

((**Note:** This section takes place during [Chapter 47](#).)

Axle and Tris found a tree that have been knocked over for its age as it leaned against a younger bunch of trees making a natural shelter. The white went underneath it to get out from rain, but Tris held herself outside, watching him for any sudden movements like a cat watching a mouse. Axle sat under the tree and looked back at the drake. He said, "You know looking at one thing for too long will make you lose sense of the real world that is around you."

Tris simply growled at him about trying to make small chat. "Axle, I could really care less, not after what you did," her voice sounding like a cursed snake as she hissed the words.

Axle calmly said, "Then explain to me what Spinx has told you about what happen, hm. If you're so buddy-buddy with him, then you should know the full detail of what happened, not just a fragment of it." Yet, he seemed to be pissed about the drake not knowing what has happened.

"A fragment is all I need, snake."

"Then you are naive. Spinx told you I was the only one to have returned home, leaving behind your sister and betraying her, is that it? Well, it's not. A young mind will always try and grab the closest thing to hope, even if it is false or a lie."

"Shut your mouth, you snake," Tris snarled and lunged at Axle just by blind rage. Even if the drake has considered herself a great fighter with the magic ability to absorb others' magic spell of elements. Even with Axle being badly injured and weakened. With him sitting down, he still managed to kick her straight in the head, rolling out from the fallen tree. Her head hit the tree with a loud thud, matching the crackling of the thunder. The drake fell flat on her chest as her world around her started to spin. As she was dazed for a second, the loud snaps of the now dead tree and the young branches could be heard as one by one snapped with loud crackling sound. *'Move Tris move,'* Tris thought in her head, but her body was not responding to her mind command. She heard one more loud snap, then the sound of wood rubbing against wood, a sign that the tree was falling over. She waited for her death, but Axle grabbed her by the neck and dragged her out the other side, more like throw her out the other side, back into the downpour before the tree could crush her under its heavy weight. She slid across the muddy ground, hitting her head on a tree again. She was dazed again as her head was ringing from the pain.

Axle came up behind her and placed one of his paws on top of Tris, pushing down on her back to keep her in place. She slightly sunk into the mud from that as she kind of struggled in panic from just being under the white's foot. Her struggling panic made her sink a bit farther into the mud till she finally gave up.

As she snarled into the ground towards Axle, Tris said, "If you're going to kill me, do it now or I will come after you over and over till you die by my claws, snake." But the white simply responded by lifting his foot off her back.

She was a bit shocked by that as Axle simply responded back to her, "No, I won't. I'm not that type of dragon. Listen, you can accept the truth or follow the lie, it's up to you. But I did not just abandon your sister to a horde of zombies for my own benefit. In truth, I did not want to leave her side at all and she knew it far too well. She did not give me a chance when she made her choice and sent me off with the teleportation scroll we were given. I was upset by that and wanted to return immediately back to her side to try and bring her home, but she forewarned Juna about me trying to do so and she stopped me from going back. Your sister is the reason I still live to this day and it pains me that she is now gone, but even more that you are now working for Spinx." He looked down to her with soft eyes. "Your sister would be upset by this, you know that. So why do you do it?"

Tris snarled, "Stop spilling your lies. You are no savior, no damn hero. You're nothing but a death bringer and that's all you will be. You're the reason my sister died; my whole family is dead now because of you. My mother and father fought for your damn family and died, and my sister died because of you. And I don't care if it would upset her, but I know her soul would get peace once you're gone from this world."

Axle turned back into his human form. Even though Tris was now trying to stand up again, the man walked around in front of her and sat down, looking dead at her with his own eyes. He proposed, "If you think that her soul will be at rest, then kill me right now."

The drake looked back at him and raised her right paw before she took a swipe at him, but she just stopped short of an inch from cutting open his neck. Something in her soul told her to stop at what she was doing. Her heart seemed to start to cry for her sister. Even though, every fiber of her being wanted to kill the lord that was in front of her, she could not bring herself to do it. She lowered her paw from Axle's neck and collapsed where she stood and just broke down crying. Tris said though her blubber of her cries, "Why di-id she have to leave me? She promised me that she would re-return back home that day, she pr-romised." Somehow, she knew Axle told the truth, because she knew her sister would do something like that; to save the life of another, one must sacrifice themselves to save the other person. "But i-ff the scroll was des-igned for b-oth of you, why did she not co-me back? Tel-l me!"

Axle looked down at the ground to his right. "She had grave wounds on her and she was almost unable to walk. Though the scroll was designed for two people, they had to be close to each other where their bodies were almost touching. I had almost no strength left to fight off the second wave of zombies coming because the teleportation needed to be channeled for a few seconds and they would have been on us in a second. So, she cast it on me so that I would teleport back, and she did it quietly as well, where I did not hear it over the roars of the dead. When I was able to figure out what happened, it was too late." Tris's face grew grim from that as her head fell into Axle's lap and just cried about what happened in the past. The man did not even seem shocked by this, but rather more sorrow for the drake now that she knew the truth about what happened to her sister. Axle got up from the mud he sat in as Tris still had tears linger around her eyes. The man saw how heartbroken the drake was as she had to question everything she had done when she served Spinx. As the water-heavy Axle started to walk away from the broken Tris, he sensed something. *'There's an ominous atmosphere right now; something is not right,'* Axle thought to himself as he quickened his pace towards Atlas, but the rain slowed his pace greatly as it made it hard for him to see through it. He wandered through the waterfall of a storm, each drop creasing his scales as it cleansed him of the dirt and mud in between them. Maybe hope filled his

mind or maybe it was grievances. Who really knows the complex mind of Axle? He wondered, planning and plotting his moves carefully. He has left Atlas too long with Spinx and was uncertain what was going on, but a great evil has risen and he knows that for sure. He knew one thing for sure, someone was going to die on this day. He stopped briefly as his only hope was that of death, something he despised. Something he held back from the world and would not allow him to ever feel again, but he had no choice if he was to save Akil, Atlas and whoever Spinx was to hurt in the future. His heartrate lowered from its normal pace, his breathing became shallow and his mind went blank as a smile appeared on his face, that of wickedness. That bronze tint appeared once more across his body and down his right side following the three claw marks of a dragon. "Nothing is immortal, everything has an end, and each end a beginning," Axle told himself as he darted forward through the rain.

Bracer took the full force of the spells, but seemed to not really care that they hit him at all. All they did was just bounce off his flames. He lunged forward and went to slash at Atlas, but something, no one got in his way. Tearing through the flesh of the white lord, scorching him. The whole slash followed down his left side of his body. Blood dripped from Axle's body as his eyes were closed and no sign of even pain was shown. Atlas saw the nasty wound on him and asked, "Axle, are you alright?!"

((**Note:** The following sections take place during [Chapter 48](#).)

Arch looked up from his pike and looked towards the sky a bit. He could make out the small rock shade from the clouds as it came back to the earth as it speedily descended. The halfling started to count in his head, '5...' He spun his pike behind his back. '4...' Arch got into a fighting stance. '3...' He placed his hand on the ground. '2...' he thought he sent a large pulse of lightning into the ground, shooting dust into the air. This would make it hard to see through as well as smell anyone's scent. The same dust also stung the longhorn's eyes as if they were pelted by sand. He had to shut his eyes tightly to shield against the thick dust. '1...' Arch teleported over the dragon, just a few feet from the longhorn's right side. "0..." Arch said out loud as a small audible thud could be heard from the rock hitting the ground. The halfling spun and extend his pike out as he went to slash at the full length of the longhorn's side, making him let out a pained grunt. The dragon blew fire at where he heard the man, hoping to get him in his flames. Arch got hit in the side by the flames as it burnt his right wing. He growled in pain as he sent his pike's hook downwards towards the dragon's foot. The longhorn roared loudly from being pierced through. He retaliated by lunging his head down at the halfling and trying to bite down onto him. But Arch jumped back a bit to evade him. The halfling was going to go for a death blow, just stopping just centimeters from the longhorn's right eye, making him flinch. The longhorn instinctively withdrew his head away, knowing that he could have been blinded in one vision. The pike was lowered from the dragon's eye as Arch removed the dust in the air with lightning. The look on his face was now showing that careless, non-thrilling-fight to an almost-a-true-warrior face, one that had a hint of fear in it, and it was facing different direction. "I could care less about you dragons, so consider this a blessing that he showed when he did or you would be dead by now," Arch said to the longhorn and, almost on cue, jumped into the air as river of earth that came across the ground was torn apart.

On the edge of that was a halfling fully armored in white metal and the symbol on his chest plate was completely different. In his hand was a brown pike with blue trim. Whoever this person was made Arch had to back up, making him tense up as a low growl was heard coming from the gold halfling. The white-armor halfling saw the dragon and moved a large yet thin slab under the dragon away from the two, startling the longhorn as he managed to steady himself. "Enter this fight and you will be harmed," he said as he pointed his pike at Arch.

It was a blink of an eye when those two engaged in combat. Taking the warning seriously, the longhorn just stood where he was at and just watched the fight, hoping for the mysterious stranger to win. It seemed they were not holding anything back from each other as a large shockwave ripped the earth and lightning danced across the ground. The speed and the strength those two traded made the longhorn look like a petty fly to these two, proving that Arch was just toying with the dragon. From what the fight was coming out to be, it seemed Arch was losing.

Kekul and the spring dragons warped to where they had captured Dracul. The soldiers looked at all the villagers in the cave and noticed that everyone, save for a healer dragoness, were all injured, thanks to Dracul's forces. The wounded villagers looked at the trio as one of them rasped, "You're the dragons who saved us."

Kekul replied, "Yes, and we're here to save you again." Looking at everyone around him, he told, "Listen everyone, I'm going to teleport you all somewhere safe where the ones who attacked you will never come to you again. It's a city called Windfall."

The healer dragoness looked at him curiously and asked, "A city? What kind?"

The magi kept quiet for a bit, wondering if the village will be accepting to the idea where dragons and humans lived with each other. He decided to test out the reactions he'll get by answering, "It's a place where both dragons and humans live together."

Some of the villagers had assume the worst as one of them blurted, "A slave city?! We're going to be taken to a slave city?!"

Kekul corrected him, "Good heavens, no! We, the Vulture Horde, would never put our fellow dragons in slavery. I'm talking about a city where both races are equal under law as citizens."

The shock died down as it was replaced by bewilderment of all the villagers. "Huh?" they asked.

Jarilo spoke for the magi, "I know it sounds crazy, but such a place actually exists. Kekul here has been there before."

Kekul assured, "And I can say that they have soldiers and guards there who will protect anyone who lives there." He remembered the day when he, Enamora and Cirrus had their first and failed mission of killing

the baby in Zeditha's care. The Aquarians had played a big part in their defeat when they came to assist Zeditha and her friends. "You will all be safe there until the threat to your home ends." All the dragons relaxed and felt safe with the plan. Before any of them would get any ideas on what to do there, the magi warned, "But before I get you there, I need you all to promise not to tell anyone in Windfall that the Vulture Horde sent you there."

An anagallis dragon asked him, "Why?"

Kekul remembered Aeolus's rule to not tell anyone about their genocide plan until all those affiliated with Shadow Wind were out of their hands. So he decided not to get into details as he told him, "Let's just say that my horde and the Aquarians have bad blood between us at this moment. I won't get into details right now as we need to hurry before Arch, that other dragon, kills the whole village."

The healer dragoness said to him, "Alright, we'll trust you and keep our promise. But could you warp Kol the longhorn out as well? He's outside fighting the man in gold armor."

The magi replied, "I will as soon as I get all the dragons here to Windfall." He turned to Jarilo and her son to tell them, "Go out there and assist him." The spring dragons nodded and went to look for the exit of the cave. Kekul began to teleport each and every dragon in this section of the village to where he fought Zeditha in the hall.

Arch and the halfling jumped away from each other as now it seems they were speaking. Their own natural tongue, that of Shadow Wind. At one point, Arch just laughed a bit and said something back to the other halfling. The other halfling snapped it seemed from that as he charged Arch. The golden halfling dropped his pike to the ground as the new halfling took a swing at him, but his pike was caught in mid-air as Arch balled his open hand and lightning seemed to spiral around as he punched the newcomer in the chest plate as lightning sent him flying away from Arch as lightning was seen in the air. The new halfling slid across the ground losing his helmet as now it could be seen that both Arch and this halfling looked almost identical to each other, which surprised Kol the longhorn as it seemed they might be twins. The new halfling got back up to his feet, kind of gasping for air.

Arch threw the halfling's pike away from the battlefield and it got stuck in the ground, standing up. The white halfling grabbed his helmet and started a running start at Arch as he put his helmet back into place. But in the middle of the charge, he changed into his true form, a large earth dragon that came barreling at his foe. Arch met this dragon in his own manner as he too changed into his dragon form. The dragons now collided with one another. The fully-armored dragons were now locked in their eternal combat in which one was not leaving here alive. They traded blow for blow, spell for spell, claw for claw, talon for talon, and bite for bite. Everything they did was equality matched, till Arch threw up dust into the earth dragon's eye, blinding him for a split second, and tore open the chest piece, cutting at what seems to be the connection between the armor, getting his talon into the soft spot of the armor and landing the decisive attack between these two. The earth Dragon tried hard not to roar in pain, but it would not help as Arch next wrapped his mouth around the earth dragon's armor-plated neck and

crushed the neck plate down into the throat, causing the earth dragon to gasp for air. Arch changed into his halfling form and kicked up his pike. With a quick thrust, it went right between the dented links of the armor, straight into the heart. He followed it with a twist and the earth dragon fell to the ground lifeless. Arch removed his pike, grabbed the other dragon's pike and stabbed it back into the ground next to his head. Attached at tip of the wooden shaft was a cloth of white. It almost seemed like Arch was about to scream and cry, but he quickly vanished from sight.

Kol was bewildered by the aftermath of the events that happened. Why did Arch suddenly leave and not finish the fight with the longhorn? He wondered if he should follow the halfling, but decided against it because the "man" seemed upset about the other halfling's death. The longhorn returned to the village and went to the tunnel where the healer dragoness was. What he came back to see was just as unexpected as the mysterious halfling's entrance. There was a magi dragon, who almost looked like a magma, teleporting away dragons. Kol looked to the healer and asked, "Bianca, what's going on?"

Bianca the healer answered, "These dragons from the Vulture Horde, you know the one Aeolus is running, are taking us away to a city where we can all be safe away from these brutes."

Kekul said to the longhorn, "Don't go telling anybody there who sent you though. They'll just put you back here."

Kol did not understand why this city would turn them away for being saved by the Vulture Horde, but if Aeolus was helping them out, then he would gladly cooperate and keep this a secret. He said, "Okay, I trust you, just as long as we're all okay."

Then Kekul teleported the last of the villagers to Windfall. Looking back to the spring dragons, he said, "Phew, I think our work here is done. Good thing that longhorn was there to hold off Arch for us. He made it easier on us."

Jarilo agreed, "Yes, that's for sure. He must be one pretty tough dragon if he was able to survive where the many others did not."

Evony was concerned about the dragon lord's return and said, "Guys, I think we should get back to Aeolus fast before Arch gets here."

The others agreed as they would not want to let their presence be signs that the Vulture Horde was involved. Kekul replied, "Right, let's skedaddle." Then he teleported the team back to the lake to report that their rescue mission has succeeded.

Aeolus said, 'So he's just a pawn then. I guess that makes our situation a tiny bit better since we can solve his problem if we knew what it is. Anyway, enough talk. Everyone's wondering why I'm silent. I need to speak with them right now, so wait for our help to arrive.'

After the telepathic bond disappeared, Eitri waited a while until Verona came back around through the castle and looked a bit puzzle at why the group and Eitri were still in the area. She had with her a sword that was wrapped in a cloth and a bag that sounded like it was full of metal, almost like armor. "Um, I thought you would have went by now to save your clan members. And I mean the ones in the cave, not here, but I guess that is a good thing as well. Also Tomas, could you take this with you as well? I figured if Dracul and Arch went to that cave for something, it has to do with Juna, Axle and Mekarth in some way. So, it's best if you take our lord and Lord Juna's battle gear with you and hold onto it until you see them out there," she asked the pygmy that was in charge of the 50-unit squad. He said something as one of the humans gathered the gear and seemed to be careful with the sword wrapped in cloth.

"I'll make sure they get it," Tomas said back. Verona nodded her head back as she left back to her duty of gathering supplies and rations for the people still in the castle. Tomas asked Eitri, "Hey Eitri, you have an image of a clearing that is close by?"

The night magi said to him, "Well about that, I have a horde leader who's taking care of this situation as we speak. He's gotten rid of Dracul and is taking down Arch next. So, we just need to get this stuff over to Juna and Mekarth."

The group cringed at the names, Dracul and Arch, that much they could understand, but one of the stone dragons stepped out from the group and came up to Eitri. "Tell me where Arch is at currently," he said, sounding more like a demand than a request. Eitri was about to answer, when Verona snapped at the stone about what seemed to be stepping out of line and he simply snapped back at her. She did not seem to be taken aback at all by this, but she did punch the dragon in the nose hard.

The dragon pulled his head back from her a bit because of that and she simply just snarled at him, but this time so Eitri could hear. She snapped, "Zero, revenge will get you nowhere. Even if you do go after Arch, what then? You're simply just going to fight him to the death and lose? Is that your whole plan, hm? I won't stop you from doing it, but you're on your own. I swear that dragons like you will just get themselves killed because of their pride and are blinded by revenge."

She turned to walk away, but not before she caught what Zero had to say, "Ya, and humans like you are the ones who enslaved dragons and cower behind your armors, tanks and machine guns." Almost like on que, the whole squad and whoever was around moved away from the stone dragon and the woman. Verona spun back around and walked right up to Zero. Even though Zero was twice as big as her, something about her was scaring everyone around her by what he said.

She and Zero had eyes locked for a few seconds and soon the silence was broken by her, "Do not compare me to those apes of a being I am category with. And if you are really ready to go ahead and get yourself killed, fine. Here where he's at." She described the location perfectly. "Now go do whatever you are going to do and go get yourself killed. See if I care," she snapped at him. But deep inside her voice, she sounded almost like she did not want the dragon to go, almost like she was scared for his life. She spun and stormed off rather quickly as well. Zero walked away as well in the opposed direction.

Eitri just stood there in silence as he watched the two go separate ways. The night magi contacted Zero telepathically and said, *'Zero, I'll tell you where Arch is. But you have to promise me that you, me and my fellow soldiers will work together to take him. I believe having numbers will be an advantage to us.'*

Zero replied back, *'Kid, you have a lot to learn in this world still. One day you will understand that numbers do not mean anything.'* He added with a humorless pun, *'There is Zero changes of me winning and I know that, kid. But there are some things in this world that needs to be settle right now between me and him.'* Then he vanished from sight.

'Huh?' Eitri asked, wondering what the stone dragon meant. After Zero left, the night magi went back to waiting for the squad that Aeolus will be sending him. Pretty soon, a flash appeared before him. In the mist of the purple clouds was a huge orange cassare dragon with glowing scales. Eitri looked at him curiously as to who this stranger was. He thought he looked familiar and wondered if this was one of the dragons he saw last night. He asked, "Excuse me, are you one of the dragons that Aeolus sent to help me?"

Azera's breathing was shallow, but someone smaller than him came by and scooped him up while the lumina dragoness that was looking at him took her eyes off him for a moment. Azera was gone by the time the dragoness would have looked back at him. Once the person got the swordsman far enough away from the dragons, but in eyeshot of the camp, that person removed the bone spear from Azera's chest as fast as they could. He opened his eyes briefly to see who grabbed him. The person was a woman, mid-20's wearing a black shirt with scales that were small on it and was soaked though. She also had black long hair and a light tan skin, but also had scales on the underside of her neck. He soon put two and two together and whispered her name, "Massiva." His memory slowly came back from his past that he forgot. Azera soon passed out from that as the woman heard someone running at them coming from the forest and saw Kathia coming towards the camp.

Holding her purple dagger out at the halfling to stab, Kathia yelled with all the fury in her voice, "You! You wretched, vile half-breed! Did you do this to Azera? You're going to pay!"

((**Note:** The following sections take place during [Chapter 49](#).)

Axle's vision was blurry during the time Atlas left to get help, but he still had a mission to do. He made his way to the mountain base. When Atlas came back with the medic from the dragon village, he was climbing up the mountain in his human form and was about 50 ft already. Hand over hand, he climbed the wet mountain. As he climbed, his breathing became shallower, pushing him to the break of passing out and rising his chances of falling.

Axle continued his climb, hand over hand, till he grabbed a loose rock, losing his grip from one hand as he swung for a bit, slamming into his side with his broken ribs as he coughed up more blood. His grip with his other hand started to slip as the surfaces started to get wet. He quickly looked and saw a ledge just a short distance from him he could make. He placed both his hands on the small grip he had and, with everything he had left, jumped to the ledge. He quickly pulled out his dagger and stabbed it into the rock as he was quite not able to jump there, almost slamming into the face of the ledge. But he managed to brace the blow with his legs and he started to pull himself on the ledge. He slid down the wall that braced him as he sat on the platform, trying to catch his breath. He moved his hand across the wall when he went to sit down and brushed against something else than a rock. He looked at it and saw an engraved mark in a tongue he was familiar with. His native tongue he had grown up with. He pulled out the triangle object his father gave him before he left the city. It was a perfect fit, but it was not turning and Axle could not figure out why. Then he saw that in the center was a slit, almost like a dagger. He grabbed his father's dagger and inserted before turning it, hearing the clicking of gears moving. He pulled the dagger out of the wall as it splits open. What it opened was a small armory that had legendary weapons from Shadow Wind, weapons his father had kept hidden from the public. There was a pillar in the center with a book and a folded-up note, an armor set and a weapon on its own rack. He walked up to the pillar where the book and the note were at and picked up the note. He started to open it when he heard someone laugh behind him and his skin crawled at the laugh, that of Dracul's.

From the outside of this room that Axle opened from the mid-section of the mountain, a large explosion happened and the dark energy of Dracul's spells could be felt as smoke filled the air. The person who came out of the smoke was Axle; he was holding a book and a folded-up piece of paper near his chest, but in front of him was a large tower shield that was made out of a pure white metal with a black trim on it. His eyes though carried fear as he saw the next attack coming from the smoke. A large black ball was launched at him and the ball looked like it was being compressed down in size. Axle blocked it with the large tower shield, but he was sent soaring through the air. Axle held on the shield, blocking the ball as it sent him flying as it started to grow in size. Axle knew what was about to happen when it hit its maximum distance. And when it did, another large explosion happened that could be heard over 2 miles away as the man had flown more than a mile and a half before it exploded.

Axle fell from the sky to the ground, crashing into a small pond. He floated there for a second before washing up on a shore. He was no longer responsive as blood pooled around him from under the shield. The side of his face had a scorch mark on it as his arm he used to hold onto the shield not just broke, but ripped open a nasty gash. His shirt he wore that was already partly torn, was gone, and his black mid-length hair lost all color in it, turning into a white pale color.

Eitri's group looked for any slave shops that might hold the prisoners inside, if Arch donated at least one of them there. Sally the flower pygmy flew over next to the night magi's head and suggested, "Hey uh, Eitri, why don't we over to where you last saw the villagers? They might still be there."

Sally's idea was a good one that would have helped them find his friends. Eitri cursed himself for not thinking about this sooner than go around trying to look for both them and Atlas's nieces. He was so

focused on looking for all of them that he forgot how fast it would be to find his fellow villagers first and then the nieces. *'Oh Guardian of Nature, I'm such an idiot,'* he thought to himself. The villagers had probably moved elsewhere by now and it was all because he wasted valuable time. But then again, there was a chance that they were still there. And even if they weren't, the group can always start from the spot search from there. Looking to Sally, he said, "You're right. I totally about that." Looking back to the rest, he told them, "Everyone, let's go back to where I was brought here." Then he led the group to where Arch and his soldiers had brought him.

Dracul and Arch parted some way back, but Dracul was on his way to a certain location, one that held some bait. When he arrived at the location, well it was full of village dragons chained to metal slabs, still in their original location. One of the guards came up and reported to him. The response he got back was a look that made guards move out of his way, but the one that reported was not so lucky as he ended up being a new artwork on the pavement of the road. The villagers dropped their mouths in shock. The red lord wasn't just brutal to other dragons, but also to his men as well. It was as if this dragon was acting like the humans, who harm their own kind and others. Dracul went in front of the dragons that were chained and took a breath. "Okay, among you five who here has the strength to fight, and who here thinks they can take flight?" The villagers all backed away nervously, knowing how a fight against him would be impossible, considering how he killed the others back home like they were mere flies. But to fly away from him? It might be possible, but they imagined it would very difficult, if he had traps set in store for them. Dracul stood there for a second and did not get an answer. He said again, this time now with a bit of an annoyance in his voice, "Did I stutter? Because I believe I did not, but maybe I did. So I will repeat myself. Who here has the strength to fight and who here thinks they can take flight? I better start getting responses back to this question."

The villagers shuddered at his threatening tone. They had to take on his challenge now at the cost of the two of them, or else they would all be killed on spot. Each were reluctant to compete against Dracul, but they must do it. Sparqus the sapphire dragon mustered up the courage to take one for the team. He forced himself to look Dracul in the eye and spoke up nervously, "I... I'll fight..." The others looked at him; their minds mixed with a small emotion of relief that they weren't going to fight, but also stronger emotions of guilt for letting him die for them and despair that they were going to miss him if this foul beast does kill him.

Now with one challenger for fight volunteered, someone else needed to take one for the flight. Pixie the imperial fleshcrowne dragoness was fearful of the chances of losing the life that she held dear and all her future dreams, but she was not going to let Sparqus die alone like he was abandoned by cowards such as herself. So she would be the one for the flight challenge. She volunteered, "I'll fly."

"Now was that so hard?" Dracul said before he said something else in Shadow Wind's language. Four dragons under his command, two per volunteer, grabbed the two chains attached to the dragons and led each one in a different direction, the fighter to the right and the flyer to the left. The three remaining villagers watched as Sparqus and Pixie were taken away to their likely dooms. They kept the sharp image of their friends in mind and store in their memory as this may be the last time they would see them.

Hopefully these were just slave tasks that did not try to dispose of them. "Now next question, who here has the courage to dig and who has the stamina to swim?"

The trio looked at each other, wondering who was fit for these tasks and who would offer themselves up for them. Todora the purple dorsal dragon asked the dragonesses, *'So who's going to do it?'*

Hex the dark lumina refused to take on those tasks and told why in a haughty tone, *'Don't look at me. I've never swim before and I don't want any dirt on my beautiful claws and scales.'*

Vika the monarch let out a dismayed sigh. If Hex did not want to do it, then it was up to her and Todora. Like the dark lumina, Vika did not know how to swim, so she decided to go for the other option. Speaking mainly to her friends, but loud enough for Dracul to hear, the monarch volunteered, "I'll dig."

Todora said, "Well then, I guess I'll swim." He was not sure if he can do it, but he has got to at least try for his sake.

The guards did the same thing, except Todora went south and Vika north. Soon following that, every guard seemed to have left except one, the warrior who choose Hex in the first place. He was just leaning against the wall. Dracul just smiled a bit and said, "And that just leaves one job for you, the one who becomes a symbol. You should feel honor about this, lumina; only a few people get to become a symbol." To anyone's ears, that did not sound so bad. But Hex wondered a symbol of what? The warrior took off his gloves and helmet. It was a human, but the look in his eyes suggested he was not mentally there anymore. He bit down on his hand hard till he drew blood. Drops of blood landed on the ground as he muttered something, almost sounding like draconic language. Soon following that, a purple circle appeared on the ground around the chained dragoness. It started to creep close to Dracul and he took a step back getting out of its range. The dragoness raised one of her fore legs up to herself as she flinched in surprise from the arcane circle. The lord said, "Well as much as I would like to stay and watch this one-time event, I don't need to be a part of this symbol. So goodbye lumina, we will never meet again." Then he took to the air. Hex had an ominous feeling as she wondered what the heck was going on.