunch to match it, dragons of the high mountains on the other hand were something else. They were born with a hunger that never stopped, a constant urge to feed on anything and everything that chanced by them, so much so that Katal had heard stories of his kin eating until their bellies would stretch till they could stretch no more and burst.

While he knew from the constant rumbling in his own tummy that most of this was true, the bursting part always made him laugh with disbelief, though the appetite that they were born with generally helped keep them stay alive during the harsh winters in the mountains, where temperatures dropped so low that even a polar bear would perish and food was very scarce. While food had been scarce in the mountains, this was certainly not the case down on the lowlands and Katal had become self conscious of his weight. He found the idea of well fed paunch on other dragons very attractive, after all a fat dragon is a successful dragon, but he had been young when he had left the mountains and had scarcely come in to contact with other dragons outside of his homeland so was never certain whether other dragons shared the desires of his kind. Though it might have made sense for at least the mountain dragons like himself, the few dragons that he had met had been slender around the waist.

It had been so long since he had lived in the mountains, he had to leave and had faced that many seasons ago. He looked at his reflection in the water, though he had been telling himself that time

had taken away his monstrous appetite, he knew this was not true. The only reason he was not eating until he himself burst was the simple fact that he had grown wary of the humans in the village, he had underestimated them once, but no more. He would reach that village by evening and eat all he could possibly eat, then demand food be brought to his home. Katal rested on his side and imagined how the villages would once again come trembling to his cave in their dozens, bringing carts of fatty meat and all the sweet treats and cakes that he liked best.

Once again he would grow strong and feared by all in the land. Then maybe from his exploits he could attract a mate. He had mated with other males before when he was young and still lived in the mountains. They, like himself were hardy dragons with strong limbs, a powerful tail and well rounded belly that pressed up heavily and rubbed against his own as they mated in the snow, these were the dragons that he adored. The only mate he had found in the forests had been on a chance meeting many years ago.

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Katal had been on a pleasure hunt at the time, the locals arrived daily at his cave and left him more than enough food to keep him sated, this hunt was purely for the fun of it, for the thrill and the feeling of being in total control.

In a rocky clearing by the riverside opposite Katal lounged his next meal, and just how he liked it, a young brown bear fat from the summer salmon run. Soon it would be time to strike, the bear had been all alone, gorging itself on salmon for the best part of the evening. 'Best to let him fill up on fish first, all the more meal for me!' He thought to himself.

By the time the bear decided call it a day and clumsily began to retreat to the rocks Katal was drooling with anticipation, bears were always one of his favourite prey. Thinking they have no natural predators always made them easy to sneak up on and they were no problem to catch if they did decide to run, or at least the ones fat enough to be worth eating weren't, the real pleasure though was once he got one in his grasp. Once he had them pinned down they would always try to overpower him, as is always the way with bears, but would soon run out of energy. 'That is where the real fun begins'.

The dragon could not simply eat the bear, that would be no fun at all. The fun part was in playing with his food first, a few playful bites on its belly, a hint now and then that it will indeed become a meal and of course the conversation piece: 'My somebody is looking rather porky today'.

The anticipation was unbearable, but coming to an end. Katal slowly began to move forward when another dragon burst from the trees behind the bear, startling it enough to jump back in the shallows of the river. No sooner had the intruding dragon appeared, the bear stood on its back legs and stood up tall, as if to look imposing. This merely gave the other dragon the perfect opportunity to pounce the witless bear and pin it on its back in the shallow water.

A gust of cold air carried with it the smell of fear from the bear, but also something else. This dragon was a female. Katal did not know what to make of her, he had never come in to contact with a female since he had left his old home, he had no idea how to approach her.

Her rubbery hide was a yellow-gold colour, akin to that of lion fur and gleamed as the water dripped from it. She was shaped like a lowland dragon, with a much slender build than Katal. A dragon like her would not normally have been an interest, but the way she seemed to toy with the bear reminded him of himself. She poked at the bears ballooned stomach and even appeared to be mocking him. She said something to the bear and removed her grip from the bear and allowed it to get up, the bear hastily turned around and made to retreat, only to be caught in the head by a mere flick of the dragons tail.

The female dragon took no time in roasted the motionless bear with a flame and hastily began to chow down. By the way she ate she had not had a good meal in a while and to Katal's surprise she was managing to get through a fair bit of the bears meat for her stature, Katal was likely nearing half again the size of her and certainly more than 3 times the weight, but on a normal day he could have only just managed an entire bear, and even then he felt as though he might burst. On and on the she-dragon ate, Katal watched in amazement as her slim middle bulged outwards and before he knew it, she was finished and a well rounded pot belly bulged joyfully in all directions.

Katal watched in as much bliss as she seemed to be, he had always far preferred the plump build of mountain dragons, but watching her now laying on her back in the water with her swollen stomach made him feel excited. He wondered whether her belly would be firm or soft, the thing she still missed though was a good coating of fat and the horse-like rump of Katal's race, but he had not mated in a long time and she might yet have looked better if he fed her up...

Suddenly her eyes drifted towards his direction. He sat perfectly still, not knowing what to do, she could not have seen him, he was too well hidden. Katal knew he needed to make a move soon and slowly walked forward out of the tree-line so not to alarm her. The well fed dragoness looked alarmed at the approaching male, she reacted slowly, sluggishly heaving her bloated body out of the water and backing up slowly towards the river bank.

Katal certainly not worried about her escaping. "That was a good meal you had there." He said, sneering.

The dragoness looked about as if for some way out of the situation. Katal moved swiftly around her side to stop her backing out of the river. "Thought I dare say..." He said and patted her swollen middle. "...It was meant to be my meal."

She turned around to face him. "I was told that rich hunting ground lay here." She said nervously.

"You were told true, though did they fail to mention that they were taken? Maybe protected?"

The dragoness shook her head slowly.

Katal threw his body at the lighter dragon and easily pinned her on to her back. "Well now you know then, that I am the alpha around here!" He bellowed.

She made a feeble attempt to squirm, her claws kicked and scratched Katal's belly to avail and eventually her struggling stopped. "Now that you've calmed down, why don't we discuss what to do about this little encounter of ours..." Katal said with a smile crossing his maw.

"Get off me!" The dragoness yelled.

"I don't take commands from trespassers!"

The smaller dragon submitted and broke eye contact with Katal. "Please get off of me."

Katal removed his hold from the dragoness and lay down in the shallow river next to her with a muffled 'thud', keeping his own belly in contact with hers.

"I.. I'm sorry for hunting on your lands... I didn't know" She said nervously.

"I'm sure you didn't... Though I must say that meal will do you good, after all you were looking a little bit on the thin side."

Katal reached around her middle and hugged himself to it tightly, his dragonhood pressed hard against his own underbelly. "A few more meals like this would do your middle some wonders..."

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He awoke from his daydream as Fray came blundering through the woods towards him as befit his stature.

Something pressed up against his underbelly, Katal felt embarrassed for a moment as the stallion stopped before him, but quickly decided that he should no longer feel embarrassed, or ashamed about anything. He was and always will be the alpha, he could do what he wanted when he wanted and it should be no different! He stood up and towered before the stallion. "Stop holding me up, I need to get to Askolov before the seasons change! You go in front so I can be sure you keep pace." The white stallion nodded glumly and Katal pushed a paw in to his rump to get him moving forward. His rump was soft with fat, it took all of Katal's strength not to eat the horse there and then, but then, eating a horse as big as that would certainly mean he would not get to Askolov in the next day. Besides, his stirring words had convinced Katal to change his life around for the better, and that at least earned the horse a bit longer to live... And it wouldn't be so bad if he got a bit plumper before he finally became his next meal either.
