



The Dragon King's Awakening (Lords of Pandemonium)

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Category: Dark Erotica

Description: Two dragons. One human mate. A world on the brink of destruction.

Rachel never expected to find her fated mates while watching two dragons battle on a mountaintop. Now she's caught between Zahraxia, an ancient Gold dragon with three thousand years of vengeance burning in his soul, and Finn, the Red dragon hunter tasked with bringing him to heel.

Their explosive connection awakens Rachel's dormant powers, but there's no time to explore their scorching new bond. An ancient threat looms on the horizon, and they must overcome centuries of distrust to join the coming battle.

As Rachel surrenders to the primal pleasure of being claimed by two possessive dragons, she must help them overcome centuries of distrust before their world burns to ash.

The Dragon Kings Awakening is a standalone companion to the bestselling Lords of Pandemonium series, where fated mates, ancient power, and earth-shattering pleasure collide.

Total Pages (Source): 18

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Rachel

The roar of the furnaces fills the hot shop, a steady thrum that vibrates in my bones as I focus on the molten glass at the end of my blowpipe. Colors swirl under the intense heat, shaping my thoughts into tangible form. It is in this dance of creation and fire that I lose myself, the outside world fading to a mere whisper.

That is until the workshop door swings open and a rush of cooler air sweeps through, prickling my skin. I glance up, and there he stands: a man with an aura that blazes like a wildfire, its fierce reds and oranges unlike anything I've seen before.

My heart skips a beat, my dragon sight piercing through the everyday to glimpse something extraordinary. Not only is his aura as brilliant as the fire in the furnace, it has a distinct corona of amber that I've learned signifies the person is seeking something. Through all that, I still can't miss that his physique is sculpted to perfection. His short, styled red hair catches the light like polished copper, and that unmistakable glint in his eyes as he scans the room betrays his true nature.

The only dragons on the island are three Black Shadows and three White Guardians, all six of whom also have mates. This is the first time I can recall a Red visiting.

The school's founder, April Vincent, rises from her workbench and makes her way over to him, along with Stuart, one of her Guardian mates. As the Red waits, he scans the shop, his gaze coming to rest on me. A flare of recognition widens his eyes, though I've never seen him in my life. In that moment, an unfamiliar tug in my chest tells me something monumental has just occurred without a single word passing between us.

April's greeting tears his attention from me, and I shake off the odd sensation still threading through my torso, returning to my project. He isn't for me. He's just here on dragon business.

Despite the momentary distraction and the lingering burn in my belly, my focus easily returns to the glass, a medium as familiar to me now as my own breath. It's as if molten glass flows in my veins, the way the material responds to my whims even through an interruption. The delicate, heated glass goblet rotates at the end of my spinning punty, slower now as it cools enough to remain solid, until I'm confident it's finally complete.

Sending a nod to my assistant, I signal my readiness for the handoff. My precise tap strikes the rod at its junction, severing the connection to the last half-hour's toil. The fine Venetian goblet begins its descent, gently captured by my assistant's waiting gloves, before being carried to the annealing furnace for tempering.

Sweat slips down my temple, defying the soaked bandana around my forehead. I tilt my water bottle for a long drink and swipe away the perspiration.

I try not to look at him again, despite how much my interest is drawn to him. Out of the corner of my eye, I'm aware that he's still talking to April and Stuart.

Occasionally, an outsider finds their way to the island where St. George School of Art stands. Their arrival is no accident; only those whose fated mates are here can set foot on the island's shores. If he's here, he's meant to be. But whether he's meant for me or some other member of the Bloodline who resides here remains to be seen.

I'm not about to go charging at this sexy new arrival like a woman starved for attention, even though that would be the truth. What if that look wasn't meant for me? What if this hyperawareness of his presence means nothing?

I grit my teeth, seize the blowpipe, and thrust it into the furnace, gathering more molten glass to begin another goblet. Part of me is tempted to follow in my friend Nemea's footsteps—craft a sex toy and use it to lure a god who will whisk me away.

Not that I don't love the island—living here for the past month has been the best experience of my life, but I'm more aware of the passage of time with each magical creature who arrives and claims another student as their mate.

It's been two days since Nemea vanished, leaving barely a trace. I'm pretty sure she's been claimed by some horny god, considering her mission to summon one with that magic dildo she crafted. Her aura, a swirling kaleidoscope of hues, could only mean Chimera blood infused her. According to what I've heard from April, this means she requires a cadre of potent mates to forge a complete bond. April herself has six.

April's lack of concern about Nemea's whereabouts is disconcerting, though. She disappeared the day after confessing to losing time and showing me a pile of unusual sketches she'd been doing, all of powerful gods, and not all of them the good kind, though good is a matter of interpretation, I guess. If anything, school management seemed relieved she was gone, though security has been tightened a bit for reasons as yet undisclosed.

I do hope my friend's in good hands, at least. Once I witnessed her aura and saw the sketches she'd made, it was clear she was destined for something monumental. If I could manifest my fate by drawing it, I would, but I'm so bad at two-dimensional art, it isn't funny. I'll stick to glass, and using my dragon sight to help my friends understand their natures better.

At least my ability has helped Audra and Sean. Their auras revealed enough to give them hope. Most students' auras clearly reveal what race's blood runs through them. Audra's is a vibrant green, suggesting ursa blood, while Sean's—a sharp, silvery blue—speaks of his turul bloodline, or maybe a mix with nymphaea.

Audra's one of the few whose mates live and work on the island, so despite being mated now, she's still here, happily continuing her studies while spending her nights in a pair of ursa instructors' bed.

I have dragon blood, this much I know. My ability to see auras is enough of a clue. Plus I'm becoming a pretty skilled glassblower, if I do say so myself. An affinity for fire is as sure a sign as any that a student at St. George carries dragon blood.

We're hybrids, though, so only through practice with the various elements can we determine what sorts of powers might manifest. My dragon sight is the most useful talent I've discovered during my weeks here, and perhaps my endurance in the glass shop. If I have any other draconic talents, I have yet to discover them.

As if in response to my errant musings about dragons, a roar slices through the hot, dry air of the shop, a primal sound that makes every hair on my body stand on end. It reverberates through the walls, drowning out the constant hum of the furnaces. A series of startled cries follow.

Before I can fully process what's happening, the Red springs into action. He bolts for the door, his aura sparking crimson with purpose. In one fluid motion, he shifts, his body—clothes and all—dissolving into scales and wings. His transformation is both graceful and terrifying, an explosion of red as he bursts through the open doorway and into the sky.

I catch a flash of gold out the window—another dragon, gleaming like a sunbeam against the backdrop of a clear blue sky. The red dragon is on its tail, chasing it higher and higher. Their forms become distant blurs of color against the vast expanse of blue.

Around me, everyone has stopped working. The noise, the sudden movement, has paralyzed us all for a moment. I try to play it off, feigning indifference as I turn back

to my new project. My hands move on autopilot, shaping and forming without real intent.

But my mind is not here.

It's up there in the sky with those dragons.

I can't deny what I feel—a stirring that has nothing to do with curiosity and everything to do with longing. Longing for what? Understanding? Belonging? Power? It doesn't matter. It distracts me at a crucial moment.

The glass in my hands shatters, fragments raining onto the concrete floor like ice chips. The failure snaps me back to reality, embarrassment flooding my cheeks as everyone turns their attention to me.

"Rachel! Are you okay?" Frida, my assistant for the day, asks, breaking through the stunned silence.

I nod quickly, waving off her concern, even though I feel anything but okay. Things break in this studio; it goes with the territory. But it always feels like a failing.

"Yeah, just lost focus for a second."

I stare at the jagged remains at the end of the pipe and the shards littering the floor, not sure whether to start over or find something else to break on purpose. The dragons' roars still echo in my ears, mingling with my own frustrated thoughts.

"Time for a break, Rachel?" Stuart chimes in. He eases the blowpipe from my hands, his touch on my shoulder meant to comfort. "Better to come back tomorrow with a fresh perspective."

I let out a sigh, feeling a bit defeated. "Yeah. I need to step away for a bit. Maybe a hike will clear my head."

"The blackberries on the western bluffs should be ripe about now. But be careful if you go up there. Finn, our visitor just now, is hunting a rogue feral dragon. Looks like he found him. They're probably long gone, but be vigilant, okay? Maybe take a friend."

I mull over his suggestion as I reach for my water bottle, then empty it in three long swallows. Feral dragons versus some perspective gained by a walk. I could see what Sean's up to and drag him along. He's usually game to wander the island.

"Blackberries sound pretty good. I like the way you think, Stu." I rise and tug my bandana off my forehead so it hangs around my neck, then gather my backpack and head toward the door.

"See you tomorrow, Rache," Frida calls out, taking over the bench under Stuart's guidance.

I step out into the sun, letting its rays kiss my face, the crisp Pacific Northwest air filling my lungs. The smell of bread baking in the kitchens of the main lodge hints at a promising dinner, but that isn't for a few hours yet. A few harried-looking students linger in the quad as I pass through, murmuring about the dragons who interrupted a peaceful afternoon. But no one seems to have been harmed, just frightened, and things get back to normal quickly.

There's no denying the idyllic peace that permeates the island, and it's a beautiful late summer day—the perfect time for a hike.

I head up the hill toward the movement studio, planning to rope Sean into joining me for blackberry picking. The studio, which I don't frequent much aside from the

morning tai-chi classes, overlooks the rest of the school and the Puget Sound, the mainland of Seattle to the east. Today, strains of slow, seductive music filter out through its open windows.

I peek in and see a dance unfolding. Sean's in there, his leggings and flowing shirt outlining his tall, lean form as he sways close to a long-haired woman, while a man with a guitar sets the rhythm. Sean's aura seems to dance too, taking on a warmer sheen as he glides with the nymphaea tai-chi instructor.

I've seen Sean's aura enough that it's no surprise to find him with creatures of wind and water. There's this tune he always taps out when he's restless, and it's the same unique rhythm of the song playing now. I've heard that turul have a fragment of a song in their souls, which is never complete until they find their true mates. Looks like Sean's found his.

I step back, leaving them to their dance, a tinge of loneliness hitting me as I face my solitary hike. I try to shake it off, treating it as an opportunity for some quiet self-reflection. A bit of apprehension builds too. Are those two dragons still about? The possibility should frighten me more than it does, but it only urges me on, and I walk faster as if to outpace the agitation of my missed opportunity with the Red, if that's even what it was.

The day is beautiful, with late summer showcasing the island's lushness. It's the perfect setting for my climb to the western overlook.

Several yards up the winding path, I stumble upon a blackberry bush laden with ripe fruit. "Jackpot," I whisper, tasting a few before moving on.

The path meanders upward through towering cedars, and I take my time, letting the rhythmic crunch of my boots on gravel soothe my earlier frustration. The sun tracks steadily overhead while I climb, warm enough to make me grateful for the

intermittent shade. When I reach somewhat level ground again, I'm rewarded with what has to be one of the most beautiful vistas on the island.

I have a 360-degree view up on this peak, overlooking the shoreline with the water in one direction and the island's smaller hills and valleys in the other. I'm sure I can see all the way to Canada from up here.

And to top it off, there are even more blackberries growing in thick brambles all the way down the steeper west-facing side of the mountain. I gather the ones I can reach, then find a warm, smooth rock to sit and bask in the beauty this place offers.

Closing my eyes, I tilt my face up to the warm afternoon sunlight. The gentle breeze carries the briny scent of the sea and the sweet aroma of the blackberry bushes surrounding my perch. I breathe deep, savoring this moment of solitude.

A screech from above makes my eyes fly open. What appears to be two large birds wheel in the sky, talons extended as they grapple. I squint against the sun's glare to make out their shapes—eagles, perhaps, by the look of their massive wingspans. I'm transfixed as they tumbled through the air in a tangle of talons and flapping wings.

So magnificent, and so clearly dead-set on murdering each other. But when I shade my eyes, I realize they aren't birds at all.

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Finn

The gold dragon bursts through the clouds ahead of me, sunlight glinting off scales that shimmer like molten metal. Two weeks of chasing this ancient pain in my ass halfway across the world, and somehow we've both crossed a barrier that should have repelled us. Not that I'm complaining; it beats tracking him across another frozen wasteland.

His energy signature blazes against my senses, raw and unstable—pure animal instinct after centuries trapped in this form. I need to end this before he decides to introduce himself to the artists below. That would be... messy.

I bank hard, following his trajectory, but my thoughts keep sliding back to that glass-working studio. To her. The way the fire responded to her touch, how her aura pulsed with untapped potential. The flash of recognition in her eyes before?—

Focus, Sullivan.

He wheels away from me, but I've got his measure now. Every dodge, every evasive maneuver, tells me exactly how far gone he is. The ancient dignity's still there in how he moves, but there's no strategy to it anymore, just pure animal reaction. His wings catch the light as he turns, and for a split-second, I glimpse the dragon he must have been before captivity twisted him: majestic, powerful, every movement precise as a blade.

I surge forward, almost getting close enough to grab those gleaming wings, but he rolls at the last second, bringing his massive tail around in an arc that would've

crushed my skull if I hadn't anticipated it. Damn. Even weakened, he's got fighting instincts bred into his bones.

He drops into a steep dive. I follow, gathering speed. The Court wants him alive and preferably unharmed, which means this needs to end in submission, not injury. And there's really only one reliable way to subdue a feral dragon. Better to do it up here; the last thing those artists below need is a front-row seat to dragon dominance. It's not exactly quiet or gentle.

The gold dragon vanishes into a bank of clouds, his energy signature momentarily lost in the thick mist. Damn it. Two weeks of pursuit, and I lose him now? But then I catch a flash of brilliant gold near the shoreline. He's perched atop what looks like a collapsed building, wings drooping with exhaustion.

My heart sinks at the sight of the ruined structure. The Court's going to love that expense report. But as I spiral down for a closer look, I realize the destruction isn't fresh. Vines thread through weathered boards, and—well, hello there. A family of mice has turned an old sofa into prime real estate, completely unfazed by the ancient dragon using their backyard as a rest stop.

He spots me just as I'm about to land. He launches himself at me, but his movements are slower now, the toll of centuries in captivity evident in his labored wingbeats. We crash onto the cabin's remains, and I finally manage to get a solid grip on him. His scales burn hot beneath my claws as we grapple across the rotting boards.

I try to steer us away from the mouse nest—no need to add homeless rodents to today's chaos—but that moment of consideration costs me. He twists free, powerful haunches coiling, and then he's airborne again. I launch after him, cursing my soft heart for small creatures. Though I swear those mice are watching us with the jaded expression of creatures who've seen weirder things destroy their home. The fact that they're even coexisting on an island overrun by dragons is enough of a testament to

their mettle.

I catch him quickly, talons holding him as we spiral upward, my attempts to mount him still thwarted by those thrashing wings and twisting tail.

He manages to push back briefly, tail catching me across the chest, and damn , but he's still strong. We grapple mid-air, climbing higher and higher as I try to find the right angle to penetrate him. But he's not making it easy, all thrashing power and primal fury. Every time I get close, those powerful haunches shift just enough to deny me entry. The bastard might be feral, but some part of him remembers how to avoid submission.

A particularly violent twist nearly dislodges my grip entirely. His jaws snap inches from my throat, golden eyes blazing with challenge. For a heartbeat, I think he might actually break free. But I didn't spend the years since my ascension hunting ferals by letting them get the upper hand. I lock my hind legs around his haunches, using his own momentum to spin us into position.

We break through a layer of clouds, his scales gleaming like he's made of actual gold. My cock throbs with need now—partly from the natural dominance response, partly because he's magnificent, even in his feral state. For a moment, I almost forget I'm trying to subdue him.

Then those wicked talons rake across my flank, reminding me that this is still very much a fight.

Come on, Your Ancientness. Let me fuck some sense back into you.

But he's not interested in being mounted by anyone. Another failed attempt to penetrate him sends us tumbling through the air, wings tangled, both our cocks fully extended now as the dominance drive takes over. And we're running out of sky.

We're falling now, spinning through open air in a tangle of wings and tails. The Sound rushes up to meet us, and shit —the last thing I need is a waterlogged ancient dragon. Cold water and dragon fire don't mix well, and he's unstable enough already.

I spot a promising bluff off to the south. If I can just angle our descent... But he's fighting me every wingbeat of the way, still trying to assert dominance even as we plummet. His cock rubs against mine as we grapple, and the friction isn't helping my concentration. At all.

Then I see her—the glassblower from earlier, perched on the very bluff I'm aiming for. Because of course she is. No time to change course now; we're coming in hot, literally, and all I can do is try to avoid crushing her as we land.

If you can even call it a landing.

The sudden impact rattles my teeth, but he's up and at me almost instantly. He lashes out, but his sluggish swipes betray his flagging energy. I finally get the upper hand, leaping at him and pinning him to the ground just as he spins to try to launch into the air again. He hits belly-first, and I don't waste the opportunity, finally— finally—getting the angle right. My cock slides home in one powerful thrust, and his answering roar probably registers on seismic equipment. But he's pinned now, caught between my teeth at his neck and my cock buried deep in his ass, and that's all that matters.

Time to remind this ancient what submission feels like.

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Rachel

D ragons . It's a pair of dragons in a bloody mid-air battle, hurtling toward the island.

I track their dizzying descent, concerned they might crash into the water if they don't regain control soon. The Sound's currents are strong and unforgiving; if they end up in those icy depths, they might not resurface.

The dragons continue to plummet, wings beating frantically, but unable to halt their freefall. From this distance, they still look like birds, save for their brilliant scales. And the fact that they're too large, too sleek, too stunningly beautiful.

I gasp and scramble to my feet, heart pounding. They're headed straight for the overlook. Straight for me .

I lurch backward off the big rock, raising my arms instinctively as the massive reptilian forms fill my field of vision in a blur of red and gold.

At the last possible second, their wings snap out, arresting their plunge mere feet from where I stand. The downdraft from their wingbeats flattens the tall grasses and blackberry brambles, the unexpected gale nearly bowling me over.

I stagger, eyes squeezed shut against the maelstrom of leaves and dirt swirling around me. When I dare crack them open again, the two dragons are crouched amid the crushed foliage, chests heaving and eyes blazing as they square off against each other.

My heart races while they clash, their roars echoing through the air. The red one lunges at the gold and the gold lunges back, wings snapping wide and talons raking. They both lash out in whirlwind of strength and fury, their movements blurred in a dangerous, powerful dance.

The Gold dragon tries to hold its ground, but the Red is relentless. With a final, powerful surge, the Red knocks the Gold off-balance, sending it crashing onto its belly. The Red is on top of it in an instant, his jaws clamping around the back of the Gold's neck, eliciting a low growl from his adversary.

My eyes widen as I realize the true nature of their struggle. The dragons' genitals, previously sheathed and hidden by their thick tails and powerful hind legs, are now on full display, protruding from beneath the skin of their bellies. Both are hard and engorged, revealing their gender without any doubt. The sight is both shocking and mesmerizing, and a flush of heat spreads through my body as I watch the primal display unfold.

I've only heard stories about the power plays of dragons, the way their hierarchical customs demand this display of dominance and submission to cement the pecking order. Who rules, and who follows the ruler's commands. Dragons draw strength from their partners' sexual energy, so reveling in pleasure means siphoning energy from the satisfied.

I remain frozen, caught off-guard by the animalistic scene. Should I leave? The thought flickers through my mind, but my feet stay planted, my gaze riveted on those colossal shafts.

The Red's magnificent appendage traces a path along the Gold's tailbone, eliciting a whine as the Gold obediently shifts his tail aside. Beneath him, his golden cock sways, its length brushing the rocky ground, its girth matching that of my forearm.

I watch, transfixed, as the Red dragon mounts the Gold, each movement he makes deliberate, dominant. The Gold arches his back, eagerly accepting the Red's cock, his wings thrashing, beating against the earth, clawing at the dirt beneath them. Then, with a sudden grip, the Red sinks his teeth deeper into the nape of the Gold's neck. A groan, raw and resonant, escapes the Gold, a complex sound that weaves pain with pleasure, echoing around us.

I'm spellbound by this ancient interplay of power and submission. The rhythm of their union is like a siren's call, stoking my desire. My body responds, a pulsing warmth building between my thighs, echoing the beat of the dragons' fucking.

Despite the violence inherent in the way the Red holds the Gold pinned to the ground, pounding into him, the Red takes his time, thrusting with a twist of hips that makes the Gold moan in a way that sounds like a plea. After several moments, the Red twists his tail around between their legs and coaxes the tip to wrap around the Gold's cock and begin stroking.

My mouth drops open as I take in the revelation about their tails—so limber, so versatile. I find myself propped back on my rock once more, hands braced on the edge, gripping tight to resist the urge to touch myself. Despite the resistance, a fiery ache pulses within me, my core a hot, throbbing knot. My panties are soaked, the wetness seeping through my shorts and glaringly evident at the tops of my inner thighs.

With a final, powerful thrust, the Red climaxes, his body shuddering with release. The Gold follows suit, his own orgasm causing him to arch his back and let out a guttural cry that resonates through the stillness of the overlook. Beneath him, his cock shoots a long, fat geyser of creamy fluid that arcs out over the cliff to spatter across the blackberry bushes beyond.

The Red remains on top of the Gold for several breaths, until the Gold shrinks,

morphing into a muscular, dark-skinned man with hair in short black cords held back from his face by a golden band. He remains limp and panting, neck still clamped in the Red dragon's jaws.

Finally the Red transforms as well, releasing his quarry and sitting back on his heels.

The school's recent visitor rests panting on his knees, watching the other man intently. His crimson hair clings to his forehead, beaded with perspiration. A swath of dark ink covers one half of his back and one shoulder, a dragon scale pattern reflected on his human skin.

I hold my breath. Time seems to stand still while the two men recover. Then, slowly, they become aware of my presence. I'm panting from the shock and arousal of the whole display and still too stunned to get myself under control. The dark-skinned Gold sees me first, amber eyes fixing on me from where he lies. He lifts an eyebrow and says something in a language I don't recognize.

The Red turns to see what caught his partner's attention, a slow smile spreading across his face as he takes me in. My entire body tingles with awareness. This is what it feels like to be the target of a dragon's focus; it's even more intense than the too-brief glance he gave me earlier.

"Well, hello," he says in a voice as smooth as silk and just as seductive.

My heart races as he rises and begins to approach, curiosity and desire reflected in his gaze. My body responds without thought, my breath quickening as the distance between us shrinks.

The other man, still dazed from his recent transformation, remains on the ground. His skin shimmers, a wave of golden scales rippling across every inch of him before dissipating back to the original rich brown. He tenses and shakes his head.

"Why were you fighting him? And then..." I wave my hand, unable to articulate the scene I just witnessed.

The red-haired man pauses, his gaze flicking to the golden dragon before returning to me.

"The subdual. Zahrax is has been feral for centuries," he explains. "I am Finn, a bounty hunter in service of the Sixth Ascension Dragon Court. I found a remote base of the Ultiori that had been holding Zahrax captive in the wilderness of Siberia. He was unfortunately left behind even after their destruction—lost, forgotten. When I opened the doors, he escaped. I've been chasing him ever since. I finally caught up to him here."

My eyes widen as I take in this information. The Ultiori were the dragons' enemy, vanquished only a few years ago. The thought of one of them being held captive for centuries, then forgotten, sends a shiver down my spine.

"He needs more energy to regain his strength, and more importantly, his sanity," Finn continues. "Energy he could absorb easily, if you're willing to help." His gaze tracks down my body once again, the light flickering behind his pupils betraying his peek at my aura. There's no way to hide how aroused I am, even if my inner thighs weren't sticky with wetness. "You are primed already, but I can help you build up more energy before giving it to him. If you are willing."

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Zahraxis

Submission burns in my blood, foreign and unsettling. In three thousand years, no dragon has ever forced me to yield. I was a king among my kind, dominant in all things. Yet the Red one's bite lingers at my neck, a mark of ownership that should enrage me, but instead anchors my scattered thoughts.

Sanity seeps back through that unwanted bond, bringing with it memories of what I once was. Of language and civilization, of protocols and power. Even my own name emerges from the feral haze.

Zahraxis . The clarity is... not unwelcome, though my pride rebels at how it was achieved. More disturbing still is the lingering heat his dominance awakened, a pleasure I cannot deny, despite my shame.

But such thoughts scatter like smoke when I sense her . My beast claws at the surface of my skin, demanding release. The girl— my treasure—watches me with those knowing eyes while the Red one whispers in her ear. Understanding filters through the tenuous connection forged by his submission bite, letting me grasp his words even as my own tongue refuses to shape this modern speech.

"Better not wait too long. He's barely clinging to his humanity. He could hurt someone on this island if he dragons-out again."

No. I would never harm her. But my scales ripple traitorously beneath my skin, betraying my weakened control. She meets my gaze, her pulse visible in the delicate hollow of her throat. "What do you need me to do?"

Everything. Nothing. The words tangle in my mind, ancient and modern bleeding together until only a growl emerges. The Red one, Finn —the name comes clearer now through our connection—touches her with casual familiarity that should enrage me. Instead, watching his hands slide down her arms sends heat coursing through my blood.

"Let me guide you," he tells her. "May I undress you first? And are you willing to take my breath? It will enhance the energy you have to offer."

Her nod sets something wild thrumming in my chest. When Finn's mouth hovers over hers, I taste his magic on the air: spice and smoke and power. She breathes him in, and I feel the echo of it through our shared bond. Her aura flares brighter, more potent, calling to my beast with irresistible force.

My claws dig into earth as Finn positions her, displaying her like an offering. The scent of her arousal hits me like a physical blow. Precious. Perfect. Mine. But when I try to voice this claim, only ancient words emerge, and Finn chuckles at my frustrated snarl.

"He clearly hasn't forgotten how to act like an entitled ass," he says, then adds in the dragon tongue, "Patience, brother. Let me prepare her properly."

Brother. The word resonates strangely through our bond. No dragon has called me this since... since...

But the memory slips away as Finn's lifts her shirt, then peels away the snug undergarment beneath. His disrobing reveals small, pink-tipped breasts that make my tongue fork involuntarily.

When he cups her breasts and feathers thumbs across both tips, she moans, the sound piercing straight through my careful restraint. Scales cascade down my arms as I

watch Finn's thumbs stroke, then he slides both hands down her belly to her waist, pushing the remaining garments down her legs. Once she's bare, her scent reaches me fully and I can't help but emit a low growl of yearning. His gaze fixes where his fingers stroke, slowly caressing closer to her very core. Then he parts her gently and begins to tease, drawing more of those sweet sounds from her throat. The magic building in her core pulls at my beast, promising power, promising pleasure, promising things I'd forgotten could exist.

I try to rise, to go to her, but my limbs shake with the effort of maintaining this form. Golden light ripples across my vision. Too much. Too strong. The beast surges forward, and this time I cannot hold it back.

The shift rips through me in a blaze of golden light. My true form emerges, larger and more powerful, yet still weakened by centuries of captivity. Her scent hits me stronger now, my dragon senses overwhelmed by the potency of her arousal. My cock slides free of its sheath, heavy and aching as I tower over them both.

Finn's presence steadies me somewhat—our new bond a thin thread of sanity in the storm of need. He holds her against him, and through my haze, I understand his words.

"Don't make any sudden movements. I'm going to let go of you, and I want you to back up slowly."

But she isn't afraid. Her eyes gleam with desire as she watches me, and when Finn releases her, she slides back onto the stone, legs falling open.

The silent invitation draws a rumble from my chest. My tongue flicks out, catching the sweet musk of her need.

The last threads of my rational mind know I should resist; she's so small, so fragile

compared to my dragon form. But her scent calls to something primal in me, something that knows she was made for this.

She tenses, and even as my mind whirls, I catch her hesitation. Something about my state displeases her. The Red one's earlier claiming left its mark on more than just my pride.

Finn barks a command in dragon tongue—an order to wait. The effort to stop tears through me like fire, but I obey. His dominance still echoes in my blood, much as it shames me.

I look down at myself, understanding her concern even through my feral state. My cock, now fully extended and aching, bears evidence of my earlier submission, my sticky seed clinging in muddy streaks. A growl builds in my chest, not at her—never at her—but at my own weakness. Dragon fire burns in my throat, and I let it loose, directing it with what little control remains in me. The flames dance across my scales, leaving me clean, pristine. Worthy of my treasure.

Her gasp of alarm pierces me, but there's wonder in her eyes too. The scent of her arousal spikes sharper, headier. She wants this—wants me—even in this form. The realization makes my scales shimmer with renewed heat.

I try to rise, to go to her, but my limbs betray me. Centuries of captivity have left me weaker than I can bear to acknowledge. The beast inside me rages at this display of frailty before my intended mate. Golden scales ripple across my skin in waves I cannot control.

Her power calls to me, a siren song of magic that could restore me. Through our nascent bond, I feel her need matching my own. The Red one's presence adds another layer of complexity. His earlier dominance has transformed into something else, something that makes my blood burn hotter.

Too much. The sensations overwhelm me; her scent, her power, the lingering echo of Finn's bite, the maddening weakness in my limbs. My control splinters as the beast surges forward, demanding full release. This time, I cannot fight it. I do not want to fight it.

The last thing I register before surrendering completely to my dragon form is her voice, thick with desire.

"I need to be fucked, Finn. And I need him to do it."

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Rachel

It's as if another voice has spoken using my mouth. I can't quite believe what I just said, but at the same time, my entire body shivers with certainty that it's true.

Finn climbs onto the stone beside me, nudges a finger beneath my chin and turns my face up to look down into my eyes. He studies me for a beat, brow furrowed, then scans my body, his nostrils flaring and his irises flickering to take in my aura.

Then he gives a slow nod and kisses me, deep and long, with another infusion of his breath seeping down my throat to flood every cell in my body.

When he pulls back, he says, "To keep you loose and relaxed. When you're ready, slide back to the middle of the stone and let him come to you. When you have the chance, grab his horns, because it's the one way to assert control when he's in this state. You can try to command him while you hold his horns. He may listen. If he doesn't, I'll be ready to rein him in. But if you can take him like this..."

He pauses, looking like he doesn't believe I can do it. Then he smirks. "If you can, you are perhaps the most impressive human woman I've ever met, and I'm over five hundred years old."

"I'm not exactly human, though, am I? I'm Bloodline."

"True. But we don't know the extent to which the higher races' blood can alter a human's DNA. We do know that your fated mate's power can influence yours."

"I don't have a mate," I say.

"Don't you, though?" He smiles as he steps back off the rock, though there's a hint of concern in his eyes. "The island's magic wouldn't have let us through if you weren't meant for at least one of us."

Finn's gaze flicks to Zahraxis, who's watching our exchange with predatory intensity.

Before I can respond, Finn transforms again, back into the enormous shape of the magnificent red dragon. He lingers close behind Zahraxis, watchful, but giving the Gold dragon space.

As he suggested, I scoot back to the middle of the rock, then beckon. "You want a taste, big boy? Come and get it."

He looms over me, muscles trembling, golden aura sparking with unstable need.

Zahraxis' lips peel back from terrifyingly sharp teeth and his long tongue darts out. He's close enough for the twin tips to tickle my ankle, which I move to the side, parting my legs wider as I prop myself up on both hands. I'm spread open for him, and he closes in, hot breath gusting over my entire body and making my nipples ache.

His big head barely fits between my spread legs, and I watch in a trance as his snout comes close, nostrils flaring with each long inhalation of my scent. His golden horns are within reach now, so I do as Finn suggested, reaching up to grab hold of them both and using them like handlebars. The moment my hands squeeze the thick, bony lengths, his narrow, slitted pupils flare wide.

"I've waited three thousand years," he growls, the deep voice rising from his dragon throat barely recognizable as English. "I will not take you gently."

I stare deep into those onyx depths, then speak with as much command as I can muster. "Lick me, Zahraxis."

A low rumble that's almost a sound of surrender rises from deep in his chest and he dips his head, his long tongue sliding out and gliding over my sodden flesh. I hold my breath, not sure what to expect, but unprepared for how glorious a sensation it is to have his fat tongue sweeping up between my thighs. He laps once, then lets out another long, humming growl, his wings stretching wide as he dips his head for a second taste.

This time he goes slower, starting lower, the tapered tips of his tongue tickling my ass before teasing their way up between my folds. I let my head fall back and moan in pure bliss when his velvet tongue passes across my swollen clit.

He teases small circles around my sensitive nub until I'm panting and heated, so close to climax my pulse thrums in my ears. Just when I think he's going to bring me over, he hums and slides his tongue a little lower, pushing it into my opening.

"Oh fuck," I mutter, tilting my hips up to take his tongue deeper. I raise my head to look down between us, mesmerized by the sight of his fat golden tongue stretching me and filling me. It feels as good as a cock, but it isn't one. I want more.

Looking deep into his eyes again, I say, "Fuck me, Zahraxis. Fuck me with that gorgeous golden cock."

Finn growls and shakes his head. "Careful, Rachel. He will do what you ask if you're holding his horns in this state."

"I want him to. I don't know how I know, but I can take him."

It isn't even a certainty I can quantify beyond what my body is demanding. His

tongue itself is huge, twice the size of a human man's cock.

He withdraws his tongue and nuzzles me with a resonant moan that I'm sure is some form of gratitude. Then I find myself scooped into one enormous talon and pulled toward him, legs dangling off the edge of the stone. He lifts his head and spreads his wings for balance, giving me a clear view of the huge, shining cock jutting up from between his thighs.

He has a solid grip on my body with one big claw, adding the other to cradle me perfectly across both. I hold onto his forearms, stomach fluttering with a mix of intense desire borne of the ache lower down, and mild fear that I really won't be able to take him.

He lines me up with the tapered tip, and the heat of his cock is so delicious against my aching need, I try to spread wider to invite him in. And as he tilts his hips, his cock pushes deeper, and beyond all expectation, I take him.

My eyes roll back at the utter pleasure of the stretch of his cock and the growing sensation of fullness. I don't look because I can imagine it well enough, and can't believe something that big can actually fit inside me. But he does, and when he starts to fuck me slowly, every stroke is heaven. I am limp in his grasp, accepting him fully into my body. His big, scaled head nuzzles against my neck, forked tongue caressing. When another sensation teases my breasts, I crack my eyes enough to find Finn's big, red-horned head is close, his tongue teasing my nipples.

They're both mine; Finn said it just moments ago, but I still don't quite believe it. They're just horny dragons, one needing my orgasm so badly he's willing to be gentle while he fucks me with his golden cock.

I finally look down past Finn's tongue to the vast thickness of Zahrax's shaft. My clit protrudes, made more prominent by the tight stretch, and Finn trails his tongue lower,

finding it and teasing. I don't feel any of the pain I would expect. All I feel is pleasure and fullness, and a certainty that I could take even more if he had more to give. My body just accepts him. All of him, to the hilt.

And he fucks me so perfectly, every stroke hitting all the right nerves. Both dragons send me spinning to the very pinnacle of pleasure until I feel like I'm floating, impaled over and over on a rod designed only to give me pleasure.

My climax hits like an avalanche, the smallest crumbling slide into surrender that grows and grows into a full-body spasm originating between my legs. My core clenches hard around Zahraxis' cock, and he roars his pleasure, the bellow echoing loud around the plateau we're on. Then he's filling me to bursting with his hot semen while Finn continues to lap at my clit.

They draw a second orgasm from me right on the tail of the first, then a third. Then Zahraxis lifts me up, cradling me against his chest. His cock slides out of me, leaving a flood of his spend cascading down my thighs.

It's then that I realize why he repositioned me. Finn is at my back, sliding his cock into the emptiness left behind. I'm cradled against the muscular, golden-scaled chest of one dragon while the other fucks me from behind.

Finn isn't as gentle as Zahraxis, but his intensity seems borne of need more than any lack of control, and it's a need I crave to be the one to fill. I want him to use my body for his own pleasure more than I've wanted anything. He tickles my spine with his tongue as his claws dig into my hips, holding me still while he slams deep, over and over. When he comes a few moments later, I'm with him, crying out another climax so intense tears flood from my eyes and drool smears across Zahraxis' scales.

As I come down, Zahraxis shifts, still holding me close to his body as his limbs morph into those of the muscular human man he was earlier. When Finn moves to

join us, Zahrax is emits a low warning growl, his arms tightening around me possessively.

"Mine," he says, the word clear despite his limited English. His golden gaze fixes on Finn with challenge, though his depleted state betrays him—his skin rippling with scales he can't fully control.

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Finn

Rachel clings to Zahraxis like a baby, almost sobbing despite having been given nothing but pleasure. The sight stirs something protective in me—this powerful little mate who just took a full dragon cock like she was born for it, now overwhelmed by the intensity of it all. Through our newly forged bond, I feel an echo of Zahraxis' empathic response to her emotional state. As a Gold, he's particularly susceptible to others' feelings, and her vulnerability hits him hard.

I hold up my hands in a placating gesture, though I bristle at his possessive display. "Brother, you're too weak to maintain this stance right now. Let me help."

He bares his teeth, but another ripple of scales across his skin betrays him. He loosens his hold on Rachel fractionally as I settle beside them, though he keeps her pressed firmly to his chest while I rub gentle circles on her back. Her aura still blazes with need, even after multiple climaxes. Bloodline indeed, and a powerful one at that.

We fall silent, but Zahraxis begins murmuring to her in the ancient tongue. The raw display of emotion surprises me; even Golds of his generation kept their empathic responses tightly controlled, seeing such vulnerability as weakness. Yet he weeps openly as he cradles her, piercing her with a golden gaze that speaks of more than just possession. Her overwhelming emotions have stripped away centuries of rigid control, forcing him to feel and express everything.

She leans up to kiss him, and I feel a surge of power as they share breath. She drinks him in while golden smoke swirls around her head, and I harden again at the sight. Their combined auras pulse with renewed heat.

I smell both our seed still flowing from her, yet her aura flares with fresh arousal. She shifts restlessly, and when Zahraxi releases her enough to let her straddle him, he grips her hips with possessive intent. He flashes a warning at me as I move to kneel behind her.

"She needs more," I say quietly, letting him see the truth of it in her aura. "You can see it."

He growls, but his cock twitches as she sinks onto him. He locks eyes with me even as he guides her movements. The bond forged by my earlier dominance thrums between us, complicated now by shared desire.

Rachel smiles down at his tear-streaked face before tilting her head back, exposing the elegant line of her throat as she works her hips. When I lean in to kiss her shoulder, Zahraxi tenses beneath her.

"Mine," he says again, but with less heat. His depleted state makes him vulnerable, needing what we can give him, even if his pride rebels against it.

I watch them carefully, gauging the moment. "You can fit," Rachel breathes, as if sensing the tension. "I want you both."

Zahraxi mutters something, but loosens his grip on her hips slightly. I move closer, sliding my palm down her back. "Let us help her," I murmur to him. "Let us help each other."

Rachel lifts her hips, sliding off his rigid length, leaving him bare and glistening with her slick arousal.

I grasp his cock alongside mine, pressing our tips together, both in challenge and as an offering. After a moment's hesitation, he gives a sharp nod, though his expression

suggests this isn't over—just postponed until he's stronger.

Rachel eases back as I guide her, steadying her hip. She takes us both in one delicious stroke, drawing groans from both of us before we begin moving in a slow, hard rhythm.

Zahraxis cups her face, staring deep into her eyes as he whispers in the ancient tongue.

"What's he saying?" she asks breathlessly. "I want to know what he's saying."

"That all the centuries of torture were worth it, since they brought him here to you."

She frowns and touches Zahraxis' cheek. "You didn't deserve torture. If we're fated, I have to believe we'd have found each other no matter where you were before."

He shakes his head and wraps his arms around her, thrusting harder. I match his pace, losing myself in the perfect synchronicity of our shared pleasure. Our combined climax rocks through all three of us with less desperation than before, but no less intensity.

As we slow to a stop, I withdraw carefully and recline beside them, propping my head on my hand. I trail my fingers down Rachel's back while she rests her cheek on Zahraxis' chest.

"It wouldn't have happened any other way," I say, unable to keep the sadness from my voice. "Because if he had not been captured by the Ultiori then, he would have followed through with the Renunciation, as all his generation did in those years when the Ultiori rose to power."

"I've heard of that, but I don't know how it works. All I know is the dragons don't do

that anymore."

"The Ultiori are gone now, so there is no need to limit our numbers and hide our young." The words taste bitter as I speak them, memories of my own hibernation rising unbidden. "Any offspring he had would have been in the first generation of hibernating dragons. Every generation only allowed itself to live for five hundred years or so, reproducing in the first few decades, then sending their young to hibernate for five centuries while the elders did their best to survive the Ultiori scourge."

Rachel shifts against Zahraxis' chest, her aura flickering with growing understanding. "Renounce their lives?" She glances at Zahraxis, who nods solemnly. "You mean they'd commit suicide?"

The raw horror in her voice echoes my own childhood grief. "The act allowed them to concentrate the power into a single generation, which made each generation the strongest it could be, giving it an advantage against our enemy. It also protected the youngest among us until we were old enough and resilient enough to hold our own against them."

Her aura pulses with empathy as she processes this. "That's so sad. You only got to know your parents for how long?"

"Between ten and twenty years, give or take." I trace idle patterns on her back, drawing comfort from her warmth. "I was one of the youngest in my generation, going into hibernation when I was only twelve years old. It was... the hardest thing I've ever had to do." The admission comes easier than expected, perhaps because of how our energies have mingled, creating something new and right between the three of us.

She reaches out to touch my face, stroking her fingertips down over my jaw. The

tenderness in her touch makes my throat tight. "You were just a baby, and your parents were gone when you ascended, weren't they?"

"They left me enough to be comfortable," I say with a shrug that doesn't fool either of them. Through our strengthening bond, I feel Zahraxis' surge of protective anger on my behalf.

He shifts beneath Rachel, reaching for my hand where it rests against her lower back. He squeezes with surprising gentleness, then speaks in halting English. "Unfair to you and them. We must make right."

"The Ultiori are gone, friend," I remind him, though his concern warms something deep inside me. Our shared dominance has evolved into something more complex, more equal.

Zahraxis looks unconvinced, seeking confirmation from Rachel. She shrugs, her skin glowing with the residual magic of our joining. "I don't know much, only that it's true. There was a war and everything, but I only heard about it all after the fact. Like, literally a few weeks ago, after I got to this island. I didn't know much about the higher races at all before I learned I was Bloodline."

He cocks his head at this, his calculating expression belying his apparent confusion. The Gold in him reads the truth in her aura even as he asks, "What is 'bloodline'?" His gaze flicks to me for explanation.

I start to answer, then stop, suddenly aware of how much there is to explain. "It's a long story, brother."

"I am free. I have time," he says, pulling Rachel closer to press their foreheads together. "Time enough for knowing my mate. If you are Bloodline, I will learn what Bloodline means."

I can't help but chuckle at his determination, even as duty tugs at me. "I get it, she's a surprising blessing to find at the end of a feral rampage. But I have a duty to return you to the Court. I shouldn't waste time. Or your precious energy, for that matter."

"Isn't he better? He seems fine, after all this." Rachel waves at our naked bodies, still flushed and tangled together. Her aura pulses with contentment, and I have to admit, she has a point. The energy she's given us both has done wonders, especially for Zahraxis.

"As depleted as he was, it will take time for his reservoir to heal enough to hold power for long," I explain reluctantly. "You gave more than enough to fill my well for a week, but his has shrunk over the centuries to the point he can only retain a thimbleful. We have a long journey ahead of us to reach the city where the Queen lives. She's waiting for us. The Court has magic strong enough to help nurse him back to full health, not to mention dragon law requires lost dragons go through a reintegration process if they've been out of touch for more than a few decades."

Her aura dims at this, and she stares down at the stone between us. "You just got here," she says in a small voice that makes my chest ache.

Zahraxis tightens his arms around her and glares at me. "Stop. You're making her sad."

She clears her throat, visibly gathering herself. "You don't have to leave immediately. Look at him—he's clearly better than when you started fighting. The school has lodgings for the visiting instructors. It would be safe for him to stay there, regain some strength, learn about... everything." She gestures at the world around us, and I feel her hope rising.

I prop myself up on one elbow, torn between duty and desire. "The queen?—"

"Will understand if you take a day or two to help him acclimate before dragging him into court politics." She lifts her chin in challenge, and damn, if it isn't adorable. "And you can't tell me you've never bent the rules before."

I laugh, caught out by her perception. "You've got me there. But?—"

"But nothing. I'm here. He clearly needs me. I feel it, and I bet you do too. You don't think we should be separated right after finding each other, do you? I'm your mate, aren't I? You wouldn't have landed on this island if you weren't meant to be here. I mean, maybe it's some other student who's meant to be yours, but I'm willing to bet it's me."

My tongue forks involuntarily at her words, anticipating the marking that will claim her as ours. She notices, her nipples tightening in response.

Zahraxis rumbles in agreement. "We must stay. The queen can wait a day more. I can survive."

I shake my head, but there's no heat in it. "You weren't exactly fending for yourself these past centuries, brother. You were a prisoner."

"Even more reason to let him rest," Rachel argues. "And you look like you could use a rest too. How long have you been chasing him?"

"Two weeks," I admit, knowing I've lost this battle.

"Then you both must be exhausted. It's nice here, and the food is delicious. I'll bet between the three of us, we can convince April to let you stay in staff housing tonight. We can figure out the rest tomorrow."

The way our auras twine together, I know she's right. A day won't hurt, and we all

need time to adjust to this unexpected bond. The queen will understand; she's always had a soft spot for fated mates.

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Rachel

It takes Zahraxi a few tries of exhaling golden breath to conjure clothing, only for everything to fade to shimmering wisps before our eyes. This prompts Finn to huff with impatience and blow a gust of red smoke at the other man. Once it finally dissipates, Zahraxi is clad in simple cargo shorts and a plain white T-shirt that hugs his cut torso. It offers a stark contrast to his dark skin and the gold band holding his coiled hair back from his face.

"Couldn't we just fly?" I ask after watching the whole production. Zahraxi sneers, earning a chuckle from Finn.

"He doesn't have the power to shift without losing his mind again, and he won't ride. It would be beneath him," Finn explains.

So we're walking.

The hike back down the mountain with the pair of men at my side feels like a dream, and I have to surreptitiously pinch myself to prove it's real. It's slow going, due to Zahraxi pausing to snack on berries and request words for every random object on the path.

"Where is he from?" I ask.

"He understands you. You can ask him," Finn says, nodding toward the other man.

"I'm not sure I can understand him, though," reply, cheeks heating. Languages were

never my strength.

Zahraxis returns from up the path, grinning and holding up one of the ripest, juiciest blackberries I've ever seen. He holds it out to me and says, "Open, Rachel."

My stomach flips at the very idea that he wants to feed me. I open, and he gently places the berry on my tongue. The moment I bite down and the sweet-tart juice blasts across my tastebuds, his mouth is on mine, warm and sensuous, his tongue teasing past my lips to share the treat. My legs go wobbly and my entire body heats, but Finn is behind me, shoring me up against the onslaught of Zahraxis' power.

Finn utters a warning to the other man, and when I open my eyes after he pulls away, there's a faint wisp of shimmering golden smoke swirling around my head.

"Wh-what was that?" I ask.

"Feels good?" Zahraxis asks.

"Don't waste your power, brother," Finn says. "Let's rest first, okay?"

Zahraxis waves dismissively, glancing at me with renewed hunger. "She has more to give."

My panties are uncomfortably wet again, and I almost wish I hadn't put them back on, but the only thing less comfortable than wet panties are wet denim shorts. Zahraxis' comment makes me wonder what my own aura looks like. When I activate my dragon sight to look at each of them, I'm met with banked desire from both men. Zahraxis' aura is an agitated crackle of red and gold lightning, volatile, but under control; Finn's is a steadier pulse of magenta—desire mixed with patience.

We start walking again, and I hesitantly touch Zahraxis' arm. "Can you tell me about

your home?"

A shadow passes over his eyes, and I wince. It was entirely the wrong question, wasn't it?

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to pry," I say quickly, giving his arm a gentle squeeze. "You don't have to talk about it if you don't want to."

To my surprise, Zahraxis gives me a small, wistful smile. "It was... beautiful," he says, his voice low and melodic. "The Nile, flowing like liquid gold. The temples, reaching to the sky. And the people, vibrant and full of life."

He pauses, his gaze growing distant. "I was a protector, a guardian," he says in halting, but evocative English. "My purpose was to watch over the land and its people, not just rule. Then... the Ultiori came, and everything changed."

I listen, enthralled, as Zahraxis describes his homeland—the lush greenery, bustling markets, and intricate architecture. His words grow more confident as he continues, like a long-dormant muscle warming up.

"We were dragons, yes, but also builders, scholars, artisans. Our cities thrived with commerce and learning. The libraries at the capitol were the grandest in the world." His expression softens. "And there, in the palace gardens: my hoard... my mates."

"It was my home," he murmurs, deep sadness in his eyes. "And I failed to keep it safe."

Finn, who has been silent until now, reaches out to squeeze Zahraxis' shoulder. "You did all you could, brother. The Ultiori's evil was not your fault."

Zahraxis nods, but guilt weighs heavily on him. I take his hand, lacing our fingers

together. His thumb caresses my skin as Finn's magenta aura pulses with a mix of empathy and caution.

"What happened?" I ask gently.

He draws in a deep, shuddering breath. "Nikhil came. Bringing shadows of death, they descended upon our realm. Took my mates... my freedom." His free hand clenches at his side. "I fought, but they overwhelmed me. Dragged me into darkness, trapped me in a cage. Experimented on me."

Tears prick at the corners of my eyes, the gravity of his loss overwhelming—his home, his mates, his very identity, all ripped away. I squeeze his hand and rest my other hand on his forearm.

"I'm so sorry, Zahraxis," I murmur, my voice thick with emotion. "But you're free now. And you're not alone."

He turns to me, golden eyes shimmering with a vulnerability that tugs at my heart. Slowly, he interlaces our fingers, his touch electric. "Yes, Rachel. Not alone. You and..." His gaze shifts to Finn. "...my brother, we are... family now. And now that I am free, I will make Nikhil pay."

I shoot an alarmed glance at Finn. His jaw is clenched, and he takes a steadying breath.

"I've already told you, Nikhil is not the enemy. He was under the control of a mad nymph for all those years. He has atoned. It was his blade that ended her life at the end."

Zahraxis emits a derisive snort. "I remember the scent of the nymph who came into my cell with him all those times. If he allowed himself to be controlled by her, then

he is weak and should not be allowed to live."

Sensing the need to distract him, I slide my free hand up his biceps and squeeze. "You said you had mates. Does that mean you had children too?"

Finn's eyes widen in alarm, and I immediately realize my mistake. Zahraxis emits a low growl accompanied by flames licking out from between his teeth.

"My mates and children were captured by those monsters, my kingdom ravaged. You see why I must seek retribution."

Hoping for some way to defuse his rising anger, I glance at Finn. "How long has it been?"

"Over three thousand years. Some of his children survived. The youngest of them were among the dragons who built the first hibernation temple, and his grandchildren were part of the first generation to hibernate. You have a second chance, brother. Don't waste it chasing a man who is not your enemy. And I know it's likely not a consolation, but had you not been captured, you would have been bound by the laws of renunciation that came after the Ultiori's rise. You would not be alive to chase this misplaced need for revenge."

Zahraxis frowns. "A barbaric practice. It should never have become law."

Finn nods gravely. "It remained so until after my generation's Ascension. Six generations of dragons committed ritual suicide to protect the next."

His voice is subdued, and I reach out to touch his hand. Some of his tension eases as he twines his fingers with mine, glancing down at me. His red eyes flicker with inner fire, and a tingle courses up my arm from where we touch. A mirror to that sensation travels up my other arm like their essences are speaking to each other through me.

Zahraxis stiffens, his grip tightening on my hand as he notices the dual energies flowing through me. "My treasure," he says, voice rough and possessive. When I peek at their auras, I see his golden energy surge outward, trying to overwhelm Finn's crimson essence where it touches me.

"Brother," Finn says carefully, "things have changed while you slept. The old ways?—"

"Dragons do not share treasures," Zahraxis cuts him off, his limited English precise and cold. "My harem was vast, my treasures many. But they were mine ." Pain flashes in his eyes. "All taken. But she..." He pulls me closer. "She is mine now."

"The island's magic wouldn't have let me through if that were true," Finn counters quietly. "Fate brought us both here?—"

"Fate brought me here," Zahraxis corrects. "You followed."

I try to maintain my grip on both their hands even as their energies war around me. There's something right about how their powers feel when combined, but Zahraxis' desperate need to reclaim what was stolen from him blinds him to it.

The school comes into view, and I reluctantly pull away from them both, trying to ignore how Zahraxis' aura follows me like a possessive shroud.

I lead them to the main lodge where the school offices are located on the first floor. Delicious scents waft from the kitchen adjacent to April's office, and both dragons falter, betraying their hunger. Honestly, after our marathon of epic sex on the overlook, I'm pretty famished myself. But first things first.

I knock on the door, and a male voice calls, "Come in!"

When I push the door open, a disheveled April is taking a seat behind a desk, while a smug-looking Stuart leans against the window frame, licking his lips like a cat who just polished off a saucer of cream. I school my expression, because who am I to judge?

"Hi, Rachel," April says. "What can I do for you?"

"It's not me, so much as them," I say, gesturing behind me, only to look back and find the hallway empty. Frowning, I step back out the door and peek around the corner. "Guys? Over here," I call to the pair who've strayed into the kitchen and stolen a basket of dinner rolls, much to the chef's dismay.

They meander back and follow me into April's office, hands and mouths full of fresh bread. I grimace. "Sorry. I guess they're hungry."

She laughs. "There's no stopping a hungry dragon. I see you met our visitors, then?" Her gaze flits between the three of us, one eyebrow rising.

Stuart lets out a soft snort. "I'd say she's more than met them. So you're the reason these two made it through the barrier, then. I wondered who the lucky student was. Nice work, Rachel. I had a feeling you were powerful enough for multiple mates."

My cheeks heat. "I'm more surprised than you, I guess. But I was wondering if there's any visiting artist housing available? I don't think the dorm is the right place to take these two tonight. Zahrax is going to need to rest and, um, replenish before they leave for ..." I trail off, glancing at Finn. "Where is it you have to take him?"

"The queen's offices are in New York City." He eyes me as if there's more he wants to say, but refrains.

I cock my head toward him and look at April. "It's a long trip. Can you help?"

"Give me just a moment," she says, rising and leaving the office. She heads down the hall, where I can hear her knock at the door to one of the other offices. There are a handful of administrative staff who help manage the school, including April's mother, Cassandra, who is the head of security for the entire island, and the school's assistant director and facilities coordinator, whose offices are on this floor.

A moment later, she returns with a smile. "Eagle's Rest is empty for the next week. It's a little out of the way, but that might be preferred. It's cleaned and ready for guests, and the cupboards should be well stocked with non-perishables. If you need to stock up with more supplies for cooking, just fill out a form with the kitchen staff and they can get you what you need."

"We won't be staying more than a day," Finn says. "I don't like keeping the Court waiting. And if Rachel agrees, I'd like her to come with us."

My heart leaps into my throat. "Y-you do?"

"We can come back for you after, but I don't know how long it will take. They may have another task for me. They may want to keep Zahraxis longer. We just found you, Rachel." His gaze is imploring, uncertain.

Zahraxis reaches out and clasps my hand in his much larger one, his golden eyes fixed on Finn as he brings my knuckles to his lips. The gesture is deliberate, challenging. "Come," he says simply, his gaze shifting to me with an intensity that makes my breath catch. "We belong together."

When I woke up this morning, the last thing I expected was for the day to take me here. I planned to hone my skills in the hot shop. Work on the set of Venetian-style goblets I've been making to send home to my mom. Maybe sketch some new designs for a show the school is putting together at a gallery on the mainland. Not wind up being nailed on a bluff by two dragons who are probably my fated mates.

Two dragons.

I glance between both men, then up at April and Stuart, who seem to be waiting for my answer too. April offers a comforting smile. "It's both the easiest and most difficult decision you'll ever make. Trust me, I get it. It doesn't mean you have to give up who you are, Rachel."

Taking a shaky breath, I sit up straighter. "I want this. It's just that it's been so long since I got here, and I was starting to get comfortable. It was starting to feel like home."

"You can come back and teach, if that's something that interests you," Stuart says. "You've already outpaced the other students. Your skills are as strong as some of the best glassblowers I've met."

"Either way, we're not going anywhere," April says.

I swallow a lump in my throat, touched by their support. Turning to Finn, I say, "Let me have the night to think, okay?"

Before he can answer, Zahraxis says, "We will wait."

Finn's eyes narrow at the other man. Then he chuckles. "I guess we're waiting."

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Zahraxis

The last rays of the setting sun filter through unfamiliar trees, casting strange shadows across this new world. I breathe deep, tasting salt air and pine, so alien compared to the lush river valleys of home. No sweet lotus blooms here, no rich soil carried on the wind from the flooding Nile. Even the moisture in the air feels wrong—heavy and cool, rather than the sultry warmth I knew in my kingdom. Ahead, Finn strides with the easy confidence of one who belongs in this time. Beside me, Rachel's presence anchors me, her aura a steady flame that keeps the feral edge of my nature at bay.

The weight of stares from the evening meal still prickles against my empathic senses, curiosity, envy, and desire all mixing together from the gathered students. Such open fraternization between races would have been unthinkable in my time. Yet here they all dwell together, sharing meals and mates as if the ancient boundaries between the higher races never existed.

My skin ripples with scales I cannot fully control, the borrowed power from our earlier coupling already beginning to fade. Rachel's nearness helps, but the chaos of this new world threatens to overwhelm me. Strange buildings line the narrow path, filled with humans whose auras pulse with mixed bloodlines. Behind us, shouts and laughter echo from some manner of game with a ball and net being played in the dying light.

"I never imagined humans could so openly bond with our kind," I say, the modern tongue still clumsy on my lips. "And not just dragons... but other races too. Even nymphs." The word tastes bitter. "It's like a mosaic of connections."

Rachel's aura brightens with pride as she explains, "It's about what's in your blood here, not who you are. The Bloodline means humans like me carry the legacy of your world in our veins."

Finn glances over his shoulder, his crimson aura steady in the twilight. "The Council ended those old laws, Zahraxis. They don't persecute dragons who share a human mate anymore."

I rub my chin, considering this. The very concept challenges everything I was taught, yet I cannot deny the rightness I feel my growing bond with them both. "You let nymphs in your midst without care, even tolerating their mating your friends. These are such drastic, sometimes troubling changes... I need to see more to believe it."

"There were laws preventing you from sharing? Your possessiveness makes so much more sense now." Rachel nudges me playfully, her aura sparking with mischief.

"I'm not being possessive. We are fated, Rachel." The words come out harsher than intended, but as I watch Finn's confident movements ahead of us, something shifts in my understanding. I crossed the barrier first, drawn by Rachel's presence like a lodestone to true north. Yet Finn followed, something that should have been impossible, unless...

Was it Rachel who allowed his passage? Or perhaps our combined fates? The island's magic would have barred him otherwise, just as it bars all who aren't called by their destined mates.

Finn stops and faces us, his expression serious, but kind. "If what you've seen so far isn't enough, you're just going to have to trust me," he says, his aura glowing with certainty. "The queen herself will confirm it once and for all when we see her."

I study them both, feeling the threads of fate that bind us. Everything I knew,

everything I believed, unravels and reweaves before my eyes into something new, something I never imagined possible.

We reach the cottage door, a warm light spilling from a window onto a porch furnished with strange wooden chairs. Finn steps aside with a gesture I don't understand. "It's your island. I will let you lead tonight," he says softly to Rachel.

Ancient instinct drives me forward to secure our shelter. I grasp the door's latch, only to be brought up short by Finn's sharp words.

"Have you never heard of the concept of 'ladies first,' you dick?"

I pause at the threshold, confusion warring with irritation. "Ladies... first?" The foreign phrase sits awkward on my tongue as I glance between Rachel and the doorway. Scales ripple across my skin, born of discomfort rather than weakness this time. "This is... a custom?"

"An important one," Finn says, his tone dry. "Along with please, thank you, and not treating your mate like property."

Pride demands I challenge this, but something in Rachel's aura stops me. I step back, gesturing for her to enter first. The movement feels stiff, unnatural, yet when I catch her approving smile, something warm unfurls in my chest.

She reaches for my hand, squeezing gently. "You'll get used to it."

I grunt, unable to form a proper response, but follow her inside. Still, I position myself between her and Finn—some habits cannot be so easily broken.

The strange room holds more unfamiliar furnishings: soft-looking seats and a stone hearth. So different from the polished marble halls and gilt-edged furnishings of my

palace, where every surface spoke of power and permanence. Even more jarring after centuries in bare cells of cold steel and concrete. Yet there's a comfort in these simple trappings that speaks of home rather than dominion. For a moment, I feel myself slipping, the strangeness threatening to overwhelm my tenuous control. Rachel's aura pulses with concern, and I struggle to find words to explain.

"In my time, protection was... not a matter of custom. It was an imperative. Empress Belah—may her reign be eternal—she taught that the strong must shield the weak. It is honor."

The words come slowly, pulled from deep within as I try to bridge the vast gulf between my world and this one. I meet Rachel's gaze, willing her to understand.

Finn leans against the doorframe, arms crossed but aura surprisingly gentle. "Honor is timeless, Zahraxis," he says. "But how we exercise it... that changes with time. Where I come from, we practiced courtly behavior to show respect, not just protection."

"Courtly behavior?" The concept seems foreign, yet something about it resonates.

Finn steps forward, his movements deliberate. "Yes. It's about more than just guarding someone's safety; it's about showing them they're valued, that their comfort and happiness matter to you."

He demonstrates with a deep bow before Rachel, taking her hand to press his lips to her knuckles. Though his eyes hold mischief, the gesture carries genuine respect.

I watch them, feeling the warmth of their combined auras wash over me. "And you believe this 'courtly behavior' does not undermine strength?"

"On the contrary," Finn replies with a soft laugh as he straightens. "It takes a stronger man to put others before himself."

His words strike something deep within me, challenging centuries of belief. I feel Rachel's hope and Finn's patience flowing through our shared connection.

"Then... I will strive to adapt," I say, humbled by the realization that true strength may take forms I never considered.

Rachel steps closer, placing her hand on my arm. "And we'll help you."

Her touch sends fire through my veins, my control slipping as scales ripple beneath my skin. The bones of my face shift, my vision sharpening as my pupils narrow to slits. When I look down at her, the sight of her parted lips makes my ancient blood burn.

"Perhaps," I manage, my voice thick with need, "there are other ways I might demonstrate my... esteem for you."

Finn moves closer, his heat radiating against my awareness. His voice drops low as he adds, "And maybe there are ways we can both show you just how much we respect you."

Rachel's hands find both our chests as she looks up at us. "I think I'd like that."

I wrap my arm around her waist, pulling her flush against me. This possessive gesture feels different now—less about ownership and more about reverence.

Finn slides to her side, his hand settling on her hip below mine. "Let us worship you tonight."

"I think we have a more immediate concern." Rachel's hands cradle my face, her thumbs stroking my cheeks. Even through my slipping control, I feel her determination to help steady me.

"What do you propose we do?" Finn asks, his voice rough with promise.

"Make me come. Just for him." Her eyes lock with mine, fierce and knowing. "Honor goes both ways, doesn't it?"

Then she rises to claim my mouth with hers, and I surrender to this new way of being.

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Rachel

Kissing Zahraxis feels like coming home, a sensation of sinking into familiarity, comfort, and safety. My entire body hums with contentment when he tightens his hold on me, and I slide my arms up and around his neck. I'm still very aware of Finn's proximity, even with my eyes closed. His aura is a faintly buzzing caress against my skin as he moves a hand between me and Zahraxis to unfasten my shorts.

I let out a soft gasp when he slides his hand down over my pelvis and his fingers find my slick, pulsing clit. The surge of pleasure in me incites a groan from Zahraxis, who cups my ass through my shorts. After a brief squeeze, his hands slide back up, then down again, this time pushing my shorts off my hips entirely. I manage to shimmy halfway out of them, leaving them hanging around one ankle, then lift one knee and hook it around Zahraxis' hip.

"There we go," Finn murmurs, his strokes broadening and quickening over my hot flesh now that his hand has more freedom to move. I'm rocking against his touch, hovering at the very edge of climax and hoping he doesn't make me wait too long.

Zahraxis releases my mouth, panting against my shoulder. "Hurry," he says. When I look into his eyes, his pupils are narrow slits again, and his aura is a wild shimmer of hunger and arousal.

"Talk to me," I breathe. "Tell me what you want to do to me tonight."

His golden eyes flash with heat as he leans close to my ear, his voice a deep rumble that vibrates through my entire body.

"My Raelesha," he purrs, the ancient name rolling off his tongue like honey, the weight of it making me long to know what it means. "I want to worship every inch of your body until you're trembling. Until you forget every word but my name." He slides his hand possessively up my side. "Until the only thing anchoring you to this world is my touch. Because you anchor me, my Raelesha. My soul anchor."

He nips at my earlobe, his breath hot against my skin, his words going from my ear straight to my clit. "I want to taste your pleasure, to feel you shatter in my arms again and again until you can take no more." He cups one breast and he gently thumbs my nipple, the sensation only increasing my need.

"Please," I gasp, my hips rocking desperately against Finn's rapidly stroking fingertips. "Don't stop. Tell me more."

He growls low, tightening his grip. "My beautiful Raelesha. I'm going to spread you open and taste you until you scream. Then I'll bend you over and drive my cock into you deep and hard, claiming every part of you." His voice grows rougher, more primal. "I'll fill you completely, make you mine in every way possible. Let me feel you come apart for me, precious one. Show me how much you need me."

He lifts me up higher, and I sling the other leg around him as his long fingers stray farther down beneath my ass until the tips graze my wet opening. Finn adjusts quickly, finding my clit again and rubbing even faster.

The second Zahraxis probes my opening, pressing his thick fingertips against it, pleasure grips me hard and fast. I cry out, my core spasming. Clutching at his head I slam my mouth to his, and he greedily kisses me back, as if drinking in every last drop of the magic that flows into him from my orgasm.

Finn lets out a needy groan as my wetness coats his fingers, and the sounds of his stroking grow even lewder with the fluid coating his hand. I'm still soaring when

Zahraxis breaks the kiss. Finn clutches the back of my head with his free hand and turns me toward him, capturing my mouth as he pushes several fingers deep inside me and fucks me with them, still stroking my clit with his thumb to draw out my climax as long as possible.

I ride the pleasure until I can't bear it any longer, though for the first time, I'm positive I can feel the connection between the three of us, and the distinct flow of energy from me into each of them—like a magical conduit links our very souls.

Finn seems to sense my waning need for contact, perhaps through the connection we share, and gently extracts his fingers. He starts to wipe his hand on his shorts when Zahraxis grabs his wrist.

"Do not dare waste such precious ambrosia." He draws Finn's hand to his mouth and encompasses the other man's glistening fingers between his lips.

Finn chuckles. "We aren't nymphaea, brother. We've already gleaned the best magic from her Nirvana."

"This is the icing on the cake," Zahraxis says after sliding his lips off Finn's fingers before sucking them back into his mouth again. Finn lets out a soft grunt of surprise, his arousal nudging hard against my bare hip.

Weak from the orgasm, I step back and fall into one of the nearby armchairs, leaning over to unfasten my boots and remove them, along with my socks and the rest of my clothing. The two of them are still locked together by Finn's fingers.

I'm only half-joking when I say, "Wasn't I enough for you both? Is this why dragons weren't supposed to share before?"

Finn chuckles, finally extracting his fingers from Zahraxis' mouth. "Trust me, you're

more than enough. But dragons are greedy creatures." He extends his hand to help me up from the chair. "Speaking of which, we should get you cleaned up before round two. Care to show us where the shower is?"

I accept his hand, my legs still a bit shaky. "I haven't actually been in this cottage before, but they're all laid out similarly." I glance around, spotting the hallway. "Should be through there."

Zahraxis follows close behind as I lead them down the hall, his hand settling possessively on my lower back. The bathroom is indeed where I expected, and it's more luxurious than the dormitory facilities—a massive walk-in shower with multiple shower heads dominates one wall. It's clear the architects considered the potential for more than two people sharing a shower, or at least one large dragon.

"Perfect," Finn murmurs, reaching in to turn on the water. Steam quickly fills the space as he adjusts the temperature. "Ladies first?"

I step under the spray with a contented sigh, letting the hot water sluice over my skin. When I open my eyes, both men are watching me with identical hungry expressions. Neither has gotten off since our encounter on the mountain, and their rigid cocks betray just how much they need release.

"Are you going to join me, or just watch?" I ask, trailing my hands over my body to rinse away the sweat from our earlier activities.

Zahraxis moves first, stepping into the shower and pulling me against his chest. His skin is blazing hot compared to the water, and I can feel the ripple of scales trying to emerge just beneath the surface. His cock presses insistently against my stomach.

"Still struggling?" I ask softly, reaching up to touch his face.

He nods tersely. "The magic helps, but..." He trails off as Finn joins us, closing the glass door behind him.

"But it's not enough for a permanent fix," Finn finishes. "That's why we need the Court's help." He reaches for a bottle of shower gel, squeezing some into his palm. "For now, though, let us take care of you."

The first touch of his soapy hands on my shoulders is heaven, and when he digs his thumbs into my muscles, I melt. "That feels amazing."

Zahraxis watches intently as Finn moves his hands lower, then seems to catch on. He takes some of the soap himself and begins washing my front while Finn works on my back. Their touches start innocent enough, but soon become more purposeful, more intimate.

Finn slides his hands down to cup my ass, his fingers dipping between my thighs from behind. "Fuck, you're still dripping wet," he murmurs, probing gently. "We made quite a mess of you, didn't we?"

Zahraxis growls in approval, his hands moving to my breasts. When he rolls my nipples between his fingers, I arch back against Finn with a gasp.

The way they work in tandem leaves me breathless—Finn's thorough attention between my legs while Zahraxis lavishes attention on my breasts. When Finn's fingers curl inside me, Zahraxis captures my mouth in a searing kiss that makes my knees weak.

"Such a good girl," Finn murmurs against my neck. "You took both of us so well on the mountain." His fingers slide out of me, and he reaches around to rinse his hand in the spray. "Think you can handle us both again?"

Before I can answer, Zahraxis breaks our kiss to say something in his ancient language that makes Finn laugh.

"What did he say?" I ask breathlessly.

"He said if I don't hurry up and fuck you, he's going to lose his mind." Finn's hand slides back between my legs, this time focusing on my clit. "But I think we should make him wait. Show him how sweet torture can be."

Zahraxis growls, the sound vibrating through his chest where I'm pressed against him. His cock throbs against my stomach and his skin ripples with another wave of golden scales.

"Please," I whimper, caught between wanting to help Zahraxis and loving how Finn's fingers are working me closer to the edge. "I need you both."

"Soon," Finn promises, his skilled fingers never stopping their rhythm. "First, come for us again. Show him how much power you have to give."

Zahraxis' hands tighten on my breasts, his touch growing rougher as his control slips. The contrast of his demanding grip and Finn's measured strokes drives me wild. When Zahraxis bends to take one of my nipples in his mouth, the dual sensations push me over the edge.

My orgasm sends a fresh surge of magic into Zahraxis, and his eyes flash molten gold. Without warning, he lifts me up, my legs instinctively wrapping around his waist.

"Need you," he growls, pressing me back against Finn's chest. "Both of us. Now."

"Demanding, isn't he?" Finn chuckles against my ear, but his cock is rock hard where

it presses against my ass. "What do you say, Rachel? Ready to take us both again?"

"God yes," I breathe, already aching to be filled.

Zahraxis shifts his grip, spreading me wider as Finn's hands settle on my hips. They work in perfect sync—Zahraxis pushing into my pussy while Finn lines himself up behind, waiting for Zahraxis to pull out again. The stretch when they enter me together is exquisite, drawing a long moan from my throat that echoes off the shower walls.

"Fuck," Finn groans, his fingers digging into my flesh. "So tight like this."

Zahraxis responds by capturing my mouth in a hungry kiss, his tongue plunging deep as they begin to move. Every thrust drives them deeper, filling me completely. Steam swirls around us as their movements grow more urgent, more demanding.

"Mine," Zahraxis growls against my mouth between kisses. "My precious treasure, taking us so deep." His words are punctuated by sharp thrusts that make me gasp. "You were made for this, made to take our cocks, to give us your power."

"She sure was," Finn agrees, his voice rougher than usual. "Fuck, Rachel, you feel amazing wrapped around us both. So wet, so eager for it." He nips at my shoulder, then soothes the spot with his tongue. "Want us to fill you up again? Make you come so hard you can't see straight?"

The combination of Zahraxis' formal possessiveness and Finn's raw desire drives me wild. I can only nod, too overwhelmed by sensation to form words.

"Need to feel you come," Finn groans, his thrusts growing harder. "Gonna make you come on our cocks, feed him all that sweet magic while we pump you full."

Zahraxis lets out a sound that's more dragon than human, his skin rippling with scales again. "Yes, give us everything. Let us feel your pleasure, precious one. Show us how good we make you feel."

Pressure builds inside me with every thrust, their cocks working in perfect rhythm now, the stretch of them both excruciatingly arousing. Steam swirls around us, but the heat of their bodies is even more intense. Zahraxis' chest rumbles with constant growls while Finn's breathless curses fill my ear.

"That's it," Finn pants, his fingers digging into my hips. "You're close, aren't you? I can feel your aura swelling. So much power."

"Please," I whimper, caught between them as the tension coils tighter. "I'm so close."

Zahraxis shifts his grip, changing the angle just enough that stars burst behind my eyes. His golden gaze locks with mine, burning with need. "Come for us, Raelesha."

The use of that ancient name combined with a particularly deep thrust sends me over the edge. I cry out as pleasure rips through me, my body clenching hard around them both. Magic surges between us, wild and potent.

Zahraxis roars, his release flooding into me as the magic hits him. Finn follows a heartbeat later with a string of curses, his hips jerking as he empties himself deep inside me.

For several long moments, we stay locked together, panting and trembling under the spray. Finally, Finn eases out of me with a groan, helping steady me as Zahraxis lets my feet touch the floor again.

My legs are shaky, but they both keep steady hands on me. The shower's still running hot, washing away the evidence of our passion even as I feel their combined release

trickling down my thighs.

"You okay?" Finn asks softly, reaching for the soap again.

I nod, leaning back against his chest while he begins washing me again—more practically this time. "Better than okay. How's our golden boy doing?"

Zahraxis' eyes are heavy-lidded, satisfaction evident in his relaxed posture. The constant ripple of scales has subsided, though his skin still gleams with a faint metallic sheen. "The magic... it helps," he says, his voice rough but steady. "But I need more."

"You'll have more," I promise, reaching up to touch his face. "We have all night."

Finn hums in agreement, his hands gentle as he finishes cleaning me. "Let's dry off and get you two into bed."

Zahraxis runs his hand along the marble tile of the shower wall, something distant in his eyes. "It has been... a very long time since I've known such luxuries." He doesn't elaborate, but the shadow that crosses his face speaks volumes.

I reach for his hand, twining our fingers together and drawing him out of whatever dark memory has gripped him. His haunted eyes refocus on me, softening as Finn turns off the water.

We step out into the steam-filled bathroom, and Finn wraps me in a thick towel before grabbing one for himself. Zahraxis takes the third towel, but barely uses it, instead letting his elevated body heat dry him naturally.

"Which way to the bedroom?" Finn asks, running his towel over his hair.

I peek out into the hall. "Should be the last door."

The bedroom is spacious, with a king-sized bed that suddenly seems very inviting. My body is pleasantly tired, but I can feel the thrum of magic still coursing through me, ready to be shared. Now that I understand what it feels like to share it with a partner, I recognize it for what it is. It isn't just arousal; it's as if my arousal is a beacon for something more, drawing magic to me like iron filings find a magnet. It starts to fade as my arousal does, but I know now that this is what Zahraxis needs so rather than let my desire subside, I want to do everything I can to keep it heightened.

Zahraxis moves past me to the bed, his movements carrying an innate grace despite his weakened state. He pulls the covers back, then settles against the headboard, extending his hand to me. "Come, Raelesha."

And there it is again: the desire rising once more at the very sight of this beautiful man. Even though he's no longer hard as steel, every inch of his body is a feast for the eyes.

Finn's warm chuckle follows me as I crawl onto the bed and lie down against Zahraxis' side. "Pace yourself, brother. We have all night to restore you. And perhaps I should say the same to you, Rachel. I don't want to break you. Your magic is too delicious."

Finn nestles himself against my back and pulls the covers over us, but none of us are ready to properly rest. I've never been as insatiable as I am with the two of them; between Zahraxis' tender kisses and Finn's nips along my shoulders, I'm aroused and ready within moments of the lights going out. They take turns this time, giving me time to come down from each orgasm before entering me again, and again.

The night becomes a blur of pleasure and power, Zahraxis deriving more magic from each coupling. Sometimes they take me together, stretching me to my limits with

their thick cocks buried deep, their bodies moving in perfect sync. Other times they pleasure me with their tongues and fingers until I'm flying so high I'm aware of nothing but their touch.

By the time the moon is high, we're all spent, tangled in the sheets and one another. I'm nestled between them, my head on Zahrax's chest while Finn spoons me from behind. The steady rise and fall of their breathing nearly lulls me to sleep.

"Better?" I murmur against Zahrax's skin, noting how the rippling scales have almost completely subsided.

He hums in affirmation, his fingers trailing lazy patterns on my shoulder. "The magic holds now. It is... easier to maintain control."

"Good," Finn says, his voice heavy with satisfaction. "Maybe now you'll believe me about waiting a day before we head to the Court."

Zahrax doesn't respond, but his arm tightens around me slightly. I drift off to sleep, body still buzzing with pleasure.

Finn

I lie awake watching my sleeping mates, tracking the steady rise and fall of their breathing. Rachel curls against my chest while Zahraxis spoons her from behind, his arm draped possessively across her waist. The moonlight streaming through the windows turns his dark skin to burnished bronze, while Rachel's pale flesh seems to glow.

My tongue forks involuntarily, aching to draw the ancient sigils that will bind them to me forever. The marks of a true mating bond are sacred, permanent—not something to be rushed even when every instinct screams to claim them now. Rachel needs to understand what she's agreeing to first.

Still, there are other options. My fingertip traces the delicate curve of Rachel's shoulder, drawing the ancient sigil of claiming. The proto-mark shimmers crimson for a moment before fading into her skin. She sighs in her sleep, pressing closer as I reach across her to draw the same mark on Zahraxis.

The temporary bonds settle into place, and suddenly I can feel them both more clearly: Rachel's magic thrumming strong and steady, while Zahraxis' power ebbs and flows like a tide, still unstable from centuries of captivity. Even without seeing their auras, I know exactly how much energy each holds, and how their magic twines with mine through these ephemeral marks.

Through this new connection, I sense the exact moment Zahraxis' control begins to slip. His magic surges chaotically, ancient memories threatening to overwhelm his tenuous grip on the present. The humanity drains from him like water through sand. I

recognize the pattern, and know we have mere seconds before his body surrenders to its true form.

"Brother," I whisper, but he's already too far gone. His eyes snap open, pure gold with slitted pupils, no trace of humanity left in them.

I move fast, extracting myself from Rachel's embrace and rolling away from the bed just as Zahraxis lunges. We crash into the far wall, his partially shifted claws raking my shoulders as I spin us around, pinning him face-first against the cool plaster.

"Easy now," I murmur, keeping my voice steady despite the way he thrashes against my hold. "I've got you. Let it go."

He snarls, his skin rippling with more scales. I kick his legs wider apart, using my body weight to keep him immobile. Through our proto-mark, I feel his confusion, his fear, the way pleasure wars with pride as I establish dominance.

I bring my fingers to my mouth, coating them thoroughly with saliva before reaching between us to work him open. He fights harder, golden scales flickering across his skin as he tries to shift fully. My cock hardens against his ass, responding to his challenge even as I maintain control.

"That's it. Submit to me and the darkness will fade."

A soft gasp from the bed draws both our attention. Rachel watches us with wide eyes, her hand already between her legs. The sight of her touching herself while watching us makes my cock throb, and I feel an answering surge of need from Zahraxis through our proto-bond.

I spit into my palm, slicking myself before driving into him hard. The pleasure hits like lightning, amplified by the bond until I can barely tell where my sensations end

and his begin. I sink my teeth into his neck, tasting blood as he finally submits. He goes limp in my grip, his chaotic magic beginning to steady as my dominance overtakes him. I set a brutal pace, each thrust sending sparks of shared pleasure through our temporary bond.

Rachel's soft moans join the sound of flesh meeting flesh. Zahraxis reaches toward her with one trembling hand, and she doesn't hesitate to take it. The moment she joins our circuit, everything intensifies. I feel the surge of her magic flowing through all three of us as she works herself faster, her pleasure feeding into our shared connection.

"Good girl," I say, my voice rough but steady. "Feed him your magic. Help me bring him back."

Her climax triggers a cascade of power that flows through all three of us. Zahraxis shudders beneath me, accepting both my dominance and her magic. I drive into him harder, letting my own pleasure build as his energy finally stabilizes. The feedback loop through our proto-marks is almost overwhelming—his pleasure, her arousal, my need all spinning together into something transcendent.

When we come, it's almost simultaneous, my release flooding him as his cock pulses untouched. Rachel's second small orgasm completes the circuit of power between us, anchoring Zahraxis completely. Golden scales ripple across his skin one final time before settling. The amount of energy we've managed to give him this time far surpasses our earlier couplings, thanks to the proto-marks, though I couldn't have foreseen they'd be so useful so soon. I only wanted to feel closer to them both in case the Court objects to a formal mating.

I withdraw carefully, guiding both my mates back to bed. Rachel turns to face Zahraxis, her fingers tracing the fresh bite mark on his neck. I settle behind her, pressed close against her back.

"Are you okay?" she asks him softly. "That looked... intense."

Zahraxis chuckles, the sound warm and steady now. "You worry for me?"

"Well, yeah. I mean, that's twice now I've seen him basically force you, and you're both... rather well-endowed." Her cheeks flush adorably. "I just want to be sure you're actually okay with it."

He shifts closer, his lips brushing teasingly against her neck. "You wish to know how it feels?" His teeth graze her skin, making her gasp. "When dragon goes feral, only primal acts can reach them. The pleasure..." Another gentle bite. "It anchors us. Returns control."

"So you're not hurt?"

His laugh tickles her skin. "No, little mate. Not hurt."

She twists to look back at me. "Is this something you have to do often as a bounty hunter?"

"It's part of the job," I say, trailing my fingers along her shoulder, feeling the echo of the proto-mark beneath her skin. "Feral dragons need a stronger dragon to subdue them, to remind them who they are."

"And it's always... like this? Between you and the dragons you hunt?"

I pause, feeling the weight of our growing bond. "No." Through our connection, I let them both feel the truth of it. "This is different."

Zahraxis rumbles agreement, and I feel our shared energy resonating perfectly between us. Rachel drifts off to sleep again, but this time I let myself relax. The

proto-marks pulse gently, a promise of the permanent bond to come.

Rachel

Last night's dinner had been an exercise in awkward restraint, with both dragons attempting to behave like they weren't literally just tag-teaming me on a mountain overlook. This morning feels more relaxed, though we're still drawing enough stares to make me want to sink under the table.

The dining hall's familiar breakfast bustle washes over us while Zahraxis and Finn demolish what looks like half the kitchen's morning production. I'm pretty sure most of the students are torn between fascination and mild horror at the sheer volume of food they're consuming.

Zahraxis looks... different. His golden eyes are alert, but calm, studying the room with the intensity of a scholar who's just been released from a very long, very terrible library. Gone is yesterday's feral energy, replaced by something more controlled. Still, that edge of ancient power radiates from him like heat from a banked fire.

When Sean approaches our table, guitar case slung over one shoulder, Zahraxis tenses slightly. The territorial vibe is strong enough that I have to suppress a laugh. Finn just offers an easy smile as Sean's mates join him—Naia with her fluid grace, and Elias, who looks like he wandered in from backstage at some indie rock concert.

"Feeding a small country?" Sean comments, settling into an empty chair. His own plate holds a modest serving of eggs and toast.

"Dragons need sustenance," Finn says with a grin. "Especially before a long journey."

"Journey?" Naia asks, her silvery eyes brightening with interest. "Where are you headed?"

"The Queen's Court in New York," I explain, watching Zahraxi from the corner of my eye. "We leave today."

Naia's brow furrows. "You're not planning to fly that whole distance, are you? That would take days, on dragon wing."

"It is the proper way," Zahraxi says, his voice carrying that formal edge I'm learning means he's holding himself in check.

"There's really no need," Naia says, leaning forward with genuine warmth. "I could drift you there in moments. The River is particularly strong here on the island?—"

Zahraxi's fork warps in his grip. "We will not trust our fate to nymphaea magic."

The temperature around us seems to drop several degrees. Naia draws back, her silver eyes widening as she registers the hostility rolling off him in waves. Even Sean tenses, though Elias just continues picking at his breakfast as if he hasn't noticed the sudden shift in atmosphere.

"Brother," Finn says quietly, "Naia isn't?—"

"You know what her kind did." Zahraxi's words come out in a near growl. "Three thousand years in darkness, trapped in her web of power?—"

"Meri." Naia's soft voice cuts through his building rage. "You speak of Meri, the Banished One." Her expression holds such profound sadness that even Zahraxi pauses. "She destroyed more than just the dragons, ancient one. My people still weep for what she took from us."

I reach for Zahraxis' hand under the table, feeling the tremors of barely contained power coursing through him. His skin ripples with golden scales, but he doesn't pull away from my touch.

"The nymphaea weren't her allies," Finn explains, his tone gentle, but firm. "They were her first victims. She killed their satyrs, corrupted their magic?—"

"And yet you would have us trust?—"

"Trust that we learned from her evil," Naia interrupts. "Trust that we guard our power more carefully now, and that we understand the price of corruption." She meets his gaze steadily. "The Haven cast her out for breaking our most sacred laws when we should have executed her. That failure haunts us still."

I notice Elias has stopped eating, his dark eyes focused intently on Zahraxis. There's something almost hypnotic about his stillness—not indifference as I first thought, but deep concentration.

"Your pain echoes in every breath," he says, his voice carrying that musical lilt I've come to associate with the turul. "But so does her truth." He gestures to Naia with an elegant tilt of his head. "We turul hear more than words, ancient one. We taste truth on the wind itself. Your captors wielded corrupted power, yes, but Naia's magic runs pure as a mountain stream."

Zahraxis' jaw clenches, but some of the hostility bleeding into his aura begins to fade. "You claim to know truth from lies?"

"I hear the song of it," Elias confirms. "As clearly as I hear the remnants of darkness still clinging to your own breath from your imprisonment. That darkness isn't you, just as Meri's corruption was never truly part of the nymphaea's River."

Finn leans forward, pressing his shoulder against mine. "He's right, brother. The world you knew is gone, but something better has taken its place. The races are stronger together now."

Zahraxis tightens his grip on my hand, though not painfully. When I peek at his aura, I see the volatile swirls of gold beginning to settle into something steadier. His gaze shifts between Naia and Elias, then to Finn, before finally settling on me.

"You trust this?" he asks softly.

I consider my answer carefully. "I trust that the world you knew and the world that exists now are different places. I trust that holding onto old hatreds only gives her more power, even in death." I squeeze his hand. "And I trust that you're strong enough to choose a different path."

A muscle tics in his jaw, but I see the impact of my words in the way his aura pulses with warmth. After a long moment, he inclines his head toward Naia. "How does this... drifting work?"

The tension eases as Naia explains, her voice taking on a teacher's patient tone. "The River connects all bodies of water, and through them, all places. I simply guide us along its current to our destination. You'll feel a moment of coolness, like diving into a pool, then we'll emerge exactly where we need to be." She pauses, then adds with a slight grimace, "Though I should warn you, most first-timers find it a bit... unsettling. You might want to wait until you've digested breakfast."

"Unsettling how?" I ask, eyeing the mountain of food my dragons have consumed. Because apparently, when you're dealing with magical teleportation, it's totally reasonable to be concerned about digestive logistics.

"Like being dragged through a whirlpool by your belly button," Sean supplies

helpfully. "You'll probably throw up."

Great. Nothing says "welcome to magical transportation" like the potential for spectacular vomiting. Just what I always dreamed of when imagining my first interdimensional travel.

"Lovely," Finn mutters, then glances at the wall clock. "Still, if we go soon, we could reach the Court before they close for the day. It's already almost noon in New York."

Zahraxis nods. "Very well. We accept your aid." The words seem to cost him something, but there's a nobility in the way he forces them out.

Naia beams. "Perfect! Why don't we meet at the eastern shore in half an hour? That small cove near the art gallery would be ideal—the currents are particularly strong there."

My stomach does an anxious flip that has nothing to do with magical transport. Very soon I'll be leaving the island—leaving everything I've known for the past month—to dive into a world of dragon politics and ancient magic. My heart begins to race, but before the panic can take hold, I feel both dragons shift closer, their warmth steady and reassuring on either side of me.

"We will keep you safe," Zahraxis murmurs, his formal tone softening just for me.

Finn's hand finds my knee under the table. "Always," he agrees.

Looking between them, I realize that home isn't necessarily a place. Sometimes it's a feeling, a certainty, a belonging. And somehow, in the space of a day, I've found mine with these two impossible creatures.

"I should go pack," I say, rising from the table.

"I'll walk with you," Sean offers, carefully settling his guitar case over his shoulder. "Elias says we're doing voice work today anyway, so I need to stash this in my bunk."

As we turn to leave, Zahraxis catches my hand, pressing a kiss to my knuckles that sends a shiver down my spine. "Do not take long," he says softly. "I find I do not like being parted from you."

"We'll meet you at the cove," Finn adds with a warm smile.

Just another totally normal morning, I think. Magical river-drifting, dragons who can't share breakfast without causing an inter-species incident, and two mythical creatures who apparently can't stand to be more than a few feet from me—totally normal.

The eastern cove is sheltered by towering cedars that lean out over the water, their branches creating dappled shadows on the rocky shore. I've been here before, or at least to the large deck of the art gallery that overlooks this spot, which is a favorite location for students to sketch or meditate—but it feels different now. The air itself seems charged with possibility.

Zahraxis and Finn are already waiting when Sean and I arrive, both dragons standing unnaturally still as they watch the waves lap against the shore. Their auras pulse with barely contained energy, Finn's a steady crimson glow, Zahraxis' still flickering between gold and darkness like an emotional light show.

Naia steps out from behind one of the larger rocks, her bare feet leaving no prints in the wet sand. The water seems to reach for her, tiny ripples breaking their natural pattern to flow toward her presence. "Are we ready?"

"As we'll ever be," I say, adjusting my backpack strap. My stomach churns with equal parts excitement and nerves.

"Remember to breathe through it," Sean advises. "And maybe don't eat for a few hours after."

Zahraxis moves closer to me, his presence solid and warm at my back. "If this harms her—" he begins, but Naia cuts him off with a gentle laugh that suggests she's used to overprotective magical beings.

"It's perfectly safe. Unpleasant, perhaps, but safe." She extends her hands, silver light already dancing across her skin like sunlight on water. "Everyone join hands. And whatever you do, don't let go."

Right. No pressure.

Finn takes my right hand while Zahraxis claims my left, his grip almost painfully tight. Naia completes our circle, linking hands with both dragons. I can feel the tension vibrating through their bodies—Zahraxis especially seems like a coiled spring.

"Close your eyes," she instructs. "The River moves in ways your mind isn't meant to process."

Well, that's not ominous at all.

I barely have time to comply before the world shifts .

The ground vanishes beneath my feet, water rushing in, and my stomach lurches as if I'm being yanked forward by my navel. Cool wetness surrounds me, but I can't tell if I'm moving through it, or it's moving through me. The sensation is like being caught in a whirlpool while simultaneously being stretched like taffy.

Zahraxis' grip threatens to crush my fingers, and I hear what sounds like a dragon's

roar, distorted as if coming from underwater. My lungs burn, though I'm not sure if I'm holding my breath, or if breathing is even possible in this space between spaces.

Just when I think I can't take it anymore, everything snaps back into focus. My feet hit solid ground and my knees buckle. Only the dragons' hands keep me from collapsing completely as my stomach rebels. I barely manage to turn away before losing my breakfast all over a pristine marble floor.

Attractive. Real attractive.

Somewhere behind me, I hear the distinctive sound of two dragons being violently ill. So much for their dignity, or their breakfast.

"Breathe." Naia's voice comes from somewhere nearby, sounding completely unfazed. "The nausea will pass faster if you breathe."

I wipe my mouth with the back of my hand and crack my eyes open to find we're standing in what appears to be an ornate foyer. Or rather, I'm hunched over in an ornate foyer while my dragons are on their knees several feet away, both of them sporting a concerning mix of scales and sweat, their auras churning with distress.

"That was..." I manage to croak.

"Worse than dying," Zahraxis growls, his voice rough. Golden scales ripple across his skin as he fights for control.

"You haven't died," Finn points out, looking about as graceful as a seasick cat as he tries to stand. "Though right now, I might prefer it."

"Dragons always take it harder," Naia says, somehow managing to sound both sympathetic and amused. "Something about your inner fire fighting the River's flow."

She gives a small bow. "This is as far as I can take you. The queen's offices are warded against unauthorized drifting." She smiles warmly at me. "Good luck, Rachel." Then she dissolves into fine silver mist that dissipates in seconds.

A polite cough draws my attention to a massive security desk, where an impeccably dressed man watches us with the carefully blank expression of someone who's seen far stranger things than two dragons vomiting on his marble floors.

"If you'll wait a moment," he says smoothly, "maintenance will handle the..." He gestures vaguely at our collective mess.

Just another Tuesday for the guy at the security desk, apparently.

Finn

The elevator ride is pure torture—not that I'll let Rachel or Zahraxis see me sweat. Every muscle in my body aches to spread wings, to escape this suspended metal cage. Dragons are creatures of sky and earth, and this unnatural box violates every instinctual boundary. The urge to fly burns like a physical pain, a constant pressure just beneath my skin demanding release.

Zahraxis' anxiety pulses like a living thing, washing over me in golden waves. Under normal circumstances, a Gold dragon at full power can transform entire rooms into emotional pressure cookers. Right now, his diminished state reduces his emotional bleed to a low-grade hum rather than a full emotional tsunami. Small mercies. Thank fuck he can't crank his empathic abilities to eleven, or we'd all be crawling out of our skins by the time we reach the top floor.

His hands curl into fists, knuckles white, golden scales threatening to break through his skin. "What manner of torture device is this?" he mutters, a thread of ancient dragon irritation in his voice. "A box that moves without wings, suspended against all natural law."

Rachel's steady hand on his arm seems to anchor him, her touch a subtle reminder to maintain human form. "Problem?" she asks.

"Dragons aren't meant to rise without wings," I explain, my hunter's pragmatism masking my deep discomfort. "It's... unsettling."

Zahraxis mutters something that sounds like a curse in his ancient tongue, his golden

eyes fixed on the floor numbers as they tick upward. "How much higher?"

"Forty more floors," I say. "Try not to think about it."

Rachel reaches for both our hands, and we latch on like she's our lifeline. Her aura is a study in deliberate calm—fascinating, really. Most humans would be radiating nervous energy, but she methodically projects tranquility. It's almost like watching an adolescent dragon test their limits, and provides a hint of what she might be capable of once we complete our mating bond.

I'm halfway through that thought when her thumb brushes the inside of my wrist—just a light touch, grounding, steady—and something slips loose in my chest.

I glance down at our joined hands, then up at her. "Touch me again like that," I murmur, not even thinking, "and I'll forget we're pretending I don't already own you."

Her eyes flick to mine, wide—but not with shock. No, it's something deeper. Recognition. Awareness.

Zahraxis' aura flares briefly, but not in jealousy—just heat. The moment passes, but it leaves its mark, humming beneath my skin.

But too soon that sensation is replaced by golden waves of anxiety crashing over me like shards of broken glass, each spike of tension cutting through my composure. Zahraxis isn't faring quite as well from a simple touch, his distress bleeding into the small space. When I glance at where Rachel has his hand gripped in hers, I see her thumb caressing his wrist with more intention. Her touch may have distracted me in the worst possible way—now all I want is to pin her against the wall—but it has a much needed grounding effect on Zahraxis. Rachel's steady, intentional calm begins to weave through his turbulence, slowly subduing the wild energy. By the time we

reach the top floor, her control is nothing short of masterful. Hell, maybe she's the one who owns us .

The moment the doors open, we surge forward into the reception area, dragging Rachel with us. Zahraxis takes several deep breaths, his shoulders relaxing incrementally as his feet reconnect with solid ground. The tension that built during our elevator ride begins to dissipate, our bodies recalibrating to the stability of solid earth. My wings feel like they can finally settle, the primal dragon instinct to flee the suspended metal box slowly unwinding.

The space around us gradually comes into focus: gleaming steel and glass, floor-to-ceiling windows offering a panoramic view of Manhattan that speaks to the kind of power only a dragon court could command.

A sharp-featured woman in a crisp suit rises from behind a curved desk. A green jade pendant gleams at her throat, catching the light when she moves. Court official, definitely. Her posture screams dragon, even if her human form is impeccably professional.

"Mr. Sullivan," she says, then her eyes widen as she takes in Zahraxis. She drops into a deep bow. "Golden One."

Interesting. Most modern dragons aren't big on the whole formal hierarchy thing, but Zahraxis? Pure old-world royalty. I can already see the tension building in his shoulders at being treated like some kind of living relic.

"The queen is—" She's interrupted when the massive double doors at the end of the hall burst open. Three dragons in human form stride out, their heated discussion echoing off the marble walls. They spare our group no more than a passing glance, though their auras pulse with barely contained agitation.

"—in an emergency session," the assistant finishes smoothly as she rises. "If you wouldn't mind waiting..."

I can feel Zahraxis' patience wearing thin. Golden scales begin rippling beneath his skin again. My bounty hunter instincts kick in, recognizing the potential for a diplomatic incident. Time to intervene before an ancient dragon decides to redecorate the queen's waiting room.

"We have traveled far," Zahraxis says, his voice carrying that edge that suggests he's about two seconds from going full ancient dragon on someone's ass.

"How long?" I ask, my hand settling on Zahraxis' shoulder. If he decides to lose his shit, I need to be ready to minimize collateral damage.

"An hour. Perhaps two."

A low growl builds in Zahraxis' chest. The assistant's eyes widen slightly as she finally notices the way his control is slipping, the golden scales at his temples and throat now visible.

Time for some bounty hunter diplomacy.

"Let me be clear," I say quietly. "Either the queen sees us now, or in about ten minutes, you'll have a feral ancient dragon tearing apart your waiting room. Your choice."

The assistant's gaze darts between us, unconsciously touching her jade pendant as she assesses the situation. After a moment, she nods sharply and lifts a phone. "Your Majesty? The Golden One is here, but... Yes, I understand the timing is poor, however..." She winces, holding the phone away from her ear. "My queen, he is on the verge of shifting feral in the reception area. Mr. Sullivan can barely contain him."

A beat of silence, then she replaces the receiver. "Her Majesty will see you now."

"Racha," I call out when we enter the room, already moving toward the conference table like I own half the place, "please tell me we're not about to discuss another bureaucratic clusterfuck."

The queen's mate, Corey, stands near the window in his usual casual stance, while her younger brother Max perches on the edge of a chair, both of them grinning at my entrance. Zahraxis goes rigid beside me, his golden scales shimmering beneath his skin at my complete lack of formal address.

Racha turns, a smile already spreading across her face. Her green eyes dance with a mix of amusement and genuine warmth. "Sullivan. Took you long enough."

"Took me long enough?" I drop into a chair, completely ignoring protocol. "Have you met this guy? If it hadn't been for Rachel, I might still be chasing his golden ass across half the planet."

"Where did you find him?" Max asks, leaning forward with undisguised curiosity.

"Bear Island," I say, watching their reactions. "At the Bloodline school."

Corey straightens. "The one nobody can access unless?—"

"—unless you're specifically called by Fate," I finish. "Yeah. And trust me, Fate was working overtime on this particular catch."

I'm halfway through settling in when I notice Rachel hasn't moved from the doorway. She stands absolutely still, eyes wide as she takes in Racha's aura. Right, it's her first time seeing a dragon queen in all her glory.

"Hey," I say, rising again and moving back to her side. "She puts her pants on one leg at a time. Well, when she's not conjuring them with dragon breath."

Rachel blinks, color rising in her cheeks. "She's just so..."

"Powerful? Yeah, that's our Racha." I guide her forward with a light touch at her back. "Wait till you see her eat a whole pizza in under five minutes."

"Sullivan," Racha says, but there's fondness beneath the warning. Her attention shifts to Rachel, her gaze softening. "So you're the one who helped catch our ancient friend. And from what I see, quite a bit more."

"Two dragons?" Corey pushes off from the window, giving Rachel an appraising look. "Fate's getting ambitious lately."

Max abandons his perch to circle closer, studying Rachel with that unnaturally sharp focus that makes him seem far older than his six years. "You can see auras too? Like dragon sight?"

"Speaking of timing," Racha interrupts, though her eyes still sparkle with interest, "you couldn't have picked a more critical moment to show up." Her expression shifts, something darker crossing her features.

"Critical how?" I ask, my amusement fading at her tone. I know that look—the one that means something's gone seriously sideways.

The maps spread across her conference table catch my eye. They're alive with magical markers, pulsing and shifting in patterns I've never seen before. This is the kind of high-level tactical display usually reserved for war rooms.

"We're facing a crisis," Racha says, her earlier warmth giving way to steel. "One that

makes your hunt for the Golden One seem like a training exercise."

Max's excitement dims, and he edges closer to his sister. The kid's usually a bouncing ball of energy, so his sudden stillness sets off every warning bell I've got.

"The Titans have escaped." Corey's Boston accent thickens with tension. "Tartarus himself is coordinating with us for the coming fight. We've called in the big guns for this too. General Nikhil arrives tomorrow to help form a battle plan."

Beside me, Zahraxis goes even more still, if that's possible. I would have expected him to lash out again at the mention of his ancient nemesis, but no—this is different. This is the kind of stillness that comes from genuine shock.

"Tartarus?" Rachel and I speak at the same time, though I suspect for different reasons. While shock colors my voice, something else flickers across her face—recognition, maybe? But before I can puzzle that out, Racha's already moving on.

"Yes. And where Tartarus is involved..." She exchanges a loaded look with Corey. "...Chaos usually follows."

I feel Rachel tense beside me at that word, but again, there's no time to analyze why. The doors burst open as another group of advisors sweeps in, all wearing jade pendants that mark them as court officials. Their auras pulse with barely contained urgency.

"My Queen," one starts, then stops short at the sight of Zahraxis. The entire group bows deeply.

"The Golden One," another whispers, awe and fear mingling in his voice.

Zahraxis recovers his composure and straightens, finally in his element. "You speak of the Titans as if they were more than legend," he says, his formal tone carrying an edge of challenge. "Even in my time, they were merely stories to frighten hatchlings. Tartarus too was a creature of legend, his name often invoked to make the young ones behave."

Racha fixes her sharp gaze on him. "Then you never encountered them? The texts suggested the old gods and the ancient dragons shared power?—"

"The texts are wrong." Zahraxis' voice carries the weight of centuries. "The Titans were imprisoned long before the Mother Dragon mated with Fate. The old gods retired to their own realm not long after, leaving the mortal world to the higher races. But echoes of their battle against the Titans remained."

The room goes quiet. Even the constant hum of the city beyond the windows seems muted. Max slides from his chair and moves to Racha's side, slipping his small hand into hers.

"Then we truly have no advantage beyond Tartarus and his guards," Racha says, her composure cracking just slightly.

"Tartarus." Zahraxis tests the name like a bitter wine. "Even the Dragon Council feared what lay in his depths."

"The Dragon Council," Racha says carefully. "You served them, didn't you?"

I notice Rachel's attention sharpen at the mention of Tartarus, but my focus stays on Zahraxis as he inclines his head. There's a weight to this conversation that goes beyond mere history.

"I served them. Before." The words come out clipped, pained. "Before everything

changed."

Hidden beneath his words is that old animosity for the cause of his imprisonment. Again, I'm surprised that his need for vengeance has taken a back seat to this new threat. Perhaps he isn't as single-minded a dragon as he seemed only a day ago. Or the Titans really are a big enough threat that he's willing to let go of his hatred of the man who imprisoned him.

Racha exchanges a look with Corey, some silent communication passing between them. She straightens, her bearing suddenly more queen than friend. "Then we need you at full strength. Immediately." Her gaze sweeps over the three of us. "The Court's healers can expedite your recovery, but we'll need your willing participation."

"At full strength?" Zahraxis bristles. "My mate's power will restore me naturally?—"

"Not fast enough," Racha cuts him off. "If you'd arrived at full power, it would be different. But you're barely more than feral. Centuries of captivity have depleted your magical reservoir." She gestures to the maps, where magical markers continue their restless dance. "We have fewer than three days, Ancient One. And we need every advantage we can get. You're from a time when dragons still had enough power to imbue more than a single queen in a generation. When you are fully healed, you'll be a formidable ally in the fight."

"I will not submit to Court magic." Golden scales ripple beneath his skin. "My hunter is the last dragon I will ever submit to."

I feel a strange tug in the center of my chest when he refers to me as "his hunter," and it isn't just the recognition that makes my stomach flip. It's as if he deliberately plucks at the bond that's formed between us over the past day since I caught up to him. As if to suggest he might submit again, but only to me.

"This isn't about submission," Racha says, her voice gentle, but firm. "The old ways are gone, Zahraxis. The Court serves the brood now, not the other way around."

I feel the war between pride and pragmatism radiating from him. "What exactly does this ritual entail?"

"Nothing invasive," Racha says. "The healers create a circle of power that amplifies natural energy flow." She pauses, studying the three of us with renewed interest. "Though I sense there's already something forming between you."

"The bond happened naturally, from the moment we reached the island," I say, feeling that subtle pull toward both of them. "But we haven't marked one another yet."

Zahraxis shifts closer to Rachel, his protective stance making his intentions clear. "She is ours," he says simply.

"If she chooses to be," I correct him, earning a low rumble of acknowledgment. We've had this conversation about modern customs more than once since we found Rachel.

Rachel's cheeks flush, but she meets Racha's gaze steadily. "I do choose. Both of them."

"A Bloodline human choosing two dragons. It's not a common occurrence, so it's always exciting to see." Racha's smile holds genuine warmth. "The marking bond would be permanent. You understand this?"

Rachel nods. "I understand."

"Then the ritual could serve two purposes," Racha says. "The chamber's power would

amplify the marking bond, and that combined energy would help restore Zahraxis faster—hours, instead of days."

"I will not be the first to mark her," Zahraxis says, his formal tone carrying an edge of uncertainty. "Not in my weakened state. The risk?—"

"Is minimal with others supporting the bond," Racha assures him. "But you're right to be cautious. The order of marking matters." She turns to me. "Sullivan?"

I nod, understanding what she's asking. As the stronger dragon right now, I should mark Rachel first, creating a foundation for Zahraxis' mark to build upon.

"But how do I mark them?" Rachel asks. "I mean, I'm not exactly equipped with a magical dragon tongue."

"Your fire magic should suffice," Racha says. "As a member of the Bloodline attuned to fire, you carry traces of ancient dragon power. With proper focus..." She moves closer. "May I demonstrate something?"

At Rachel's nod, Racha places her hand over her solar plexus. "The well of power inside you is like another sense. You just need to learn how to access it."

Max perks up from where he's been unusually quiet. "I just learned this! Can I show her?"

"Maximus," Corey warns, but there's fondness beneath the exasperation. He knows as well as anyone that there's no stopping Max when he wants to help.

"Watch this!" Max takes an exaggerated breath, chest puffing out. When he exhales, a perfect stream of golden flame forms not just a dragon, but an entire scene—miniature dragons soaring through clouds, their wings catching imaginary

sunlight. A wave of pure joy radiates from the display, betraying his nature as a young Gold dragon.

"Such control," Zahraxis murmurs, something like wonder creeping into his voice. "To manifest both fire and empathy at his age..."

"See? It's easy!" Max grins up at Rachel. "You just have to feel it here—" He pats his chest. "Like a warm bubble ready to pop."

His childish description seems to click for Rachel. She closes her eyes, and I feel the subtle shift in her energy as she focuses inward.

"That's it," Racha encourages. "Feel the power gathering in your core, just like Max showed you. Now imagine it flowing outward, like water through a pipe..."

Rachel's eyes snap open as flames suddenly wreath both her hands.

"You did it!" Max claps in delight. "Now make a dragon!"

"Jesus Christ!" Corey lunges for a fire extinguisher. "Not everything in here is fireproof, you know!"

Rachel stares at her flame-wreathed hands with fascination. "I can mark them with this?"

"The ancient magic in your blood carries your unique mark," Racha says. "Your fire should work similarly to any dragon's marking. Though you may need to discover the exact mechanism through trial and error."

The flames sputter out as Rachel processes this. I can't help but grin. "Trial and error, huh? I volunteer as test subject."

"Will you make dragons with me later?" Max tugs at Rachel's sleeve. "After you're done with all the boring grown-up stuff?"

"Later, Max," Racha says gently. "Right now, we need to prepare the ritual chamber." She turns to Corey. "Would you take him to his mother? Jill will want him close, given everything that's happening."

"Wait, I thought you were his mother," Rachel says, glancing between Racha and Max.

"No, Max is my little brother. Jill was my father's mate before his Renunciation." Racha's expression softens as she looks at the boy. "He carries all our father's power, the last gift of a Prismatic's chosen mate to his son."

"And his queen," Max adds proudly, golden smoke curling from his lips. Another wave of emotion—love, pride, fierce protectiveness—rolls through the room.

"The ritual chamber is prepared," Racha announces, returning her attention to us.

"Wait, how did you..." Rachel glances at the door, where no assistant has appeared. "You didn't make any calls."

Racha taps her temple with a smile. "Dragons can communicate telepathically, especially within a bonded network. Once you complete your marking bond, you'll share the same connection with these two." Her gaze shifts between Zahrax and me. "Though I suspect you've already felt hints of it."

She's right. The way Rachel can sense our emotions, the pull between us that's been there since the beginning—it's more than just attraction or intuition.

"The healing ritual will take several hours," Racha continues. "Given what's coming,

we need you at full strength, Ancient One." Her eyes meet each of ours in turn. "All of you. The combined marking bond will amplify your collective power."

"And if we refuse?" Zahraxis asks, though there's less challenge in his voice than before.

"Then you're welcome to try healing naturally," Racha says with a shrug. "But when the Titans come—and they will come—you'll wish you hadn't let pride stand in the way of power."

Rachel squeezes Zahraxis' hand. "We've come this far. What's a few more hours of magical sex if it helps save the world?"

I barely contain my laugh while Corey mutters something that sounds suspiciously like, "That should be the school's motto."

"Very well," Zahraxis says, his formal tone at odds with the way his aura pulses with anticipation. "We accept your guidance, my queen."

"Not accept—choose," Racha corrects gently. "That's the difference between then and now, Ancient One. We choose our paths, our mates, our battles." She gestures for us to follow. "Now, shall we begin?"

I feel Rachel's mix of nervousness and excitement as we move toward the door. But there's no hesitation in her step, no doubt in her aura. When she looks up at me, her gaze is awestruck. I reach down between us and pinch her backside.

"Ow! What was that for?"

"Just wanted to make sure you know you're not dreaming. You're going to be our mate, Rachel."

She cocks one eyebrow while we wait for the elevator again. "The way I see it, the two of you will be mine. "

Rachel

The descent feels different than our earlier rise to the Queen's office. Both dragons seem more at ease as the elevator carries us deeper beneath the city, as if drawing closer to the earth's core settles something primal in their nature. Zahraxis even relaxes his death grip on my hand, though his thumb still traces idle patterns against my skin that send shivers up my arm.

"You two look more comfortable going down than up," I observe.

Finn's lips quirk. "Dragons are creatures of fire. The deeper we go toward the Earth's core, the more we feel its power." His eyes gleam with banked heat. "Especially now."

The elevator opens directly into a vast chamber that steals my breath. Veins of jade in every shade imaginable stretch as far as I can see—deep forest green bleeding into seafoam, shot through with ribbons of gold and midnight blue. The stone's surface ripples like water frozen in mid-flow. No, not frozen; the stone itself seems alive, undulating in patterns that suggest both liquid grace and flames licking at the air. The effect is hypnotic, making it impossible to tell where one curve ends and another begins.

In the center of the chamber, a raised platform draws my gaze. The jade here has been shaped into something like a massive chaise or bench, its edges smooth and inviting despite the hard material. Around the chamber's perimeter, I count perhaps a dozen dragons in human form, their auras pulsing with carefully contained power.

My steps falter. "I didn't realize we'd have an audience."

"They're here to help channel healing energy," Racha explains. At my obvious discomfort, she exhales a long stream of green smoke that coalesces into a shimmering curtain around the platform. The barrier sparkles like diamond dust caught in sunlight.

"You won't see or hear anything beyond the veil unless you choose to," she says. "And they won't perceive anything from their side." Her green eyes meet mine. "The stone will amplify their power, feeding it into your bond as it forms. The rest..." A small smile plays at her lips. "Well, I suspect you three have that part figured out."

Zahraxis makes a low sound of impatience, his skin already beginning to ripple with scales. The raw need in his golden gaze when he looks at me makes my knees weak. Finn's hand settles at the small of my back, steadying me even as his touch sends fresh heat coursing through my body.

"Shall we?" he murmurs close to my ear.

I manage a shaky nod, and they guide me toward the platform. The moment we pass through the smoke barrier, the rest of the world falls away. The only sound is our breathing and the faint hum of power from the jade beneath our feet.

The jade chamber breathes around us, its living stone rippling with anticipation.

We're alone in our own pocket of space, but the air itself feels charged with possibility. When I activate my dragon sight, I can see threads of power weaving through the stone like veins of precious metal, waiting to be tapped.

"Beautiful," Zahraxis breathes, and when I turn to look at him, I realize he's not admiring the chamber. His smoldering gaze is fixed entirely on me.

Finn circles behind me while Zahraxis steps closer, both of them moving with predatory grace. The air grows thick with anticipation, and when I peek at their auras, they pulse with barely contained need.

"The marking comes first," Finn says, his voice dropping to a rougher register that sends heat pooling between my thighs. "It creates the foundation of our bond." He brushes his knuckles down my spine, the simple contact sparking electric currents through my nerves.

Zahraxis reaches for me, cupping my face with a reverence that belies the hunger in his eyes. "You will wear our marks upon your skin, and we will wear yours." His thumb traces my lower lip, and I can't resist drawing it into my mouth, tasting the salt of his skin.

His pupils dilate, golden irises reduced to thin rings of fire. "I would see all of you," he says, the formal cadence of his speech slipping as desire takes hold.

"May we undress you?" Finn asks against my ear, his breath hot on my neck.

I nod, already breathless with want. "Yes."

They move in perfect synchronicity, as if they've choreographed this dance for centuries. Zahraxis lifts my arms while Finn slides his hands beneath the hem of my shirt, drawing it upward with tantalizing slowness. The fabric whispers across my sensitized skin, and I shiver when Finn unclasps my bra and cool air kisses my exposed breasts.

Finn's appreciative growl vibrates against my back as Zahraxis drops to his knees before me. He looks up, ancient eyes holding mine as he hooks his fingers into the waistband of my pants. The position—this powerful, ancient being kneeling at my feet—sends a rush of heat through me that has nothing to do with dragon fire.

"May I?" he asks, his formal speech pattern returning, though his voice remains thick with desire.

"Please," I whisper, my own voice barely recognizable.

He slides my pants and panties down my legs with excruciating care. I step out of them, now completely bare between them.

Finn cups my breasts from behind, his thumbs circling my nipples until they peak into hard buds. "Perfect," he murmurs, his arousal a hard ridge against the small of my back.

Zahraxis remains on his knees, his gaze traveling slowly up my body with such intensity I swear I can feel it like a physical caress. When he leans forward to press his lips just below my navel, I gasp at the contact. His tongue traces a hot path upward, between my breasts, stopping at the hollow of my throat.

"Here," he says, pressing his palm flat against my sternum, directly over my racing heart. "This is where our marks will join."

Finn slides a hand around to cover Zahraxis', both of them now pressed against my chest. Through my dragon sight, I see their auras intertwine—crimson and gold weaving together like molten metal.

"Kneel," Finn says, his voice gentle despite the command. He guides me around to face them on my knees on the jade bench, which radiates unexpected warmth against my bare skin.

Both men shed their clothes with dragon magic, wisps of red and gold smoke dissipating to reveal their magnificent bodies. Their cocks stand proud and hard, making my mouth water with anticipation.

"I mark you first," Finn says, kneeling before me. "Then Zahraxis. My mark will act as an anchor for his."

He brings his face level with my chest, and I watch in fascination as his human tongue transforms. It elongates, the tip splitting into two delicate points that shimmer with crimson energy. The sight alone makes me clench with need.

"This will burn," he warns, peering up at me, "but only for a moment."

When his dragon tongue touches my skin just above my heart, I gasp at the sharp sting. It feels like a hot needle tracing intricate patterns, but the initial pain quickly transforms into something else—a pleasure so intense it borders on agony. I arch into the sensation, my hands finding purchase on his shoulders.

Through my dragon sight, I watch crimson light follow in his tongue's wake, forming elaborate whorls and curves that pulse in time with my heartbeat. Each stroke of his tongue sends waves of sensation radiating outward, connecting to every nerve ending in my body.

Zahraxis moves behind me, his chest pressing against my back as he cups my breasts. He rolls my nipples between his fingers, the dual sensation of his touch and Finn's marking making me cry out.

"Yes," Zahraxis encourages, his voice a rumbling purr against my ear. "Feel it all. Accept our magic into your body."

Finn's tongue traces the final curve of his mark, and when he withdraws, the completed sigil pulses with brilliant crimson light. The magic sinks deeper, past skin and muscle, wrapping around something fundamental within me. I feel him now—not just physically, but on some deeper level, as if a part of him has taken root inside my soul. The mark itself resembles a Celtic knot surrounding a dragon's silhouette, the

undulating lines make it appear to move with every beat of my heart.

"My turn," Zahraxia says, his voice tight with restraint. They trade places with fluid grace, Finn moving behind me while Zahraxia kneels in front again.

His dragon tongue emerges, longer and more angular than Finn's, gleaming with golden light. When it touches my skin, directly atop Finn's mark, the sensation is entirely different—not sharp pain, but overwhelming pressure, as if the weight of centuries presses against that single point of contact.

I gasp, my back arching as golden light blooms across my chest, intricate patterns weaving through and around Finn's crimson sigil. His tongue traces new dimension into the mark Finn gave me, and adds more details. Where their marks overlap, the colors blend into something new—a warm amber that pulses with combined power.

Finn's touch on my breasts is both soothing and inflaming. "Breathe through it," he murmurs against my neck. "Let it settle."

Zahraxia completes his mark with a final flourish of his tongue, then presses his forehead against mine. "You are ours now," he says, his voice thick with emotion. "And we are yours."

The combined marks pulse in perfect synchrony with my heartbeat, sending waves of magic coursing through my veins. I can feel them both now—Finn's steady presence like a banked flame, Zahraxia's ancient power like molten gold. Their emotions bleed into mine through our newly formed connection, desire and possession and something deeper that makes my throat tight.

When I look up, I find them staring at each other over my shoulder, something unspoken passing between them. The air grows heavy with tension, but not the kind that preceded my marking. This is different—laden with history and unresolved

emotion.

Finn breaks the silence first. "It's time," he says quietly. "For us to mark each other."

Zahraxis goes still, his golden eyes flaring with a complex mix of emotions I can't fully decipher. "You ask me to break three thousand years of tradition," he says, his voice tight. "For one who answered only to the Dragon Council to bear another's mark?—"

I watch the tension ripple across Zahraxis' face, his jaw tight with three millennia of ingrained hierarchy battling against the need I feel pulsing through our new bond. The amber mark on my chest throbs in time with both their heartbeats, connecting us in ways I'm only beginning to understand.

"The world has changed," Finn says, his voice gentle, yet unyielding. He reaches out, palm hovering just above Zahraxis' chest. "I'm not asking you to submit. I'm asking you to choose."

Zahraxis' golden eyes find mine, searching. "What say you, Raelesha?"

The formal address—my dragon name on his lips—sends a shiver down my spine. I rise to my knees, placing one hand over my freshly marked chest and the other against his cheek.

"I say that power flows in all directions," I tell him, the words coming from somewhere beyond conscious thought. "That's what makes it stronger."

Something shifts in his expression—pride giving way to possibility. He captures my wrist and presses his lips to my palm, then turns to Finn with newfound resolve.

"Then mark me," he says, his voice a low rumble that vibrates through the jade

beneath us. "And I shall mark you in turn."

Finn's aura flares crimson with barely contained desire. He moves to face Zahraxis directly, both dragons kneeling before each other with me at their side. Finn leans forward, his dragon tongue emerging—split and gleaming with red energy. I can't tear my eyes away as he brings his face level with Zahraxis' chest.

The first touch of Finn's tongue against Zahraxis' skin draws a hiss from the ancient dragon. His hands clench into fists at his sides, every muscle rigid as crimson light traces intricate patterns across his dark skin. Echoes of the sensation cascade through our new bond—burning pleasure that borders on pain, resistance crumbling beneath overwhelming connection.

"Breathe," I whisper, echoing Finn's earlier guidance to me. I take Zahraxis' clenched fists in my hands, gently uncurling his fingers to twine with mine.

Our gazes lock, his pupils blown wide with sensation as Finn's mark takes shape on his chest. I lean forward and capture his lips, swallowing his gasp as the final stroke of Finn's tongue completes the sigil.

Crimson light pulses once, twice, then sinks beneath Zahraxis's skin, disappearing from ordinary sight. But through my dragon vision, I see how it weaves into his very essence, creating new pathways of power that flow between him and Finn.

Finn straightens, breathing heavily. "Your turn," he says, voice rough with emotion.

Without changing positions, Zahraxis leans forward, his dragon tongue emerging, gleaming again with golden light. When it touches Finn's chest, just beneath the dip of his clavicle, Finn's entire body goes taut. His head falls back, throat exposed in a gesture of trust that feels more intimate than any physical act.

Golden light blooms across Finn's skin, intricate patterns weaving themselves into his flesh. Where the mark takes shape, his crimson scales shimmer into existence, then fade back to human skin, as if his dragon form can't decide whether to emerge or retreat in the face of such powerful magic.

I feel it through our bond—the ancient power of Zahraxia flowing into Finn, no longer constrained by hierarchy or tradition. Something new being forged between them, a connection that transcends their long and complicated history.

When the golden mark is complete, it pulses once before sinking beneath Finn's skin. All that's left are the subtly glowing outlines of the dragon scale tattoos that cover one side of Finn's torso. Both dragons exhale in unison, as if they've been holding their breath for centuries.

"Now," Zahraxia says, his voice thick with need, "we must complete the circle."

They turn their attention back to me, and the hunger in their eyes makes me tremble. Through our new bond, I feel their desire amplified by the jade chamber, by the marks we now share, by something ancient and primal awakening within all three of us.

"You must mark us as well," Finn explains. "With your own dragon essence. You should feel it even stronger now that you carry our marks."

"How?" I ask, my voice barely a whisper. I'm positive I can't replicate the wondrous magic they just displayed to mark me and then each other.

Zahraxia turns back to face me again, both dragons looking at me with identical expressions of reverence and desire. "Your desire," he says, "will bind the magic into its final form. All you must do is want it. Here." He reaches out and touches his fingertips to the place in the center of my torso. Not the pulsing, tingling marks, but a

place just below them, where that bubble of power swells inside me. I'm still getting used to the sensation that feels so much like a knot of anxiety, it's easy to mistake. But anxious is far from what I feel when I take a moment to focus on it.

He's right. It's desire. A potent, pulsing need for connection. And it's been there for ages, ever since I set foot on Bear Island.

Understanding dawns, sending liquid heat pooling between my thighs. I reach out, placing one hand on each of their chests, directly over their newly formed marks. The knot of power swells like a bubble, just the way it did when I tested it before. The moment my skin makes contact, the bubble pops and energy surges through both connections, drawing a collective gasp from all three of us.

"Yes," Finn breathes, leaning into my touch. "Just like that."

He grips my wrist gently with one hand, holding my palm against his chest while the magic flows. Zahraxis places his palm over my hand, pressing it harder. Between us, both their cocks harden to thick, rigid lengths.

My hands feel rooted to them by the magic still flowing, and some force draws us closer together. Whether it's our own bodies obeying some primal edict, or the way the jade bench subtly flows to tilt us closer together, I can't be sure, but within a breath, my elbows are bent and both men are close enough for me to feel their quickening breaths against my skin.

Finn is the first to hook his free arm around my waist and bend to capture my mouth. Our kiss only mirrors the flood of magic where my palm rests against his chest, as if another physical connection only opens up a new conduit for the power. Then Zahraxis presses his mouth to the side of my jaw and yet another conduit begins to flow. When their thighs brush mine, even more magic floods between us.

My entire body is throbbing with the power by the time Finn breaks our kiss and Zahraxis takes over, but Finn doesn't let his mouth stray too far from my skin. He nuzzles my neck as he coasts a hand down my stomach, then dips his fingers between my legs.

I am molten with need, and his touch only makes me moan and try to spread my knees, but they have me trapped between them. Sensing my desire, Finn gently hooks a hand behind one knee and lifts my leg, placing my knee back down between his own. Ever the observant dragon, Zahraxis does the same, scooting closer to Finn in the process. When my knee settles between his, I'm practically sitting on both their knees, mine spread wide between them.

"You're drenched," Finn murmurs, coasting his palm up the inside of my thigh and grazing gentle fingertips close to my core. My breath hitches at the pleasure of that scant contact, and I tilt my hips in an attempt to get closer to his touch.

Zahraxis releases my mouth to watch as Finn begins to lightly tease my clit with the softest, most excruciating caresses. Both their cocks beckon, but my hands are still adhered to their chests by the flow of power. I'm trapped, but there's nowhere I'd rather be, especially when Zahraxis claims my mouth once again and Finn begins teasing my breasts with his agile tongue. At the same time, he teases my opening then pushes several fingers into me. His thumb rests against my clit, unmoving at first, but the pressure itself makes me pulse with need.

Zahraxis moans as if he feels the same pulsing desire, and perhaps he does. Through our increasingly strengthening bond, I can feel my need magnified.

"You should see your aura right now, Rachel," Finn rasps. "You look like you're wreathed in fire. So beautiful."

I break the kiss with Zahraxis, who dips his head to kiss the side of my throat. He

coasts a hand down my back to cup my ass and tease at the wetness between my spread cheeks. His fingertips probe lightly at the place where Finn penetrates me, fucking into me slowly with his fingers while his thumb slowly pushes my desire higher.

Finn's gaze is reverent when he looks at me, his red eyes shifting to slits. I'm enthralled by his focus, his touch, the sheer need on his face every time my core clenches around his fingers. When Zahraxis slides a wet fingertip to my rear opening and pushes in past the tight barrier, I gasp.

Finn's expression darkens and he lets out a growl, fucking me harder with his fingers.

"Come for us, Rachel. Feed the magic into your mark so we can fuck you."

Is that what I have to do to release myself from this marking trap? I'm desperate enough that I'm grateful not to have to hold back. It takes only a few quick plunges of Zahraxis' finger into my ass, accompanied by Finn's hooking into my G-spot in front, and I go over in an instant.

I arch my back with a cry, my fingernails digging into the flesh of their chests. The pleasure grips my body in waves, cascading through every limb, magic surging up my arms and into my hands that glow brighter with every pulse. I'm mesmerized by the rhythmic pattern of it, the sensation of heat where my palms meet their skin.

When I finally start to come down, I relax and my arms fall to my sides, revealing an intricate knotwork of glowing patterns.

Each man's mark is a little different; Finn's is a golden threaded design entwined with deep violet, the shape of the mark Zahraxis gave him a dragon rising in flight in a position that looks like a blooming lotus blossom. On Zharaxis' chest is a dragon rampant enclosed in a Celtic knot, the red inscription outlined with purple as well.

The glow is subtly iridescent, and it's almost as if faint purple smoke rises from their marks.

I reach out a finger to trace the edge of Zahrax's mark. "Is that my color? Purple? What does it mean?"

"Purple usually signifies a blend of passion and spirituality in your nature," Finn says. "But this is more than purple. This is ultraviolet. I think your magic is a blend of red and black dragon magic." He touches the design on his own chest, marveling at it. "After we're done with you, we can explore it more."

I lift an eyebrow. "Done with me? What do you want to do next?"

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:34 am

Zahraxis

The marks glow upon our skin like living fire, binding us together in ways I have never experienced. My Raelesha—my Soul Anchor—gazes at me with desire that mirrors my own, her question still hanging in the air between us.

"What do you think, Raelesha?" I pull her onto my lap, her slick heat pressing against my rigid length. "We want to fuck you."

Her pupils dilate, the scent of her arousal intensifying. I capture her mouth with mine, tasting the sweetness of her surrender and the spice of her desire. The jade chamber pulses around us, amplifying every sensation through our newly forged bond. Beyond the magical curtains the queen gave us for privacy, I can sense a lull in the activity. It's as if the dragons surrounding us are waiting in anticipation of the true event to start.

Finn's need is even more palpable, bleeding through our bond with the intensity only a Red can bring.

"Yes," Rachel breathes against my lips. "Please."

I grip her hips, positioning her above my cock. "Ride me," I command, though my voice holds more plea than demand. "Show me how you take your pleasure."

She braces her hands on my shoulders, her eyes locked with mine as she slowly lowers herself onto my length. The tight, wet heat of her engulfs me inch by exquisite inch, drawing a growl from deep in my chest. Through our bond, I feel her pleasure

mirroring my own—the delicious stretch as she accommodates me, the fullness she craves. But also Finn's raw hunger watching me fill her up.

"Perfect," I praise as she settles fully upon me, taking me to the hilt. "You were made for this."

Finn moves behind her, his hands sliding around to cup her breasts. The crimson of his aura blends with the gold of mine, creating a swirling vortex of power that surrounds the three of us. Rachel gasps as he pinches her nipples, her slickness increasing around my cock in response.

"Move," I urge her, gripping her hips to guide her into a rhythm. "Show me how you pleasure yourself on my cock."

She begins to rise and fall, finding her own pace—slow at first, then with increasing urgency. Her head falls back against Finn's shoulder as she works herself on my length, and he nuzzles her ear, reciting filthy promises of what he'll do to her soon. The sight of her—eyes half-closed in ecstasy, lips parted, marks glowing on her chest—is more beautiful than any treasure I have ever possessed.

Finn catches my gaze over her shoulder, his red eyes gleaming with mischief and desire. What he says to her next makes her inner walls clench around me.

Finn leans closer and I meet him halfway, our lips connecting in a kiss that sends sparks of magic cascading through our bond. Rachel moans between us, her rhythm faltering as she watches our mouths move together.

When we part, I turn my attention back to Rachel, who stares at us with wide eyes and parted lips. "Did you enjoy that sight, Raelesha?" I ask, thrusting up into her with more force.

"God, yes," she gasps, grinding down to meet my upward motion. "Do it again."

Finn chuckles, tweaking one of her nipples harder before sliding his hands down to grip her hips. "So demanding," he teases, but there is no mistaking the affection in his voice, or the raw desire when he kisses me again. It isn't just for her benefit, either; through our bond I sense not only wonder from her but elation from them both over how perfectly the three of us fit together.

Together, Finn and I guide her movements, setting a pace that has her gasping with each thrust. The jade beneath us seems to pulse in time with our shared heartbeats, channeling energy through our joined bodies. The dragons beyond our curtain are fucking again, their passion adding to the power surging into me through the jade. I feel myself approaching the edge far too quickly, the combination of Rachel's tight heat and our newly formed bond overwhelming my control.

"Not yet," I growl, stilling her movements. "I would have you experience more pleasure before I find my release."

In one fluid motion, I lift her from my cock and turn her to face Finn. "Take her mouth," I instruct him, positioning Rachel on her hands and knees between us. "I will have her from behind."

Finn kneels before her, his cock jutting proud and thick. Rachel needs no encouragement, eagerly taking him between her lips with a moan that vibrates through all three of us. I position myself behind her, running my hands over the perfect curves of her ass before sliding my cock through her slick folds.

"You are so wet," I marvel, coating myself in her essence. "So ready for us."

I push back into her with one long, slow thrust, watching as her back arches and her mouth stretches wider around Finn's girth. Through our bond, her pleasure

intensifies—the fullness of being taken from both ends, the thrill of surrendering to us both, of giving herself over fully. And every sensation magnified by the connection to the stone and the abundance of dragon magic surging through it into our trio.

Finn's eyes meet mine over Rachel's body, his expression a mix of pleasure and challenge. "Her mouth feels divine," he says, his voice rough with desire.

His words send a fresh surge of heat through me. I grip Rachel's hips tighter, driving into her with renewed purpose. Each thrust pushes her forward onto Finn's cock, creating a rhythm that connects all three of us. The marks on our chests glow brighter with each passing moment, pulsing with shared pleasure that echoes through our bond.

Rachel takes Finn deeper, her enthusiasm evident in the wet sounds and muffled moans that fill the chamber. I reach beneath her to circle her clit with my fingers, feeling her immediate response as she clenches around my cock.

"Yes," I encourage, pressing harder against the sensitive bud. "Take your pleasure. Show us how much you enjoy being filled by both your dragons."

Finn tangles his fingers in her hair, guiding her movements with gentle pressure. "Look at me," he commands softly. When she raises her eyes to his, he smiles with fierce approval. "Perfect. Just like that."

The sight of them together—Rachel's lips stretched around Finn's cock, his expression of utter bliss—pushes me closer to the edge. I slow my thrusts, determined to make this last, to wring every drop of pleasure from our joining.

Finn releases Rachel's hair to reach for me, his hand curling around the back of my neck to draw me forward. We kiss over Rachel's back, our tongues battling for dominance while we continue to move within and against her. The taste of

him—spice and smoke and something uniquely Finn—mixes with the scent of Rachel's arousal to create an intoxicating combination.

When we part, Rachel whimpers around Finn's cock, her inner walls pulsing with need. I slide my hand from her clit to gather her wetness, then trace a slick path to her other entrance. She stiffens momentarily, then relaxes as I circle the tight ring of muscle with gentle pressure.

"May I?" I ask, pressing just enough to test her response.

She releases Finn's cock with a wet pop, looking back at me over her shoulder. "Yes," she breathes, her voice hoarse from taking him deep. "I want to feel you everywhere."

I push one finger slowly past the tight barrier, feeling her body resist then yield to my intrusion. Finn dips low and captures her mouth in a kiss, swallowing her moan as I work my finger deeper, preparing her for more.

"She likes that," Finn observes, breaking their kiss to watch my ministrations. "I can feel it through our bond."

Indeed, Rachel's pleasure radiates through our connection, her desire for more evident in the way she pushes back against my hand. I add a second finger, stretching her carefully while continuing to thrust my cock into her wet heat.

"More," she demands, her voice breaking on the word. "Please, Zahraxis."

"Patience, Raelesha," I soothe, scissoring my fingers to prepare her properly. "I would not cause you pain."

Finn slides close and lies back, beckoning. I withdraw my fingers and cock from her, urging her to straddle him. The loss of her delicious heat is momentary—as soon as

she sinks down onto him, I press my tongue to her rear opening, offering the even slicker lubrication of my saliva to the mix.

She remains still, held tight in Finn's embrace while he whispers words of encouragement and praise into her ear. He fucks her slowly, each stroke making her body shudder softly with pleasure while I tease her tight ring ever deeper with my tongue.

When I'm sure she's slick and stretched enough for me, I rise and press my tip to her opening. She bites her lower lip as I push past the tight ring, whimpering a little, but not resisting.

"Breathe," I instruct, pushing deeper with exquisite care. Her opening resists, then gives way, allowing the head of my cock to slip inside. Rachel gasps, her body going rigid for a moment before she forces herself to relax.

"So full," she whispers, her voice tight with a mixture of discomfort and pleasure. "Give me a moment."

I hold perfectly still, allowing her body to adjust to the intrusion. Finn captures her mouth in a gentle kiss, his hands roaming over her breasts to distract her from any discomfort. Through our bond, I feel the exact moment when pain gives way to pleasure—a shift in energy that has me fighting for control.

"Fuck me," she finally says, pushing back against me. "Both of you."

We establish a rhythm—Finn thrusting up as I withdraw, then I push forward as he pulls back. The counterpoint creates a constant state of fullness that has Rachel crying out with each movement. Then we move in sync, both entering her at the same time and fucking harder. The tight heat around my cock is maddening, the friction against Finn's length through the thin barrier between us adding another layer of sensation.

"I can feel you," Finn says, his eyes meeting mine over Rachel's shoulder. "Through her. It's incredible."

The marks on our chests pulse with increasing brightness, magic swirling around us in visible currents of gold, crimson, and violet. Each thrust builds the power higher, feeding energy into our bond until it feels as though we might ignite the very air around us.

Rachel begins to tremble, her inner walls clenching rhythmically around our cocks. "I'm close," she gasps, her voice breaking on the words. "So close."

"Let go," I command, reaching around to circle her clit with my fingers. "Come for us, Raelesha. Feed us your power."

She shatters with a cry that echoes through the jade chamber, her entire body convulsing between us. The force of her orgasm pulls at our bond, drawing us inexorably toward our own release. Finn goes first, his head thrown back as he pumps his seed deep inside her. The sight of his pleasure—combined with the rhythmic clenching of Rachel's body around my cock—pushes me over the edge.

I roar as I come, driving deep one final time as pleasure crashes through me in waves. Magic surges through our bond, amplifying the sensation until it borders on unbearable. Colors explode behind my closed eyelids—gold and crimson and violet swirling together into something new and powerful.

When the intensity finally ebbs, we collapse together onto the jade platform, our limbs entangled in a sweaty, satisfied heap. Rachel lies between us, her chest rising and falling rapidly as she catches her breath. The marks on our skin continue to glow, though with less intensity now, pulsing gently in time with our slowing heartbeats.

"That was..." Rachel begins, then laughs softly. "I don't even have words."

"Transcendent," I suggest, pressing a kiss to her shoulder.

"Life-altering," Finn adds, his fingers tracing idle patterns on her hip.

We lie in contented silence for several moments, allowing our bond to settle into its new form. Through it, I can feel Rachel's satisfaction, Finn's contentment, and beneath it all, a sense of rightness that I have not experienced since before my long imprisonment.

"I never imagined," I murmur, more to myself than to them, "that I would find this again. That I would be permitted such joy after so much loss."

Rachel turns in our embrace to face me, her eyes soft with understanding. "You deserve happiness, Zahraxis. We all do."

Finn's hand finds mine across Rachel's body, our fingers intertwining in silent acknowledgment of all that has changed between us. "I can feel both of you so clearly now. I often fantasized about what it would be like to have a mate, but never in all my life did I imagine it could be so sublime."

Indeed, our connection has transformed into something I have never experienced before—not with my previous mates, not with anyone. It is as though three separate melodies have woven together to create a harmony greater than its individual parts.

"What happens next?" Rachel asks. "How do you feel?" She rests her palm against my chest, over the pulsing mark. "Do you need more?"

"You tell me," I say. "We are bonded now, which means we share power."

She closes her eyes, and through our bond, I can sense her seeking that thread of power we share. She cocks her head and frowns, then opens her eyes.

Curious, she sits up and presses her palm to the jade beneath her. "It's humming," she says. Then her eyes widen. "Oh my god, I completely forgot we weren't alone!"

Finn chuckles. "We had help, yes. And from the feel of the room, I don't think we're finished." He tilts his chin to me. "Are we, brother?"

"Not quite. Not if the queen wishes me to be at full power for the fight."

A look of determination fills Rachel's eyes and she rises onto her knees.

"Then we'd better keep going. But this time, I don't want to hide. How do we open the curtains?"

Rachel

Both dragons waste no time. Before I can blink, they've turned their heads, each exhaling plumes of flame that sear right through the shimmering silver curtain as if it's nothing more than paper.

Beyond the destroyed barrier are even more creatures than were present when we entered the room. Their auras betray their natures, dragons and humans together, tangled in an array of positions and states of coupling. At the very front, I'm sure I even see Racha, perched on a jade ledge while a broad-shouldered man with black hair kneels between her spread thighs, eagerly going to town on her pussy.

"There weren't that many when we came in..." I whisper, eyes bulging as I scan the rest of the room. Some of the dragons are shifted, fucking other shifted dragons. Some of the humans are being mounted by male dragons. Some female dragons lie with their tails lifted while their human partners fist their engorged dragon snatches.

"Most dragons can't resist the invitation to an orgy in the middle of the day," Finn says. If word got around the building, it's no wonder more are showing up.

He gestures toward the entrance, where still more people enter. The dragons are obvious from the exhalations of smoke that cloak them briefly, dissolving conjured clothing before fading away to nothing. The humans pause long enough to disrobe.

And all around us the stone floors of the room undulate and shift like a living thing, creating surfaces more conducive to coupling, like the central platform the three of us still rest on.

Power vibrates through, warming my naked skin with tingling surges. Finn slides a hand up my inner thigh and gently coaxes my folds apart to find my clit. His touch is gentle, but enough to light me up as if I haven't just had two epic orgasms back-to-back.

"What do you say we add more to the mix? He gains exponentially more power from his own mates, after all."

Zahraxis is looking languid and relaxed now, as if he's in his element. I rise to my knees with a wicked smile and sling a leg across his lap. His flaccid cock rouses almost instantly and his gaze fixes on me, eyes brightening. But he touches my hip briefly.

"Allow me to clean myself first..."

"Oh, I'm not fucking you this time. At least not your cock. Lie back." I press my palms against his immovable chest, and he lifts one eyebrow as if amused I just dared to give him an order.

I scoot close enough that my breasts brush his chest and cup his face in my hands. He's big enough that even on my knees with him seated, we are eye to eye. I press my mouth to his, briefly savoring the hungry way he kisses me, then pull back. "I'm going to ride this tongue next, Z. Let's see how many times you can make me come if I sit on your face."

That does it. His gaze grows molten and he reclines, hands already tightening around my hips and pulling me up his torso. I laugh, then let out a startled whoop when he lifts me easily and places me back down right where he needs me, my dripping pussy poised over his full lips, which he licks as if he's about to eat me for dessert.

With a wicked glint, he extends his dragon tongue, the long, pink of it whipping up

and pushing against my wet core. I let out a surprised gasp as the twin tips part me easily, then twist around my clit in the most delicious way.

"Oh god," I moan, hips bucking involuntarily at the absolute pleasure that shoots through my lower extremities.

Finn chuckles. "You asked for it. Now you get to watch the show."

"I think we are the show," I murmur, already losing myself to the sensation of a tongue as thick as any man's cock pushing its way up into me. Around us the orgy has gradually shifted, as if all the bodies are part of a singular curious beast with a hundred eyes. It's exhilarating being the focal point, especially since I can feel every single surge of magic coming from the room straight through the floor and know that someone else just climaxed while watching me ride a dragon's tongue.

"Now what am I going to do with myself? Should I just watch?" Finn muses.

I glance at him where he's reclining next to Zahraxis, head resting on one hand while he casually strokes his hard cock with the other. Licking my lips, I shake my head.

"Let me finish what I started before," I say in a breathless demand. I reach for him and he rises slowly, then steps close, planting his feet just above Zahraxis' head. His thick, rigid length fills my vision, but before I can grasp him, he tips my chin up with one finger.

"Will you let me have my way with this pretty mouth? Because I've been dying to fuck your mouth the way you're fucking his right now."

Being able to take a fully shifted dragon's cock in my pussy is one thing, but after my first attempt at sucking Finn's dick, I'm well aware of how much a challenge it'll be to take him the way he's suggesting.

But I want nothing more than to please him right now, so I nod, mouth already watering in anticipation of feeling his cum slide down my throat at the end of it.

When I reach for him, he tuts and takes my hands, placing them on his hips. "I've got this, beautiful. You just go for the ride."

He begins by painting my mouth with the tip of his cock and the gathered fluid there. My lips tingle with the magical essence that coats them, and I reflexively lick.

"That's right, taste me. I want you ready to take my whole cock down your tight throat. Now open."

I open my mouth obediently, and Finn slides the tip of his cock between my lips. The smoky taste of him fills my senses as he pushes deeper, one hand cradling the back of my head.

"That's it," he encourages, his voice rough with desire. "Take me deeper."

I tighten my grip on his muscular thighs, fingers digging into his flesh as I steady myself between both dragons. A shudder courses through him at my touch even as I take him deeper into my mouth.

Below me, Zahraxis continues his delicious assault, his dragon tongue delving and twisting in ways that make my thighs tremble. Both dragons' pleasure mixes with my own through our newly formed bond, creating a feedback loop of sensation that threatens to overwhelm me.

The jade beneath us pulses with renewed energy as the ritual participants respond to our display. Their collective power flows through the stone, up through our bodies, amplifying every touch, every sensation. Zahraxis groans against my core, the vibration sending shockwaves of pleasure through me.

Finn begins a gentle rhythm, careful not to push too deep as I relax my jaw and throat in an effort to adjust to his size. His cockhead rests hotly against my tongue, a salty, silken sensation, and more delicious than I was prepared for. "You're doing so well," he murmurs, his crimson eyes locked on mine. "So perfect for us."

I hollow my cheeks, creating suction that draws a hiss of pleasure from him, as I slide my hands around to grip his firm ass, pulling him deeper. His aura flares bright red, tendrils of it reaching out to twine with the golden glow surrounding Zahrax. Violet strands of my own magic weave through their combined energies, binding us tighter with each passing moment.

The chamber around us thrums with power as new participants reach their peaks. Each climax sends a fresh surge of energy through the jade, feeding into our connection. Zahrax's tongue finds that perfect spot, and I moan around Finn's cock, my hips grinding down against Zahrax's face.

"She's close again," Finn says, his voice tight with restraint.

Zahrax responds by doubling his efforts, gripping my thighs to hold me in place as his tongue works its magic. The pressure builds, coiling tighter with each expert stroke. When he slides one hand up to press against the mark on my chest, the dam breaks.

My orgasm crashes through me with such force that I have to release Finn's cock to cry out. My entire body convulses as wave after wave of pleasure radiates outward from my core. Through our bond, I feel my climax trigger something in both dragons—a surge of power that flares through our auras, and has Finn's mark glowing brighter on his chest.

"Don't stop," Finn urges, guiding himself back to my lips. "The magic is building."

I take him in again, eager to please, to feed the growing power between us. I reach between his thighs and cradle his balls with one hand while I wrap the other around the base of his shaft. He lets out an eager groan, fingers tightening at my nape to push his cock deeper until I'm forced to breathe through my nose. My eyes water, but I'm not about to let him stop until he's finished and I've swallowed every delicious drop.

Zahraxis continues his relentless pace, driving me toward another peak before the first has fully subsided. The sensation is almost too much, bordering on painful, but the magic demands more.

Around us, the ritual participants have fallen into a synchronized rhythm, their collective energy pulsing in time with the three of us at the center. The jade beneath us has begun to glow, veins of light spreading outward from our platform like a spiderweb of power.

Finn's rhythm falters as he approaches his release. "Rachel," he groans, his voice strained. "I'm close."

I redouble my efforts, taking him deeper, desperate to finally taste him. I clutch at his thighs, feeling them tense beneath my fingers. Zahraxis chooses that moment to slide two fingers inside me while his tongue focuses on my clit, the dual stimulation sending me spiraling into another climax. The timing is perfect—as I convulse around Zahraxis's fingers, Finn roars his release, his seed spilling down my throat in hot pulses.

The magic crests, a tidal wave of power washing through all three of us. I can feel Finn's mark on Zahraxis blazing through our bond, while Zahraxis' mark on Finn burns with equal intensity. My own chest feels like it houses a small sun, the combined sigil radiating heat and light that bathes us all in its glow.

My thighs shake with effort to stay up, but Zahraxis continues gently licking my

swollen pussy, and it feels too good to let him stop just yet. As if sensing my waning energy, he cups my ass, holding me up while he licks me clean of my orgasm.

Finn seems just as reluctant to extract himself from my mouth, but finally lets out a satisfied sigh and retreats. I collapse forward, grateful when Finn sits and gathers me against his chest. Zahraxi sits up, pulling my legs across his lap, his golden eyes almost luminous with power. But even brighter is his mark—a crimson dragon intertwined with violet flames, pulsing with power.

"I feel it," he says, his voice deeper, richer than before. "The power returning."

He lifts one hand, and golden flame dances across his fingertips—not struggling sparks, but a controlled, powerful display that casts dancing shadows across the jade chamber. The dragons surrounding us respond with their own displays of power—jets of flame in every color arcing toward the ceiling, creating a kaleidoscope of light and heat, coupled with a harmony of roars of triumph.

Finn brushes his lips against my ear. "Look at him," he says with a note of awe. "You've brought him back."

Indeed, Zahraxi radiates power in a way I haven't yet witnessed. His aura has expanded, golden light pulsing outward to fill the space around us. The darkness that once threaded through it has vanished, replaced by pure, radiant gold and the most euphoric sensation that rivals the afterglow of sex with the two men I love. Even his human form seems to have settled, the constant shimmer of scales beneath his skin now all but nonexistent.

"Not just her," Zahraxi says, meeting Finn's gaze over my shoulder. "Us. This bond between us." He reaches out, cupping Finn's face with a tenderness that makes my heart ache. "I never imagined such a thing was possible." He leans close and presses a gentle, almost reverent kiss to Finn's mouth.

Around us, the golden light pulses and expands to fill the room. A collective, satisfied sigh emanates from our observers. When I peek around at them, I find almost everyone is in a similar state of relaxation.

The three of us stay locked in that embrace as the ritual's energy gradually subsides. After a time, participants begin to disengage, their purpose fulfilled now that Zahraxis' power has been restored. The jade beneath us cools, the glow receding back into the stone like the tide pulling away from shore.

Racha approaches, wrapped in a shimmering green robe that materializes from her smoke as she walks. Her expression is one of satisfied approval as she surveys the three of us.

"The power flowing between you three is impressive," she says, her eyes tracking the energy patterns only dragons can see. "You've melded together remarkably well for such a new bond." Her gaze settles on Zahraxis. "How do you feel, Golden One?"

Zahraxis straightens. "Whole," he says simply. "For the first time in three thousand years."

Finn rises, carefully placing me on my feet before exhaling a stream of crimson smoke that swirls around all three of us, solidifying into soft robes. The fabric settles around my shoulders, warm and surprisingly comfortable against my skin.

"The battle preparations?" he asks Racha, his demeanor shifting instantly from intimate to tactical.

"Tomorrow," she says. "The war council meets at dawn. For now, rest. You'll need your strength." Her gaze lingers on me. "All of you."

As she turns to leave, Zahraxis' voice stops her. "Queen Racha." His formal tone

carries a new note of respect. "There is one matter I would discuss before we face the Titans."

She turns, one eyebrow raised in question.

"Nikhil," Zahraxis says, the name like gravel in his mouth. "I am told he fights with us now."

A shadow crosses Racha's face. "Yes. He arrives tomorrow to join the council."

Tension ripples through Zahraxis' body, transmitting through our bond like electricity. Finn steps closer, his hand finding Zahraxis' shoulder.

"Brother," he says quietly. "Remember what we discussed."

"I remember," Zahraxis replies, his voice tight. "But I must see for myself. I must know."

Racha studies him for a long moment. "Vengeance is a luxury we cannot afford, not with the Titans at our door." Her tone softens. "But understanding... that I can offer you."

She glances between the three of us, her expression unreadable. "Be ready to put this behind you. We need you all focused for the battle to come."

As she walks away, I lean back against Zahraxis, feeling the steady beat of his heart against my spine. Through our bond, I sense the conflict within him—ancient rage warring with newfound peace, the desire for vengeance battling against the pull of our connection.

"We'll face it together," I say, reaching for Finn's hand to complete our circle.

"Whatever comes."

Zahraxis presses his lips to the top of my head, his breath warm against my hair. "Together," he agrees, both a promise and a prayer. As Finn's hand tightens around mine, I let the moment wash over me. I never asked to be claimed by dragons. I just stopped pretending I wasn't already theirs.

The jade chamber grows quiet as the last of the participants depart, leaving the three of us alone in the soft, pulsing glow of the living stone.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:34 am

Zahraxis

Dawn breaks over the city, painting the sky in hues of gold and crimson that mirror the marks upon our chests. I stand at the window of our assigned quarters, watching as the first light touches the steel and glass towers of this strange new world. Behind me, Rachel and Finn still sleep, their bodies entwined on the massive bed, their breathing synchronized in slumber.

Three thousand years. That is how long I waited in darkness, how long I dreamed of revenge against the one who condemned me to that living death. And now, today, I will face him.

The thought sends a ripple of golden scales across my skin before I master myself once more. The power that flooded back into me during yesterday's ritual sits comfortably beneath my human form, no longer straining against my control but flowing with it. I feel whole again, my magic restored, my strength returned. Yet something has changed; the bond we forged has altered me in ways I am only beginning to understand.

I feel Rachel stirring through our connection, her consciousness brushing against mine like a gentle caress. She rises silently, padding across the room to join me at the window. Her hand slips into mine, warm and small yet somehow anchoring.

"You're worried about meeting him," she says, not a question but a statement of fact. Through our bond, she feels my turmoil as clearly as if it were her own.

"Not worried," I correct her. "Uncertain. For three millennia, my hatred for Nikhil

was the flame that kept me alive in darkness. Now I am told he was but a puppet, his will not his own." I look down at her, this remarkable human who has somehow become essential to my existence in mere days. "What does one do when the object of one's vengeance is revealed to be another victim?"

She considers this, her expression thoughtful in the growing light. "You listen," she says finally. "You see him with new eyes. And then you decide."

Finn joins us, his crimson robe hanging open to reveal the mark on his chest—my mark, intertwined with Rachel's violet signature. "She's right," he says, resting one hand on my shoulder. "Nikhil has his own demons to face. But he's fought for redemption these past years. He helped destroy the true enemy."

I feel their concern flowing through our bond, their desire to ease my burden. As an empath, I have always sensed the emotions of others—a constant background noise of feelings not my own. But this is different. Their emotions flow directly into me, clear and undiluted, not like the distant echoes I typically perceive from those around me. It is as though the walls between us have dissolved, our spirits touching without barriers. Strange, but not unwelcome.

"I will listen," I concede, turning back to the window. "But three thousand years of hatred does not vanish overnight, even with the truth revealed."

Rachel squeezes my hand. "No one expects it to. Just be open to what you see today."

A knock at the door interrupts our moment. Finn moves to answer it, returning with a court messenger, who bows deeply upon seeing me.

"The queen requests your presence in the war chamber," the messenger says. "The council gathers now."

I nod, dismissing him with a gesture that feels both familiar and foreign—the casual authority I once wielded as naturally as breathing, now a half-remembered habit from another life. As the door closes, I turn to my mates.

"It seems the time for reflection has passed," I say.

Rachel glances down at her simple sleep clothes, then at our state of undress. "I only have jeans and a T-shirt. I'm not exactly prepared for a war council."

"We can fix that," Finn says with a grin. "Strip."

She raises an eyebrow, but complies, pulling her sleep shirt over her head. I feel a surge of possessive pride at the sight of our marks upon her chest, the combined sigil pulsing gently with each beat of her heart.

Finn and I exchange a glance, then simultaneously exhale—his breath crimson, mine gold. The smoke swirls around Rachel, merging into a shimmering cloud that clings to her form before solidifying. When it dissipates, she stands transformed.

The garment we've created for her is elegant, yet practical: a deep violet tunic with gold and crimson accents, fitted trousers, and soft boots. The neckline dips low enough to display our mark proudly, while subtle dragon motifs wind around the sleeves and collar.

"Oh," she breathes, examining herself. "This is beautiful."

Finn exhales another stream of crimson smoke, this time enveloping himself. It solidifies into clothing that manages to look both formal and relaxed, typical of his contradictory nature.

I follow suit, golden smoke pouring from my lips to create my own attire. I choose

something that honors my past while acknowledging this new present—a high-collared jacket with subtle hieroglyphics embroidered in thread that gleams like real gold, paired with fitted trousers that allow for ease of movement.

Finn grins, tugging at Rachel's collar. "We'll work on teaching you the finer points of dragon magic after we deal with the whole 'ancient monsters trying to destroy the world' situation."

His attempt at levity draws a smile from Rachel, but I feel her anxiety through our bond—not for herself, but for me. She worries how I will react when faced with Nikhil, fears what might happen if my ancient rage overwhelms my reason.

I capture her face between my palms, pressing my forehead to hers in a gesture of intimacy that predates even my long imprisonment. "I will not dishonor what we have built," I promise her. "Whatever happens today, I will remember that I am no longer alone in my purpose."

Her relief flows through our bond, warm and bright. Finn steps closer, completing our circle, his presence steady and grounding.

"Together, then," he says, offering his arm to Rachel while I take her other side.

"Together," we agree in unison.

I open the door, and we step into the hallway. The sound of urgent voices already echoes from the direction of the war chamber. Finn's stride lengthens, and Rachel quickens her pace to match. I feel the weight of three thousand years of hatred in my chest, but also the counterbalance of this new bond.

The war chamber buzzes with activity as we enter. A massive holographic display dominates the center of the room, projecting a detailed map of Greece with glowing

markers tracking movement patterns. Dragons in human form cluster around it, some tapping at the sleek tablets in their hands, others speaking urgently into smartphones. The technology is alien to me, yet I sense the subtle current of dragon magic enhancing these human inventions.

Racha stands at the head of the table, her petite form commanding attention despite the chaos. Her mate, Corey, remains at her side. They both look up as we approach, conversation halting around us as others notice our arrival.

"Zahraxis," Racha acknowledges with a nod. "Sullivan. Rachel. Thank you for joining us."

I incline my head in response, the gesture of respect coming more naturally than I expected. "My queen."

The words still feel strange on my tongue—not because I resent her authority, but because for most of my existence, I answered only to the Dragon Council. To acknowledge a single ruler of our kind, and a Green at that, would have been unthinkable in my time. Yet the world has changed, and I with it. The Dragon Council still lives, of course, but evidently only acts as advisors to the dragon race.

"We have two days," Racha says, gesturing to the holographic display. The image shifts to show Mount Olympus, surrounded by pulsing red indicators. "The Titans have given their ultimatum—either we deliver the key to Olympus, or they will curse all of dragonkind as they did the four Court dragons."

"Which we have no intention of doing," Corey adds firmly. "Giving them access to their primordial essences, their godseeds, would be suicide for everyone."

"And the gods?" I ask, studying the display with narrowed eyes. "They offer no assistance?"

A ripple of grim laughter passes through the room. A dragon I don't recognize—Asian features, with an aura that suggests significant age despite his youthful appearance—shakes his head.

"The gods have 'retired,'" he says, making air quotes with his fingers. "They've made it clear this is our problem to solve."

"Tartarus is the exception," Racha clarifies. "He and his guards will form the vanguard of our defense. He's still attempting to secure the key himself—not to give to the Titans, but to harness the power of their godseeds for our side."

Rachel studies the display intently, her expression grave as she takes in the scale of what we face.

"We'll need every advantage," Finn says, leaning over the table to examine the tactical markers.

"Indeed we will," a new voice answers from the doorway. "Which is why I've brought reinforcements."

The room goes silent. Every muscle in my body tenses as I turn toward that familiar voice—a voice I have heard in my nightmares for three millennia.

Nikhil stands in the entrance, a familiar woman with fair skin and long black hair beside him, her eyes gleaming sapphire. Belah, the pharaoh herself. My former ruler.

I should bow to her, but instead my vision narrows, golden haze creeping at the edges as rage surges through me. Scales ripple across my skin, and I feel my control slipping. Three thousand years of hatred crystallizes into this single moment, this opportunity for vengeance that I have craved for longer than most beings have lived. But my emotions can't help but cause a ripple effect throughout the room. Every

dragon in attendance emits low rumbles of hostility.

"Zahraxis," Belah speaks first, her voice carrying the weight of ages. "It has been too long."

I barely hear her. My focus remains locked on Nikhil, who meets my gaze without flinching. He has changed—no longer the cold, calculating torturer who condemned me to the void. His eyes hold knowledge and sorrow in equal measure, and something else I cannot name.

"Golden One," he says, using my old title with what sounds like genuine respect. "I had hoped we would meet again under better circumstances."

A growl builds in my chest, golden flames licking at the corners of my mouth. I take a step forward, only to feel Rachel's hand on my arm and Finn's presence steady at my back. Through our bond, they send waves of calm, not restraining me but reminding me of their presence, of the promise I made.

It's enough for me to notice how much the mood in the entire room has shifted. Chagrined, I rein in my animosity, and everyone relaxes.

"Better circumstances," I repeat, my voice barely recognizable through the effort to contain my rage. "Such as me tearing out your throat for what you did to me? For what you did to my kind?"

Nikhil does not retreat. Instead he steps forward, away from Belah's protective stance. "I deserve your hatred," he says simply. "And more."

His admission catches me off-guard. I expected denial, justification, perhaps even attack—not this quiet acceptance.

"You trapped me in darkness for three thousand years," I say, each word precise despite the flames that threaten to spill from my lips. "You experimented on dragons like we were nothing more than beasts."

"Yes," Nikhil agrees, his voice steady. "I did all those things and worse. Things I remember doing, decisions I remember making, all while something else controlled my mind." He takes another step closer. "I do not ask for forgiveness, Zahraxis. I ask only that you see the truth before you decide."

Racha moves between us, her green eyes flashing with authority. "This is not the time for personal vendettas. The Titans?—"

"Will wait," Belah interrupts, surprising everyone. "This conflict has festered for millennia. It must be resolved if we are to face external threats as a unified force." She turns to me, her blue eyes softening. "Zahraxis, will you permit Nikhil to show you what truly happened? To share his memories of the final battle against the one who controlled him?"

Rachel's hand tightens on my arm, her concern flowing through our bond. Finn's presence at my back remains steady, supportive without being constraining.

"How?" I demand, still not taking my eyes off Nikhil.

"A memory merge," Nikhil explains. "I can share what happened directly. It is a very recent memory, so every detail will be crystal-clear to you."

The chamber has gone completely still, every dragon watching this confrontation with bated breath. I feel the weight of their attention, but more importantly, I feel the steady support of my mates through our bond.

"And if I find your memories false?" I ask, golden flames dancing between my teeth.

"If this is some trick?"

"Then I place myself at your mercy," Nikhil says. "Though you should know only Belah's fire can end me."

"Trust me in this, if nothing else," Belah says, stepping forward. "I, who was once your pharaoh, ask this of you, Zahraxis. See the truth before you judge."

I consider this, weighing three millennia of hatred against the possibility of truth. Rachel's presence in my mind feels like a cool stream against the heat of my rage, while Finn's steadiness grounds me.

"Show me," I finally say, the flames receding from my mouth. "Show me everything."

Nikhil nods, approaching slowly. The assembled dragons draw back, forming a circle around us. Rachel and Finn move to stand at my sides, their support unwavering.

"This will be... intense," Nikhil warns, raising his hands. "Particularly for an empath of your strength."

I meet his gaze directly, this man who was once my captor, my torturer. "I have endured worse at your hands."

A flash of pain crosses his face, but he nods in acknowledgment. "That you have." He lifts his hands toward my head. "May I?"

I give a curt nod, bracing myself for whatever comes next. He cups both hands at the sides of my head, splaying his fingers to brace my jaw, thumbs beneath my chin with two fingers at my temples. Then I close my eyes, and the war chamber dissolves around me.

Darkness. Suffocating, all-consuming darkness. Not the absence of light, but something alive, malevolent, slithering through every thought. I struggle against invisible bonds, screaming orders to a body that no longer obeys. My hands—Nikhil's hands—move without my permission, performing unspeakable acts while my consciousness remains trapped, a helpless witness to atrocities committed with my own flesh.

Years blur together, decades, centuries of this half-life. A rage for vengeance against all dragon kind, a desperate need, all driven by grief so profound my bones ache with it.

Then—a spark.

A face swims through the darkness. Belah, her blue eyes wide with horror as she realizes the truth. "You're still in there," she whispers, and the darkness recoils from her voice. She holds up a hand, a drop of blood poised on a fingertip above my mouth. The darkness flees when the blood hits my tongue, but only briefly, then returns with the rage of a swarm of hornets.

The memory shifts and fragments. A song pierces the void, notes so pure they cut through the darkness like knives. The melody wraps around my consciousness, prying the shadows away, creating space to breathe, to think, to fight back. The song lingers more thoroughly than the fleeting taste of my lover's blood, keeps the darkness at bay. I can finally think for myself long enough to atone.

Then I am on a beach, tracking bloody footprints along wet sand. Dionysus walks beside me, his massive form radiating divine power. Ahead, a woman—no, not a woman, but some thing wearing flesh not her own—paces frantically, slicing her own flesh with a blade while ranting about destruction. The darkness that fled my mind is in her now, and the woman who owned the flesh the darkness inhabits fights harder against it than I ever did.

"Meri." The name escapes my lips like a curse. The being who controlled me, who imprisoned Zahraxis, who has tormented countless lives across millennia, has chosen another vessel, but one willing to die to be rid of her.

The scene accelerates. Dionysus negotiating, offering his own blood to create a new and better vessel. Gaia appearing, her presence so overwhelming it makes even the memory of it difficult to bear. The creation of a new body, Meri's spirit transferring—then immediate betrayal as she attacks with newfound power.

I feel my hand close around a ritual blade, the weight of it familiar and terrible. This is the same blade Belah once gifted me, now stained with blood and betrayal. Meri stands before me, her new form radiating malevolent power, her taunts cutting through the chaos of battle around us.

Rage. Pure, clarifying rage fills every fiber of my being as I confront the creature who stole my life, who used my body to commit countless atrocities. The blade feels alive in my hand, hungry for the blood of the one who has caused so much suffering.

"Remember this?" my voice is barely recognizable as I hold the blade before Meri's face. "You were there when it was made more than three thousand years ago."

I slice her cheek, the blade parting flesh with terrible precision. Blood wells, bright against pale skin. Another cut, deeper, down her face to her throat. Her fear is palpable now, the realization that she has finally miscalculated.

"I nearly tossed this blade through your heart earlier," I say, my voice cold with centuries of accumulated hatred. "I would have been happy if you'd died then, but this is so much better, I think—seeing you suffer under my hand, for once."

My consciousness splits then, and I'm aware for the first time that I am merely an observer of Nikhil's memory, yet he holds tight to my awareness.

"This is the best part. Feel it with me, Zahraxis," he whispers in my mind. And I obey, surrendering again to the visceral need to experience his revenge, and find closure of my own in the process.

The blade slides into her flesh with a slick, intimate sensation, the tip seeking and finding the perfect path between her ribs like a predator scenting weakness. The moment it punctures her heart, I feel a jolt of savage pleasure so intense it's almost sexual. Her blood flows hot over my hand, soaking the hilt of the dagger, running down my arm in rivulets of crimson that feel like liquid vengeance against my skin.

Her body slackens against mine, her life ebbing with each weakening heartbeat. Her head falls against my shoulder, her breath coming in ragged gasps against my neck. The last of her life pulses around the blade, and I twist it, ensuring there is no coming back from this death.

As she slumps in my arms, I feel it—the moment the shadow that has haunted us both for millennia finally dissipates. Freedom. Pure, absolute freedom.

The memory dissolves, and I am back in the war chamber, staggering backward as Nikhil's hands fall away from my temples. Rachel and Finn steady me, their touch anchoring me to the present.

"She's gone," I whisper, the truth settling into my bones. "The one who imprisoned us both... truly gone."

Nikhil nods solemnly. "By my hand, with Dionysus' sacrifice. She will never harm another dragon, another being, again." He nods at Rachel. "It was that moment when the Bloodline came into being. Rachel and those like her, and their ancestors going back three millennia, were once tainted by Meri's blood, susceptible to her mind control. When Dionysus gave his own blood to create a new body for her, his magic subsumed her own, his blood replaced hers. Every descendent of every human she

tainted had their higher races blood awakened by the god's sacrifice."

I struggle to process this new reality. The hatred that sustained me for millennia doesn't simply vanish, but it shifts, redirecting toward an enemy already destroyed, a threat already eliminated.

"I saw what she did to you," I say, meeting his eyes. "How she used you as I was used."

"Different prisons," Nikhil acknowledges. "Same jailer."

Rachel's hand finds mine, her presence in our bond steady and supportive. Finn stands close, his crimson energy mingling with my gold through our marks.

I look down at Rachel, awed yet again by her very existence. If not for that day and how those moments transpired, I might not have found her. Her gaze meets mine in unspoken understanding.

"What of the others?" I ask, thinking of the dragons I had known, the ones who had suffered alongside me. "My kind, who were taken for her experiments?"

"Many were lost," Belah says, stepping forward. "But those who survived have been found, healed as much as possible. Reparations are being made to all living victims of the Ultiori."

I absorb this, another piece of a world I'm still learning to understand. "And now we face the Titans," I say, turning back to the maps. "A new enemy, a new battle."

"Together," Racha confirms, her green eyes assessing me carefully. "If you choose to stand with us."

I take a breath and nod. "I will stand with you against the Titans, but first, I would see my homeland again. Three thousand years is too long to be away from Egypt's sands."

Belah steps forward, her blue eyes bright with understanding. "The Court maintains a sanctuary near Luxor, overlooking the Temple of Karnak. It would be yours, if you wish it."

I feel Rachel's excitement pulse through our bond, matched by Finn's steady approval.

"We could go there after the battle," Rachel suggests, squeezing my hand. "Something to fight for."

"No," I say, meeting Racha's gaze. "We go now. Just for a day." I turn to Nikhil, the hatred that once consumed me now transformed into something more complex. "I need to remember what I'm fighting for before I face these Titans. I need to stand on Egyptian soil again."

Racha studies me for a long moment before nodding. "Very well. Naia can take you tonight and return you tomorrow for the war council." Her green eyes soften. "Some battles are won before they're fought, Golden One. By remembering who we are."

Rachel

New York's predawn air carries a chill that makes me shiver despite my new dragon-conjured clothing. We stand at the edge of a fountain in Central Park not far from the Court building, waiting for Naia to finish her preparations. The city's ever-present glow creates a false twilight against the darkened sky, so different from the star-filled nights on Bear Island.

"Are you certain this is wise?" Finn asks, his voice low as he watches Naia trail her fingers through the fountain water. "We could fly there after the battle."

Zahraxis stands motionless beside me, his golden eyes fixed on the rippling water. "I need this," he says simply. Through our newly formed bond, I feel the complexity beneath those words—a desperate hunger to reconnect with his homeland, to ground himself before facing yet another battle.

I squeeze his hand. "Egypt is closer to Greece than New York. If we need to, we can fly straight from there."

Zahraxis looks at me as if impressed that I understand basic geography. Before I can brush off the reaction, he says, "It seems I've been too wrapped up in my return I hadn't considered the logistics to follow. Thank you, Raelesha. That detail may even aid our battle plans. A secondary base of operations, closer to the fight, is a good idea."

"It was nothing," I say with a shrug, cheeks warming.

Naia looks up, silver light dancing across her fingertips. "I've located an anchor point near Luxor," she says. "The current is strong there—the Nile remembers its ancient paths." She rises gracefully, water streaming from her hands in defiance of gravity. "Are you ready?"

"As we'll ever be," Finn mutters, stepping forward. His aura pulses with resignation.

I swallow hard, recalling our last experience with drifting. "At least we know what to expect this time."

We join hands, forming a circle with Naia. Her skin begins to shimmer, taking on the fluid quality of moving water. "Close your eyes," she instructs, "and remember to breathe."

The world dissolves around us, and that familiar yanking sensation pulls at my core. The disorienting whirlpool effect is no less intense the second time, but I'm prepared for it, focusing on the steady pressure of Zahraxis' hand in mine. His emotions flow through our bond—anticipation, fear, hope, all swirling together like the currents carrying us across the world.

When reality snaps back into place, the first thing I notice is the heat—dry and intense betraying both the warmer environment and the later hour where we've arrived. My knees buckle as nausea rolls through me, but I manage to stay upright. Beside me, both dragons fare worse, dropping to their knees on the sandy bank. Finn's creative cursing fills the air while Zahraxis remains ominously silent, his golden eyes wide as he stares at the landscape around us.

"The Nile," he whispers, reaching out to touch the dark water lapping at the shore. "After all this time..."

Naia, completely unfazed by the journey, gestures toward a path winding up from the

riverbank. "The Court's sanctuary is just beyond that rise. I'll return for you tomorrow at midday." She studies Zahraxis with something like reverence. "Welcome home, Ancient One." Then she dissolves into mist that merges with the river, leaving us alone on the foreign shore.

The sky is just beginning to lighten, stars fading as dawn approaches. In the distance, massive stone structures loom against the horizon—the temples of Karnak, I realize with a start. Zahraxis rises slowly, his gaze fixed on those ancient silhouettes.

"It still stands," he says, wonder and pain mingling in his voice. "After all this time, it still stands."

Finn claps a hand on his shoulder. "The Court has worked to preserve what remains of the ancient sites. They're considered heritage landmarks now."

I activate my dragon sight, curious about what energies might linger in this ancient place. The result nearly staggers me—the land itself pulses with power, golden threads of magic woven through soil and stone. They grow denser toward the temple complex, forming a tapestry of light visible only to those with the gift to see it.

"The magic," I breathe. "It's everywhere."

Zahraxis nods, unsurprised. "This land was sacred long before humans built their first mud hut beside the river. The temples were placed where the earth's power runs strongest." He takes a deep breath, seeming to taste the air. "It has changed, but its essence remains."

We follow the path up from the riverbank, my eyes adjusting to the growing light. The landscape is both alien and hauntingly beautiful, the river a dark ribbon against golden sand, palm trees swaying in the gentle breeze. As we crest the rise, a structure comes into view that makes me gasp.

The Court's sanctuary is a masterpiece of ancient and modern design. Built from golden limestone that seems to capture the first rays of sunrise, its facade features soaring columns carved to resemble papyrus stalks. Massive doors of dark wood stand open, revealing glimpses of a courtyard beyond. The building appears ancient at first glance, but closer inspection reveals subtle modern elements—nearly invisible solar panels nestled among traditional roof tiles, security cameras disguised as decorative falcons, windows of one-way glass set into stone frames.

"This is..." I struggle to find words.

"Home," Zahraxis says simply, his voice thick with emotion. "For now. Perhaps longer."

A figure emerges from the entrance—a woman in a simple white dress, her dark hair braided with gold threads. She bows deeply when she sees us. "Welcome, Golden One," she says in accented English. "I am Amara. We have awaited your return for generations. The sanctuary is prepared."

Zahraxis inclines his head, slipping effortlessly into the role of returning royalty. The gesture seems to come naturally to him, a remnant of the life he led before his imprisonment. "You have our thanks."

She leads us through the massive doors into a central courtyard where a fountain plays, the sound of water creating instant coolness against the rising heat. I pause at the railing along one side, suddenly realizing our vantage point.

"We're on an island," I say, taking in the narrow channels of the Nile flowing on both sides of the sanctuary grounds. "Right in the middle of the river."

Amara nods, a hint of pride in her smile. "Yes. The sanctuary was built on the sacred island of Djeserit," she explains. "It has always been a place of power, protected by

the river itself."

Zahraxis moves to the railing, his expression distant. "I remember this place. My royal court would come here for purification rituals before major ceremonies." His fingers trace the weathered stone. "The island was believed to be the first land that emerged from the primordial waters at the beginning of creation."

Potted palms create islands of shade across the courtyard, and comfortable seating areas are arranged to catch the morning breeze. Amara guides us from the riverside view through the courtyard to a grand staircase.

"The upper chambers have been prepared," she explains. "They offer lovely views of the surrounding landscape." She gestures to various doorways as we ascend. "Bathing chambers, meditation rooms, the library with texts dating back to your era, Golden One."

Zahraxis pauses at this, his interest visibly piqued. "My era?"

"Yes, my lord. The Court has preserved what could be saved." Her expression turns apologetic. "Much was lost, but some remains. Many were returned to us by Nikhil, when he pledged his loyalty to the dragons again." I glance at Zahraxis whose expression remains neutral, but his aura pulses with recognition, and appreciation of the gesture.

We reach the upper level, where Amara shows us to a suite of rooms that takes my breath away. Floor-to-ceiling windows frame spectacular views of the Nile on either side and the temples of Karnak past the riverbank to the east. The furnishings blend modern comfort with ancient aesthetics—low divans covered in rich fabrics, tables of polished dark wood inlaid with gold, lamps that cast a warm glow reminiscent of lanternlight. Despite the traditional appearance, I spot climate controls discreetly built into the walls and modern fixtures in the adjoining bathing chamber.

That bathroom is particularly impressive, a massive space dominated by a shower large enough for three people (or one dragon), with multiple heads and a glass wall overlooking the river. A sunken tub that could double as a small pool occupies one corner, while the opposite wall features a vanity with twin basins carved from alabaster.

"This is incredible," I murmur, running my fingers along the cool stone of the vanity.

"The sanctuary was built to accommodate dragons in both forms," Amara explains. "The floors are reinforced, the ceilings high enough for shifting, provided the dragon does not wish to stretch their wings." She turns to Zahrax. "Is there anything else you require, my lord?"

He shakes his head, visibly overwhelmed by the experience. "No. Thank you."

After Amara leaves, promising to return with refreshments, we stand in silence, absorbing our surroundings. Finn moves to the windows, looking out at the temple complex now clearly visible in the morning light.

"We should visit before the tourists arrive," he suggests. "The site opens to the public at six a.m., but the Court can arrange private access."

Zahrax nods, his gaze fixed on the distant columns. "Yes. I would see it... as it is now."

Through our bond, I feel his conflicting emotions—eagerness to reconnect with his past, fear of what has been lost, and beneath it all, a deep, aching nostalgia that makes my own chest tight. I move to his side, slipping my hand into his.

"Then let's go," I say softly. "Let's see your temple."

The ancient stones of Karnak Temple glow gold in the early morning light, massive columns rising toward the cloudless sky like silent sentinels. We walk through the Great Court, our footsteps echoing in the empty space. A few guards nod respectfully as we pass, clearly informed of our visit by the Court.

Zahraxis moves as if in a trance, his fingers trailing over hieroglyphs carved into stone pillars. Through our bond, I catch flashes of memory: these same courtyards filled with people, incense smoke curling toward the sky, chants rising in harmony with the flow of the Nile. The contrast between those vibrant memories and the quiet, partially ruined reality before us makes my heart ache.

"It was so much more," he murmurs, pausing before a massive statue of a seated figure. "So much has been lost."

Finn nods, his expression somber. "Time takes its toll, even on stone."

We continue through the complex, Zahraxis occasionally stopping to translate inscriptions or explain the purpose of various chambers. His knowledge is intimate, personal; these weren't just historical sites to him, but places he lived and served. When we reach the inner sanctuary, he falls silent, staring at the sacred space now open to the sky where a roof once gave shelter.

"This was my throne room," he says finally, gesturing to a spot near a fallen column. "I ruled this region as king, serving Isis. During the high ceremonies, I would commune with the gods here." His voice drops lower. "We would bring offerings at dawn, just as the sun touched the inner chamber. The light would strike the gold... it was blinding."

I activate my dragon sight again, curious what energies might remain. Golden threads still pulse through the stone, concentrated most heavily in this inner sanctuary. "The magic is still here," I tell him. "Faded, but present."

A small smile touches his lips. "Of course. Some things even time cannot erase."

As we exit the inner sanctuary, a small group of early tourists enters the main courtyard, led by a guide speaking rapid-fire English. They point cameras at the towering columns, exclaiming over the scale of the architecture. One breaks away from the group, approaching a carved relief that Zahraxis had just been examining.

"Please do not touch the carvings," the guide calls out, hurrying over.

Zahraxis stiffens beside me, his aura flaring with indignation. I feel his struggle to contain his reaction—these are sacred spaces to him, not tourist attractions. Finn moves closer, his steady presence a counterbalance to Zahraxis' rising tension.

"Different world, brother," he murmurs. "Different time."

Zahraxis takes a deep breath, visibly mastering himself. "Yes. It is not as it was." His voice carries a resignation that breaks my heart. "Nothing is."

We make our way back through the complex as more tourists begin to arrive, the sacred silence giving way to the chatter and camera clicks of the modern world. By the time we exit the main gate, the sun has climbed higher, its heat intensifying with every passing minute.

"We should return to the sanctuary," Finn suggests, eyeing Zahraxis with concern. Through our bond, I feel the ancient dragon's emotional exhaustion, the weight of seeing his past transformed into something unrecognizable. The weariness is affecting me and Finn as well as we find our driver waiting near the entrance.

The trip back is quiet, each of us lost in thought during the brief car ride across the short bridge to the island. When we reach the sanctuary, Amara meets us with cool drinks and the news that a light meal has been prepared. We eat in the courtyard, the

fountain's gentle splashing a soothing backdrop. Zahraxi barely touches his food, his gaze distant.

"Was it what you expected?" I ask finally, unable to bear the silence.

He considers this, setting down his wineglass. "I expected nothing," he says. "Three thousand years... I knew it would be changed. But seeing it..." He shakes his head. "It is like visiting your own tomb, only to find tourists taking photographs of your sarcophagus."

Finn snorts. "Poetic."

"But accurate," Zahraxi insists. "What was sacred is now... entertainment."

"Not entirely," I counter. "The magic is still there. I saw it. And people still come to connect with something greater than themselves, even if they don't understand exactly what that is."

Zahraxi studies me, his golden eyes thoughtful. "Perhaps. But they climb over altars where gods once walked."

"Gods retire," Finn reminds him. "And the world moves on. But some things remain." He gestures to the sanctuary around us. "The Court remembers. The dragons remember."

"And now I remember too," I add softly. "Through you. Those memories aren't lost as long as someone carries them."

Something shifts in Zahraxi's expression—a softening, an acceptance. He reaches for my hand, his touch warm against my skin. "Yes," he agrees. "Not lost. Changed, but not lost. And we can build something new together."

As the day's heat reaches its peak, we retreat to our chambers. The climate control keeps the rooms pleasantly cool despite the scorching sun outside. Zahraxis moves to the windows overlooking Karnak, his silhouette framed against the ancient skyline.

"Rest," Finn suggests, pressing his palm against the small of my back. "We have time before we need to get back."

The word "rest" hangs in the air between us, its meaning transforming with the heat in his eyes. Zahraxis turns from the window, his golden gaze falling on us with an intensity that makes my skin tingle. Their energy shifts—the emotional weight of the day crystallizing into something more primal, more urgent.

"Yes," Zahraxis says, his voice a low rumble that vibrates through me. "We should... rest."

He crosses the room in three long strides, reaching for me with hands that tremble slightly—not with weakness, but with barely contained need. When he brushes his fingers against my cheek, desire surges between us, amplified by the sacred energy of this place—his place.

Source Creation Date: July 23, 2025, 2:34 am

"Here," he murmurs, "in the land of my birth."

Finn moves behind me, pressing his chest against my back as he grips my waist. "A proper homecoming," he agrees, his breath hot against my ear.

I'm caught between them, surrounded by their heat, their scent, their overwhelming presence. Zahraxi bends to capture my mouth, his kiss deep and possessive. His tongue slides against mine as Finn works at the fastenings of my clothing, each button undone revealing another inch of skin to the warm air.

"The bathing chamber," Zahraxi suggests when he breaks the kiss, his eyes flicking to the massive shower with its view of the Nile. "This is a sacred moment. We should consummate it beneath the sacred waters of this place."

We move as one toward the adjoining room, shedding clothes with each step. By the time we reach the threshold, I'm naked between them, their hands roaming over my skin with reverent hunger. Finn reaches in to start the water, steam rising immediately as multiple shower heads spring to life.

Zahraxi lifts me effortlessly, carrying me into the shower and setting me on my feet beneath the warm cascade. Water sluices over us, plastering my hair to my scalp and running in rivulets down my body. Both men follow, the glass enclosure suddenly feeling much smaller with their powerful forms inside.

"Look at you," Finn says, his crimson eyes taking in my wet skin, the faintly pulsing glow of their marks on my chest. "Fucking gorgeous."

Zahraxis makes a sound of agreement, cupping my breasts from behind. He circles my nipples with his thumbs, pinching gently until they're tight peaks that ache for more attention. When Finn bends to take one in his mouth, I gasp, arching into the heat of his tongue.

Finn explores lower with one hand, sliding down my stomach to the juncture of my thighs. He parts my folds, finding slick heat between. The first stroke of his fingers elicits a soft sigh from me, the pleasure already building in my core reflected through our bond. I marvel all over again at how easily I can sense their hunger for me, and it only gets me hotter.

"Already so wet for us," Finn murmurs, circling my clit with teasing pressure.

I moan as he switches to my other breast, grazing the sensitive peak with his teeth. Zahraxis dips his head to bite gently at my throat, each nip sending a fresh jolt down to my clit. There's something different about Zahraxis now—a steadiness, a certainty that wasn't there before. He moves with deliberate purpose, each caress precisely calculated to draw the maximum response.

Finn straightens and turns, positioning his back against the glass wall and pulling me with him, the magnificent view framed behind his powerful form. His gaze flashes to Zahraxis behind me, as if some silent exchange has occurred, as if this moment has already been choreographed by them both. Beyond his shoulder, the Nile flows serenely, the same river that witnessed Zahraxis' reign thousands of years ago.

Zahraxis moves close behind me again, dipping his mouth to my ear. "I want you to see," he says, his voice rough with desire. "I want you to look upon my kingdom while we claim you."

Finn grips my hips and lifts me with a strength that still takes my breath away. I wrap my legs around his waist instinctively, my arms looping around his neck for support. He braces himself more firmly against the glass, spreading his feet and bending his

knees as he positions me so I can gaze over his shoulder at the expansive view while he supports my weight.

"Yes," I breathe, my core aching with need. "Please."

The water streams over us, creating a warm curtain that somehow enhances rather than obscures the connection between us. With deliberate slowness, Finn lowers me onto his cock, the thick head pressing against my entrance before sliding inside.

I gasp at the stretch, the fullness, as he fills me inch by exquisite inch. His pleasure mirrors my own, satisfaction radiating between us as my body yields to him. When he's fully seated, he holds me there, letting me adjust to his size.

"Perfect," he murmurs against my ear. "You were made for this."

Zahraxis presses close, caressing my breasts as he watches Finn claim me. His cock is a hot, rigid length against my ass. A memory flashes through my mind: that first afternoon on Bear Island when they filled me together, stretching me beyond what I thought possible.

"I want you both," I say, the words tumbling out before I can think better of them. "Like before. Together."

Finn stills, his golden eyes meeting Zahraxis' over my shoulder. A subtle smirk tilts at the corner of his mouth. Something passes between them—as if they planned this all along.

"We know," Finn says, his voice gruff but cocky. "We want that too."

"Then do it. Please," I insist. "I need to feel you both inside me."

He adjusts his grip, supporting me more firmly as Zahraxis shifts behind me. He

slides his cock along the crack of my ass until it presses against my already stretched entrance. Finn easily lifts me up and off his own cock, holding me aloft as if I weigh nothing while Zahrax is aligns their cocks together.

"Breathe," Zahrax is instructs, stroking my lower back. "Relax for us, Raelesha."

I focus on my breathing, on the sensation of their cockheads penetrating me ever so slowly, on the warm water cascading over all three of us. Gradually, my body yields, and they push deeper with excruciating slowness. The stretch is intense, bordering on pain, but the bond between us transforms the sensation into something transcendent.

"Oh god," I moan as they slide deeper, both their thick shafts pressing deep within me. "So perfect."

When they're both fully seated, we remain motionless for long moments, adjusting to the overwhelming connection. The sensation is far more intense than that first time on the mountain, our newly forged bond amplifying every touch, every emotion.

I briefly test the connection and find Zahrax is focused as much on the view as he urged me to be. He is the happiest I have known him to be in the few days since I met him.

"You brought me home, my love," he whispers in my ear. "This is the happiest I have ever been."

Without a word, I crane my neck to meet his eyes where he peers over my shoulder. Our gazes lock, and a spark of raw desire passes between us. He dips his head to capture my mouth in a kiss so deep I feel the weight of it in my soul.

While we kiss, they both begin to move, rocking together while I'm trapped between them, locked in the cage of their bodies.

They establish a rhythm that defies logic, completely in sync, filling me with every stroke. The dual stimulation sends waves of pleasure crashing through me, building rapidly toward release.

Zahraxis releases my mouth, only for Finn to take over. He captures my mouth in a hungry kiss, swallowing my moans as Zahraxis nips at my shoulder. Their movements grow more urgent, more demanding, as they drive me toward the edge.

"Look," Zahraxis commands. Finn breaks the kiss, allowing me to obey. "Look at my kingdom while we make you ours."

The sight of the ancient river flowing past, combined with the relentless rhythm of their cocks inside me, pushes me over the edge. My orgasm tears through me with unexpected force, my inner walls clenching around them both as pleasure radiates outward from my core.

"That's it," Finn growls, his thrusts growing erratic. "Fuck, you feel amazing."

Zahraxis follows me over the edge, his release triggered by the rhythmic pulsing of my body around him. His pleasure amplifies my own, creating a cascade that prolongs the sensation to near unbearable heights.

Finn manages a few more thrusts before surrendering to his own climax, his cock pulsing alongside Zahraxis' as he empties himself deep inside me. The three of us remain locked together, trembling with aftershocks as the water continues to cascade over our joined bodies.

Slowly, carefully, they withdraw, supporting me between them as my legs refuse to hold my weight. My body feels gloriously used, pleasantly sore in ways that remind me of our connection.

"That was..." I begin, but words fail me.

"Just the beginning," Finn promises, reaching for the soap. "We're not done with you yet."

They wash me with reverent care, taking turns to soap every inch of my skin. Zahraxis pays particular attention to my hair, massaging my scalp with unexpected tenderness.

"In my time," he explains, "washing another's hair was an act of deep intimacy, reserved for family and lovers."

When they've rinsed me clean, Zahraxis presses me back against the glass once more. This time, both men sink to their knees before me, their intentions clear in their hungry gazes.

"Our turn to taste you," Finn says, lifting one of my legs over his shoulder.

Zahraxis mirrors him, spreading me wide between them. The first touch of their tongues—Finn circling my clit while Zahraxis teases my entrance—draws a startled cry from my lips. The dual sensation is almost too much after my intense orgasm, but they give me no time to recover.

They work in perfect harmony, trading places and techniques with wordless coordination. When Finn slides two fingers inside me, Zahraxis sucks my clit between his lips. When Zahraxis thrusts his tongue deep, Finn grazes my sensitive bud with gentle teeth.

Another climax builds rapidly, my oversensitive body responding to their skilled attention. They sense my approaching release, doubling their efforts to push me over the edge.

"Please," I gasp, tangling my fingers in their hair. "I can't—it's too?—"

"You can," Zahraxis insists, his golden eyes looking up at me. "One more, Raelesha."

Finn hums in agreement, the vibration against my sensitive flesh sending sparks of pleasure racing along my nerves. They work together, tongues and fingers creating a symphony of sensation that leaves me no choice but to surrender.

My second orgasm crashes through me with even greater force than the first, my knees buckling as pleasure overwhelms me. Only their strong hands keep me upright as wave after wave of ecstasy pulses through my body.

Before I can recover, they switch positions again. Finn closes his mouth over my clit, sucking rhythmically, while Zahraxis slides his tongue inside me. The combination pushes me immediately toward a third climax, my body responding with near-painful intensity.

"I can't," I sob, even as my hips rock against their mouths. "Too much."

They ignore my protests, sensing my body still craves more despite my words. When this orgasm hits, it's less a crash and more a transcendence—my consciousness seeming to float above my body as pleasure radiates through every cell. This time I can sense the energy flooding into them where their hands are in contact with my skin. Both men are glowing as if every cell in their bodies is luminescent.

I'm barely aware of them turning off the water, of being lifted and carried from the shower. They pat me dry with soft towels, then wrap me in one of the plush robes. My limbs feel like liquid, my mind hazy with satisfaction as they carry me to the bed.

I drift in and out of awareness as they dry themselves and don their own robes. When I finally regain some semblance of coherence, the sun has begun its descent toward the western horizon. I clamber off the bed to join them where they stand at the windows. They reflexively pull me between them, each curling a strong arm around my waist as we watch the Nile gleam like molten gold, boats moving along its surface

like tiny insects from this distance.

"I wish we could see the pyramids from here," I say, my voice still hoarse from crying out in pleasure.

Finn smiles. "They're a few hundred miles north, near Cairo. We can visit when we return."

"When we return," Zahraxis echoes, the words a promise rather than a question.

A soft chime interrupts the moment—Finn's phone, receiving a message. His expression grows serious as he reads the screen.

"The Titans have been spotted approaching Mount Olympus," he says, looking up. "The Council is gathering their forces so they're ready when it's time to strike."

Reality crashes back—the battle ahead, the danger we face, the world that needs saving. I feel a momentary pang of resentment that our brief respite must end so soon.

"Do we have to leave right away?" I ask, reluctant to give up this peaceful interlude.

"Naia won't arrive until midday tomorrow," Finn reminds me. "We have tonight, at least."

Zahraxis turns from the window, his expression resolute. "One night in my homeland after three thousand years away." His lips curve in a small smile. "It will have to be enough."

I grip both his hands. "Is it enough? To have seen it again?"

Zahraxis considers this, his gaze moving from the river to the temple, then finally back to me. "I thought I needed to stand on Egyptian soil again to remember who I

was," he says slowly. "But I realize now that home is not just a place." He reaches for Finn's hand, just as Finn grips my free hand in his, completing the circuit of our bond. "Home is where we stand together."

Finn's expression softens. "Poetic again. You're full of surprises, Ancient One."

"Tomorrow, we prepare to fight," Zahraxis says, his voice taking on the formal cadence that emerges when he speaks of serious matters. "But tonight..." His golden eyes meet mine, then Finn's. "Tonight belongs to us."

THE END FOR NOW