

Daniel

After breakfast, Mallory and I started our flight. It would be good for her. Besides gaining confidence, she would reconnect to her dragon in a way only shifting allowed. Plus, she could use the distraction.

She seemed very hesitant at the beginning as Alessia moved her wings slowly, not wanting to leave the ground of the mansion's 'flight track' we improvised at the back of the garden. Aelred nuzzled Alessia's side gently encouraging her, and she released a sound of contentment, her light caramel eyes fixed on him. Alessia was a beautiful dragon, small and gracious. She was also a young dragon, around thirty-three years old, only a child in dragon age.

"You can do it, Mallory. Just give Alessia's complete control and let her instincts take over,

"I

mind-linked her. She only needed a sliver of confidence to start flying.

Alessia whined in response and flapped her wings faster, took a few steps back to gain impulse and ran forward, gaining the skies.

I smiled inwardly; she was as strong and brave as Mallory, my remarkable mate, my sweet warrior. Aelred moved his wings fast, reaching Alessia almost immediately, and flew by her side. He couldn't take his eyes off her, she was a beauty and my normally introverted dragon was completely in love, all he wanted to do was to nuzzle and kiss her—he was impatient to reach the mountains and be able to cuddle with his mate.

"We have to give Mallory and Alessia time and space, Aelred. I know how hard it is

," I told him and he

whimpered almost desperately.

Soon we arrived at the caves. I found a very spacious one that would be perfect for us to use, and we landed there. Alessia looked around carefully before she allowed herself to relax. I exhaled sharply, my chest clenching. It was visible she and Mallory were so used to being afraid and on the defensive.

They weren't alone anymore and I would give my life to keep them safe. This time I wouldn't fail.

Aelred approached Alessia slowly, hesitantly, trying to read her reaction and see if could take another step forward. She motioned for him to come closer, moving her neck graciously. He was beside himself and had to contain his paws to not jump in her direction.

Aelred brushed his neck against hers, nuzzling her face and whimpering in delight. He licked her snout and wrapped his wing around her as she snuggled into his embrace, whining sweetly.

It didn't take long for them to be laying side by side; Aelred was finally cuddling with his mate, covering her with kisses and gentle nuzzles, grooming her and showing how much he loved her. She was completely relaxed, her chest rumbling in contentment. The peace surrounding them was so complete that they ended up falling asleep, as Aelred's slightly-crooked wing covered his female like a golden blanket.

Mallory and I let them sleep and she whispered into my mind, *"I should have done that as soon as I arrived at the Golden Mansion. That was all Alessia needed, flying, feeling free and being... with him. I was so selfish, not considering my Dragon and her needs after everything she had been through."*

"Mallory, you did what you could. It wasn't only hard for Alessia, but for you as well. Don't be so hard on yourself! You did what you could at the time. What matters is that they are together now and Alessia could reclaim the skies."

"Yes, she is so happy. But I really don't think she wants to train, she would rather just be in his wings,

"

Mallory giggled in my mind and it sounded sweet, almost angelic.

At that moment, I knew that my new goal was to make her giggle like that as often as possible.

"They are both very happy and it couldn't be different. They need each other.

" My Dragon needed his

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returning to the back of my mind and watching the nappy couple caress each other even in their sleep, surrounded by the warmth of their love.

My only wish was that my mate could let me in as well, let me hold her in my arms during her sleep. I brushed this thought away, we were making a lot of progress lately and I could even hug and comfort her yesterday for more than a couple of minutes. It was already more than I deserved.

But it wasn't about me, rather about her and I wondered what she feared, what pained her so completely that she was paralysed.

The questions echoed in my mind, reverberating pain through my soul. ' **What the hell did those monsters do to you in that dreadful laboratory, Mallory? How deep are your wounds, my love?**

~*~

Henry

I was roaming around the house like a zombie, waiting for Marion's witch friend to come, I was waiting for a f*cking miracle.

I looked at Egan and asked not for the first time, "Are you sure none of your magical instruments, contacts, or anything could help her?" my voice was edgy, my wolf was edgy and I was losing my mind.

"Yes Henry, I am sure. Anita is our best chance," he replied patiently.

"How about the Great Golden Fire, Alma? It must be able to help her, it has to. Can you try once again?" I asked, and Alma shook her head sadly.

"It won't work, Henry. I can feel it, it doesn't matter how many times I try. It won't. Anita is coming in an hour or so, why don't you go out for a bit, take a walk, and breathe some fresh sea breeze?"

"You look like a ticking bomb about to explode and that wouldn't help Kemy at all, she needs you to stay focused," Egan added, wrapping his arms around Alma.

I exhaled deeply, nodding at them. They were right, if I spent any more time wandering and pacing around this house Knight would go feral.

"*Me? You are the one about to go feral here, Henry!*" My wolf growled and he wasn't wrong.

So, I decided to meet with Cooper, plan things for after my Kemy woke up—because she had to wake up, there was no other option.

Cooper and I meet in an almost empty bar in the city, sitting at the corner of the counter, where no one could either hear or disturb us, we both order a glass of beer. Once again the Gamma surprised me with his straightforwardness, starting to talk even before sipping his cold drink.

"Henry, I know it isn't for me to question, I am just a Gamma, but I care about our pack and about you, about the man you choose to be... what are you using these magical instruments for? For power? To wipe out the other packs of South Alaska, go even further south, and eventually reign sovereignty across North America as the only remaining Werewolf Pack?"

He asked, mentioning my father's ultimate goals and missions. When I was young, I thought it would be my life mission as well, I didn't know any better. I didn't have my own mind, my own dreams, my own life and I couldn't see beyond the cold darkness surrounding my pack. But now everything changed, and I was my own man, someone who would never kill fellow werewolves for power and exterminate the packs that didn't submit to my will, as my father planned to.

"Isn't that our pack's goals and missions? To fulfill *this* destiny?" I asked, testing him and trying to see where his loyalties lie—to the pack and the werewolf species or to the power-hungry Alpha.

"That's indeed your father's goal... it doesn't mean it should be your goal as well. She, your mother,

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would be a good man, a kind and fair Alpha, he took a deep breath, his hands trembling around his glass of beer. "Your father has abused the wolves of his pack, including me and those I cared about for too long, it's time for you now, Henry. It's time for a change," he said without meeting my eyes; he was surely afraid of my reaction, that I would deem him a traitor and kill him for that, as it was required per pack law.

"He is being very brave, taking the risk, saying those things to you," Knight chimed in.

Was Cooper a very brave man, looking after the well-being of the pack, of the werewolf community and ultimately carrying about me or was it only something he had plotted with my father, a way to put my loyalty to the test?

I took a deep exhale, trying to feel in my bones if I could trust Cooper, and my instincts were stirring up. Wolves were better judges of character than their human counterparts, so I let Knight lead me.

Knight inhaled through my nostrils, trying to smell his fear as my eyes were trained on his stiff muscles and facial micro-expressions. He was tense, he was afraid, but he wasn't lying. Knight and I agreed on that.

"I want the dragons' magical instruments to overthrow my father. I would challenge him for the Alpha title and fight him properly, as it is supposed to be per Werewolf Law. But I know that he wouldn't play fair and I wouldn't stand a chance against his traps and treacherous schemes. Besides that, a vast part of the pack will surely side with him," I said before drinking the rest of my beer in one single gulp, as my eyes were fixed on Cooper's hazel ones.

"I am not sure about that. In fact, I believe that the pack had enough of your father's wrong-doings, not many wolves over there should stay loyal to him if they know that they have an option, that new and better leadership can arise," Cooper said, he exhaled sharply and looked away for a moment before his eyes met mine once again, "After our first meeting, I didn't want to help you, I was thinking about a way to sabotage you, your father can't put his hands on Dragon's powerful weapons. It would be a disaster, he would obliterate anyone who dared to even breathe in a way it didn't please him. And with this magic in hand, if there is any chance she is alive, he would hunt and kill her, my Luna, your mother," he added, swallowing hard and drinking his beer.

"He won't put his hands on these instruments, ever! I will get them, once my... once the dragons are distracted, and we will place them somewhere safe. In the meanwhile, try to contact some pack members, the ones you are sure that would back me up, back us up."

"I will do it, Henry. I know a few people who wouldn't need to think twice. As I said the Alpha hurt many people and there are some things we can't ever forgive or forget, no matter how many times the whip broke their skin and tried to wipe all the memories away to replace it with fear only." His forehead creased and the look in his eyes was laced with deep pain. He was a tortured man, but it all was about to be over. **My father's reign of terror was about to come to an end. I only had to wake Kemy up and put my hands on the Dragons' powerful magic.**

~ * ~

Alma

Anita and doctor Emily arrived half an hour after Henry left the mansion, which was quite good, they didn't need a relentless and desperate werewolf on their tail. It wouldn't help anyone.

Egan joined us and we went to Kemy's room almost immediately. Without wasting any time, Anita did her thing: she took five black stones from her purse, and placed them beside Kemy, before running one of the stones on her own forehead. She took a deep breath and hovered her hands over Kemy's chest, chanting quietly, *"A 'fosgladh sùilean m' inntinn, a 'togail fèileachan m' anama.*

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Agus gu oiseanan a diochuimhne agus

*a 'leigeil dhomh an sgàthan foirfe den rud a tha do-fhaicsinneach fhaicinn . * ”*

It was the same spell she chanted to see inside of my soul and find out more about my powers and my babies. It worked for me, so it must work for Kemy as well, or at least we hoped so. Anita clenched her eyes and tried to concentrate for a few minutes, in which I almost held my nervous breathing.

“I am so sorry, but I can’t see anything. There is nothing I can do,” Anita inhaled deeply, opening her eyes and giving us a sad look of frustration.

I gulped hard, looking intently at Kemy’s still frame as my heart clenched painfully. Egan took me in his embrace, cocooning me in his warmth.

Doctor Emily, Anita, my Egan and I went downstairs and sat on the sofa of the ample living room, as I covered my face with both hands in frustration.

“We still have time, Alma.” Egan cooed me.

“I know, but we don’t even know how long we have. What if it’s not enough?” I asked, looking intently at his hazel and blue eyes.

He kissed the side of my forehead and said calmly, even though I knew well he was also a wreck inside but was being strong for our clan, for me.

“Have faith, my love. Our clan had already lost so much and I know that our Gods wouldn’t take our Kemy from us as well.” He caressed my side and I nodded, fearing he was wrong and hoping he was right.

Marion came with a tray of tea and took a seat by my side, taking my hand in hers and squeezing it gently. She sighed deeply, her green eyes were filled with sadness as well.

Egan was right, their clan, our clan had already lost so much, almost everything. And now that they had just recovered their hope and started to truly live again, they - we - couldn’t lose Kemy.

I sighed, looking at my cup of tea. We had nothing to do now, besides have tea and try to not let pain and sadness sink us with its heavy anchor, preventing us from breathing.

“Alma, I don’t think the Great Golden Fire would be that quiet and inert if it didn’t know that there is a way or that’s how things are supposed to happen,” Anita said, trying to comfort me, but it didn’t work at all.

“If the Great Golden Fire is trying to tell me that things are supposed to be like this and Ember should die, leaving Kemy sleeping forever in some sort of bizarre curse, I will lose it! If that is the Great Golden’s Fire goal, I swear I will just give up on this Great Dragon Spirit conjuring thing and go back to my potions, at least there my failures didn’t break my heart.”

Egan wiped my tears and took me in his arms, almost cradling me soothingly. He was such a good Dragon Daddy!

“Little Ruby, try to calm down, breathe slowly. You can’t stress yourself out that much now that you are less than two weeks until your due date.”

I shook my head, the sharp pain in my heart seemed to go down to my stomach, “No breathing will do! We have to save her, Egan! We have to!”

A whimper left my lips and I clenched my eyes shut as another strong wave of pain broke through me. When I opened my eyes, I saw Doctor Emily’s slightly surprised face, she was leaning down in front of me.

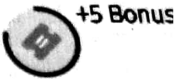
“Alma, you are in labour.”

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(*) Opening the eyes of my mind, lifting the veils of my soul.

**Winds of the east blow my energy to Kemely's consciousness,
and to the corners of her forgetfulness,**

letting me see the perfect mirror of that which is invisible. (Gaelic)



*** This chapter contains a *short mention* of abuse, which consists of one paragraph that will be signalled by asterisks. ***

Mallory

Alessia and Aelred woke up after a few hours and started nuzzling and kissing each other again.

He enveloped her much smaller frame with his wings embracing her, as he covered her face with sweet licks, making her rumble happily.

Suddenly, she did something she had never done before, pushing back and shifting to my form. What was this funny dragon doing? I shook my head and she only hummed in my mind in response as I stood there in front of Aelred.

He was a very large dragon, even for a fully-grown adult male, and was towering over me. His gentle deep golden eyes were fixed on mine and he leaned down slowly nuzzling my shoulder and lowering his head for me to pat him.

A smile formed on my face at his sweetness, and I laced my arms around his neck, planting a kiss on his cheek.

“Aelred, you are so beautiful,” I beamed as he rubbed his head against my hand, almost purring like a cat.

Maybe that was what Alessia wanted, for me to be close to Aelred, to bond with him as well. He let out a sound of contentment as he licked my arm in a tingling way.

“You are such a gentle giant!” I caressed his face and smiled. Even with all the pain, the chaos and the uncertainty, being here with him gave me the feeling of peace that I didn’t ever remember feeling.

Unexpectedly, Aelred shifted to a very naked Daniel. He stood there a few steps away from me, looking confused for an instant.

“I think our Dragons tricked us to shift,” he said with a small smile, making me giggle. They definitely did that, sneaky Dragons!

Daniel stood there at arm’s length, without moving. However, as I glanced down quickly, I saw the hard and long evidence of his desire and gulped hard. That was when realisation hit me: I was an i***t. For some unknown reason, he always had wanted me but was giving me space—that was what he was doing all this time, my sweet mate!

I looked into his eyes, gathering all the courage I needed to take a few steps towards him until our bare chests almost touched. Daniel cupped my face gently and placed a chaste kiss on my forehead. But his lips touching my skin was all that was needed to ignite the flame of my desire and I felt a wave of warmth creeping down my spine.

“You are beautiful,” he murmured, his gaze fixed on mine.

He didn’t even steal a quick peek as I did. In a moment of sheer courage, I closed the distance between us, and laced my arms around his neck just like I did with Aelred. He lowered his face, his warm breath was fanning over my face, our gazes fixed together, our lips almost touching.

He rubbed his nose against mine, and placed a soft kiss on my lips, stopping for an instant and looking back at my eyes for permission. My lips brushed against his in response, emboldening him to lick my lips, asking for entrance. I moulded my lips against his, welcoming his tongue into my mouth, and our tongues caressed each other slowly but passionately.

In another instant of courage, I pressed my body against his completely and he groaned into our kiss, wrapping an arm right above my waist and cupping the nape of my neck with his other hand.

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desire was growing to such an extent, that it was starting to overshadow my fear, and my mind that once was only filled with dreadful memories, pain and nightmares, was almost fully occupied with thoughts about this gentle, handsome, and incredible man—my mate.

He parted our kiss and cupped my face, his eyes glued on mine and a smile on his face. My breath was uneven and the juncture between my legs was burning, warm moisture leaking from there. I gulped nervously, and looked away shyly; he surely could smell it. What was I thinking? We were both naked in each other's arms.

He pushed away gently, probably noticing my hesitance and discomfort, "Are you okay, Mallory?" he asked, cupping my face and lifting my chin with his thumb to make me look at him.

"Yes...I think so," I replied, with a sigh. I wanted him, I wanted him badly. I liked him... No! I think I loved him. Yes, that was it, I've never felt something like that before, strong, sweet, that made me bold and shy at the same time. He was the most incredible man I've ever met.

Alessia hummed her agreement in my mind.

Yes, I loved him and I wanted to be brave, for us, for our love.

"Daniel, I am fine. Just kiss me," I asked, chewing at my bottom lip.

He kissed the tip of my nose before his lips caressed mine roaming down to my jaw and neck. He placed an open mouth kiss on the crook of my neck, my marking spot. A nervous thrill made my blood become molten lava and I felt as if my body would literally become fire, which by the way, was my special power.

"Am I on fire? My legs... did they become fire?" I whispered, worried that I would burn him.

"No," he replied with a chuckle, looking at me before closing his eyes once again and licking the soft skin of my neck, and sucking it very gently.

A soft moan escaped my lips, I'd never felt like this before, the gentle and overwhelming fire flowing through my body and making me feel good, making me feel alive.

Daniel's lips trailed down to my collarbone, and I dove my fingers into his dark locks, pushing him against my skin, I was desperate for his kisses.

*** But soon his mouth went a few inches down and I panicked a bit, taking a step away, "You won't bite them, will you?" I asked, looking down at my breasts.

A shiver of fear made my whole body cold, as the memory and the pain took me to a dark place in my mind. Their assaults, their bites, the pain, the wish to crawl out of my skin and disappear. ***

"What?" he asked, his forehead creasing in confusion as he looked between my face and my breasts. I grew self-conscious and folded my arms in front of my chest.

"Bite? Of course, not. I won't even touch them if you don't want me to. I won't do anything you don't want, Mallory. Ever," he reassured me, cupping my face and attracting my eyes to his grey ones. They were full of warmth and understanding.

I looked away for a moment to put myself together and looked back at him, "I want you to touch them, slowly," I mumbled, moving my arms to the side and looking at my mate.

He nodded and pressed his lips against mine, sucking my bottom lip between his and licking my tongue. His hands cupped my breasts with a feather-light touch and he caressed my nipples so very gently, that pleasure trailed all over my skin, making goosebumps erupt all around.

My arousal was leaking down my thighs, I had never felt like that before, so wet and hot down there and it made me press my legs together, wanting some relief, wanting for it to be over.

Daniel stopped and ran his fingers through my long blond waves, "Mallory, relax. We can stop now if you want. We will go as fast and as far as you want. It's your choice, your decision," he reassured me.

Part of me wanted to stop, but the other part only wanted to be in my mate's arms to melt and burn there.

Before I could say anything, Daniel's face grew serious and his gaze was distant.

"Mallory, Alma is in labour. Marion has just mind-linked me."

"Let's go back home," I said without thinking twice. We all knew that Alma's labour was somewhat risky and complicated, so I wanted to be there for her like she had always been there for me.

Daniel nodded, I knew how much he cared about Alma, Egan and their babies. In a matter of minutes, we shifted and flew back home.

~*~

Alma

As soon as Doctor Emily said that I was in labour, everyone went crazy. Egan scooped me up in his arms and Marion teleported us all to my bedroom where Doctor Emily took a better look at me.

"You are almost four centimeters dilated and I have to measure the interval between the contractions, Alma. But you don't have to worry, it can take hours," Doctor Emily told me.

Egan looked so nervous, that it seemed like he was the one about to give birth, or rather lay an egg. He squeezed my hand and looked at Doctor Emily, his too handsome face contorted with lines of worry, "Isn't that too early? Is it dangerous? Her due date was supposed to be in eight days."

"No, Lord Egan. It's a bit earlier than we anticipated, but that's common in twin pregnancies, it's not even considered pre-term," she explained patiently, which did nothing to calm Dragon Daddy down.

I, on the other hand, was as calm as I could be and even took a twenty minutes nap before a crampy contraction woke me up. I looked around, my room was quickly and magically transformed into an operating room like the ones you see in Grey's Anatomy. Jen was there in the corner, wearing those cool blue TV-doctor clothes and smiling at me. She would assist Doctor Emily, they already had everything planned out.

"Everything is ready: Jen is here to heal you and Niki prepared some anesthesia potions, we should start the c-section. Having a normal or natural birth is too risky for you because we don't know the effects that the fire placenta and amniotic sac can have on you if there is a rupture," the doctor told me what she had already mentioned in some of our calls and exams. I nodded, I trusted her, Niki and Jen.

"After the anesthesia potion and the spell, you might doze off for a few minutes, but you should be awake when the babies are born," doctor Emily added.

Egan kissed the back of my hand and my forehead, "Everything will work out well, my love. The Great Golden Fire will protect you and our babies." His eyes were moistened with unshed tears and even though he was trying to reassure me, I could feel how nervous he was. But I was at peace, I knew somewhere deep inside me that my babies and I would be well.

"I know, Love. I have faith," I told him and he kissed my forehead once more before Niki gave me her potion and Doctor Emily did her thing, making all the anesthesia magic kick in.

My eyelids grew heavy and I became groggy, soon I was a bit high on magic, and all I could see behind the curtain of my close eyelashes were mini golden dragons flying around fast in the golden-pink sky. They were happy, over-excited and almost doing pirouettes in the sky. I tried to touch them, but they

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I couldn't stop smiling at this scene, that was the future the Golden Dragons wished for, filled with life and hope. That was what my kids meant to their people, to their species, the start of a time of wonders, the renewal of life and faith.

Suddenly the Golden Fire surrounded me, warm, soft, almost flowing like water and filling me with light. The soft golden light entered my eyes, projecting a new vision. I saw two small kids, a boy and a girl, running in a grassy field and giggling.

They were my babies, my little dragons, our miracles.

Next thing I knew, I woke up to a sharp cry and blinked twice, trying to adapt to the light since my head was still very hazy.

Alma

"My Love, everything is going well," Egan's voice filled my ears. He had a nervous smile on his face and a look of absolute love in his hazel and blue eyes.

Marion was right behind him, a white bundle on her arms. "Alma, this is your son," she beamed as tears of joy slid down her face.

She brought the little bundle closer to me and an insanely huge smile formed on my face as I saw his little red one, his perfect little nose and his big open eyes looking intently at me.

"I love you so much, my Ruby," Egan pressed a couple of kisses on my head, and reached to take the baby from Marion's arms to show our baby boy to me.

As she was about to give the baby to Egan, even though I shouldn't be feeling anything in my downtown area, I felt a scorching burning sensation that made me scream out loud. I was on fire, literally.

I couldn't really discern what was happening, everything was blurry and hazy. All at once, I heard yelling, sobs, baby cries, Doctor Emily saying something and Egan calling my name over and over.

Black dots started to form in front of my vision and my heart started beating very fast and I was sure I was having a heart attack, but suddenly I felt something warm grow from my back, the Spiritual Fire took the shape of a small dragon and flapped its wings fast, flying from my back to my inflamed womb and settled there, replacing the fire by light and healing me on spot.

It felt so fresh and so good to not be burnt anymore. I breathed deeply as my heart attack stopped and the healing light spread across my whole body.

"Alma? Love?" Egan called, my gaze met his. He was leaning in front of me, pale and wide-eyed.

"I am fine," I beamed. Everything around me was Spiritual Fire, light.

"The liquid fire subsided completely and the damaged tissue was completely healed by the Light Dragon," Jen said, looking like she witnessed a miracle happen. Well, even as a witch healer I don't think she had ever seen a dragon of light crossing the spiritual world to heal their bearer. Surely, it wasn't part of her work routine.

"It's all fine now, Alma. The amniotic sac tore and the fire leaked onto your womb, burning you from the inside as we feared it could happen. But the spiritual fire acted fast, healing you completely," Doctor Emily's normally calm voice carried a note of worry and bewilderment.

Egan showered my face and my head with soft kisses, "My Love, I've never been so afraid in my entire life." He exhaled deeply. His face was still pale and contorted with pain.

"I am not leaving my family, I am not going anywhere," I reassured my Egan with a tired smile, looking between him and the little bundle in Marion's arms.

Marion was also as pale as a ghost, cradling the crying baby in her arms. She finally gave our little boy to Egan who immediately stopped crying in the arms of his dad. Egan kissed his head gently and smiled at him.

They were so cute together! I had a silly smile on my face as I looked at them. After a couple of minutes cooing our baby, Egan's gaze found mine and he observed me carefully, trying to check if I was well or maybe he was even afraid that something else would happen.

"I am fine, Love. I want to take him in my arms," I asked and as my husband placed our baby on my chest gently, I wrapped my arms around him and kissed his bare head, looking at his big and wide open magical eyes: one green like mine and the other hazel, like Egan's. He was perfect and I couldn't stop smiling.

"It's your baby girl, I just took her out of the amniotic sac," I heard Jen's voice and smiled, squeezing Egan's hand as we both looked at each other, crying, smiling, and almost laughing at the same time.

"Alma, Lord Egan, your baby girl is healthy and fine. I will help Doctor Emily to stitch and heal Alma now," Jen said, giving our little girl to Egan. He placed her on my chest beside her brother and I kissed her head, her little eyes were closed and she let out the cutest yawn I've ever seen.

We had talked about names a few times, but we wanted to look at their tiny faces before making a decision.

She opened her blue eyes slowly, they had a sparkle of light, like the sky on a summer day. A beam formed on my face, my baby girl was a little light. She was my Amaris, which meant illuminating, promised by the Gods, a miracle.

"Amaris." I smiled and Egan nodded.

"And Ethan for him," he murmured, kissing our baby's boy bare head.

"I love it!" I beamed, between smiles and tears of joy. Love was all I could feel right now.

"It's perfect, they are perfect. They are a miracle, a wonder in my life, just like you," he beamed, sitting beside me on our bed.

He wrapped his arm around my shoulder, and rubbed the babies' backs, holding the three of us in his arms. His eyes were pure love and adoration, and I was sure they mirrored my own.

At this moment, nothing else existed, only the three of them, I think Doctor Emily stitched me—I hoped so— but honestly, I wasn't sure. The rest of the room and the rest of the world went invisible for a couple of hours as we stayed there basking in wonder, as we both were lost in love with our little ones and each other.

~ * ~

Henry

When I arrived at the mansion, Adrian told me that Alma was in labor. After going to my mate's room and showering her face with kisses, I looked around the mansion carefully, my senses in alert to catch their scents and heartbeats. Marion and the witches were in the room with Alma, while Daniel and Mallory were away, and Adrian, accompanied by Alev, sat having a drink in the living room.

I couldn't waste this golden opportunity, they were all either too anxious or distracted, it was what I was waiting for—the right moment to put my hands on the powerful magical instruments I needed to defeat my father.

I looked around cautiously, before entering Egan's office. There wasn't anyone around, no scent, heartbeat, no approaching steps.

My eyes scanned the neatly organized office, and I focused on the magic surrounding me, trying to feel for something. Powerful magic could hardly be perfectly hidden or unnoticeable, its energy shone, like a small beacon of light in the darkness.

The small drawers on Egan's work desk almost called for me and I tried to open each one of the three of them. I cursed under my breath; they were locked with a Locking Spell. Of course he wouldn't leave his most powerful artifacts unprotected.

My eyes caught a little and almost imperceptible twinkle of light as I looked at the top of the shelf in front of the desk. I opened it and huffed in frustration when I noticed it was empty.

"No, it can't be empty, Henry. I just know it, there is something there," Knight chimed it. He was right, I had the same impression.

35. Heirs of Fire

except that it wasn't empty. I felt three round and solid objects with my hands. After taking them out of the shelf, they revealed themselves: three stones with symbols carved in blue light were in my hand.

"Runes!" Knight barked in. I have never seen runes before, the few witches that neighbored our pack didn't have any in their shop. Maybe they were rare, but despite that, I could recognize the magical stones in my hands as runes and I felt their power radiating through me.

"Henry, are you sure this is the right move? Stealing like that?" Knight barked in my head, as he paced back and forth nervously, restlessly, like a wolf with fleas.

"They are Dragons, Knight. They are sneaky, cruel creatures, our natural enemies. It isn't wrong to take these instruments from them. After all, these reptiles could end up using them against werewolf packs, and it wouldn't be the first time in history it happened." I argued with my wolf.

"Henry, they might be Dragons, but they trusted us and welcomed us to their house. It isn't fair nor right."

F*ck, this wolf was only voicing my own thoughts and inner struggles. But I had to dismiss him, I had to dismiss my doubts if I wanted to win my pack and end my father's reign of terror.

"And is it right that only a few individuals of one breed keep virtually all of the most powerful instruments for themselves? They have a lot, they won't miss these few objects..." I argued back, pushing my hesitancy as well as my wolf to the back of my mind and exhaling deeply.

It wasn't wrong to take something from your enemy, something I needed desperately. **They weren't like my Kemy—she was different— they were only slick and obnoxious reptiles.**

I placed them on the desk and took some more invisible objects from different shelves, getting crystals, runes and amulets to reveal themselves before my eyes. A smile formed on my face as I looked at all I needed. There were more than twenty of them and even though I couldn't fully understand their usage and effects, I could still feel their power.

Now that I had them in my possession, I could mind-link Cooper and start the preparations to come back to my pack and become the Alpha.

Henry

I looked at the magical instruments under my grasp, their power was calling for me. After taking them, I would be much more powerful than even my father ever dreamed of. I would overthrow him and make my pack the best and strongest one within the continent.

I cursed under my breath, f*ck! I was thinking just like my father. I was becoming just like him.

What would my Kemy think if she knew about what I was doing? I exhaled and looked around myself, I had to make a decision and fast, before someone caught me in the act. Soon, my scent cover would fade away and the dragons would be able to detect that I had been here when they noticed the missing runes and crystals.

I was covering my scent with the few herbs I got from the witch shop before I came to the mansion on the day I thought Kemy was in the claws of her tormentors, the enemies, the Red Dragons.

The enemies.

Were the Golden Dragons my enemies as well? I grew up thinking they were, that all dragons were horrible, treacherous greedy creatures who solely wanted power and left only destruction behind.

I gulped hard, maybe I was the one becoming a greedy and treacherous creature.

Was my Kemy that different from them? She was what I loved most, a beautiful, smart, lively woman, who always spoke her mind. She was full of light and fire. But even though I had never seen Ember, Alma was right, she was part of Kemy.

A deep exhale left my lungs, maybe Kemy wasn't that different from them, and maybe the Dragons weren't that bad either.

And hell, I couldn't do it to my Kemy, I couldn't do it to them. She was a Dragon as well, I tried to deny and tell myself otherwise, focusing only on her human side I loved so much and ignoring the dragon part of her, making the invisible Ember even more invisible.

F*ck, Kemy was also part of this clan, stealing from them would mean stealing from my own mate. I couldn't do it.

I huffed in frustration, not knowing what else to do to help my pack. But hurting my mate and her family wasn't an option and it shouldn't ever have been. I placed the magical objects back in place, glancing at the glass shelf once more before my legs took me out of Egan's office.

I loved my Kemy and I couldn't deny and try to forget the fact that she was a dragon-shifter anymore and since I love her so much, I couldn't persist in hating dragons.

Dragons weren't the monsters I grew up hearing about, because she wasn't a monster, no part of her was hateable or even remotely bad.

She was entirely light, fire and love.

I went to my mate's room and laid by her side, taking her in my arms, inhaling her sweet lavender scent and running my fingers through her light-brown locks.

After a few minutes, Mallory entered the room. Her face was laced with worry and her gaze was cast down. I sat up immediately, and asked her, attracting her eyes to me.

"Is everything alright with Alma and the babies?" I asked, concerned. The truth was, they grew on me and I ended up caring about them, which was something I couldn't ever expect.

"Yes, the birth was quite complicated but they are fine now, she is nursing them, nesting them with Egan. Do werewolves also nest their babies?" she asked, half-absently.

"I think so. Mothers groom their new babies for some time, it could be called nesting. What happened?"

"It's Kemy. Anita, Marion's witch friend, can't do anything about it, she can't help her. There is nothing we can do, Henry. Ember will die soon, we have no time and there is no way," Her voice was laced with muffled sobs.

She sat by the other side of Kemy's bed, taking her hand in hers and sobbing quietly.

Knight released a mournful howl in my mind and my heart clenched painfully. Alma was right, Ember was part of Kemy's soul and she was about to lose her, besides losing the chance to ever wake up and have a real life.

I exhaled sharply, I couldn't wake my mate up, save her and give her everything she deserved. I wouldn't be able to make her my Luna, have a family with her. But it didn't mean I would ever leave her or give up on her. I would be with her in her dreams, in our dreams. I would have to start taking sleeping pills soon. But I would do it, spend half of the day with my mate and the other half taking care of our pack.

"Mallory, I have to tell you something. Kemy doesn't blame you for what happened, she never did, never even thought about it. There was nothing you could have done, you were just a bit older than her and didn't have any warrior training. She told me that she is very grateful for everything you did for her and she loves you," I told her, looking at her green teary eyes.

Mallory breathed deeply, "She was all I had, Henry. I had to do something to protect her."

"Kemy doesn't want you to keep putting the blame on yourself. She only wants you to be happy and move you from this feeling of guilt," I reassured her and she nodded, giving me a sad smile.

"Thank you, Henry. I really appreciate your words. I needed to hear it, now I just have to bring myself to believe it." She clenched her lips, trying to hold back her tears and sobs.

Mallory was a very loyal and dedicated sister and she deserved to move on from this guilt and be happy with her grumpy mate. They both really could use some happiness.

She stayed there in the accent chair, holding my mate's hand and I tried to fall asleep. Between Knights howling and whimpering and my clenching heart, it was hard to fall asleep, but I had to. I had to tell Kemy everything, she would want to say goodbye to Ember and so did I, even though I couldn't see her.

After an hour or so, I fell asleep, opening my eyes to Kemy's meadow. She sat there by the tree, looking at the distance. She turned to look at me and stood up, coming in my direction. She didn't look lively and energetic as normal, her eyes lacked their twinkle, their fire and light. As soon as I arrived here, I could feel Ember dying and Kemy surely could feel it too.

Before anything else, I took my mate in my arms and showered her face with gentle kisses. I cupped her face between my hands and looked intently at her gloomy blue eyes, moistened with unshed tears.

"The witch couldn't help you. There is nothing we can do and time is almost up," I said, trying to conceal the sorrow in my voice, as I pressed my sweet mate against my chest tightly.

Kemy sniffed, "I know, I can feel it. She is almost fading away. Ember was everything I had for so long, she is my best friend and part of my soul, Henry. I don't know how I can be without her, our connection is even stronger than the regular one between dragon and human counterpart, she saved me over and over again, without her I wouldn't have been able to keep my sanity and probably not even my life. Losing her hurts much more than being condemned to live forever in this dream-limbo," she sobbed deeply, trembling a little in my arms. I ran my fingers through her hair, trying to comfort her the way I could.

My Kemy couldn't lose Ember! It was like losing part of herself. But there was nothing I could do.

I couldn't save my mate, I couldn't help her and Ember to heal! How I wanted to give my soul to them,

36. Saying Goodbye

My arms wrapped tightly around Kemy as I pressed her shivering body against mine. F*ck, I would do anything to help them. My moistened eyes trailed to the blue sky of her dream. I clenched my eyes shut, sending a silent prayer to the Moon Goddess above, hoping she would hear me and save Ember.

It didn't matter to have all the power, the runes, the magic if I couldn't help the woman I loved. Nothing of that meant anything. As an Alpha being helpless was both depressing and infuriating.

A sharp exhale left my mouth as I tried to put the wolf whimpering in my mind and my sadness at bay and focus on my mate, on reassuring her. I took her face between my hands, making her look at me.

"Let's go to see Ember. I think we should stay near her. Can you see her now?" Kemy should stay close to Ember.

I didn't know how much time we had, but I could feel that it wasn't much. That was what Kemy needed now, and what I needed as well, to say goodbye to Ember.

My mate took my hand in hers and led the way, her little hand felt cold to the touch, which was surprising, considering that her skin was always warm, hot even.

"Yes, I can, but only an outline of her, it isn't even golden anymore, it's in some shade of tan. She is fading away fast, she is trying to hide her pain from me, but I can feel it, Henry. It's so sad that you couldn't even see her, she really wanted to be seen by you," Kemy sobbed deeply, tears sliding down her face.

I stopped to wipe her tears and scooped her up in my arms, this way I could keep wiping her non-stop cries with my kisses.

"Where is she?" I asked and Kemy pointed the way, leading us to the direction of the only tree in the meadow. We sat there and Kemy leaned forwards, running her hands in the mid-air.

I followed her hand's movements, trying to touch Ember, but my palm only met the emptiness of air as if Ember was only an imaginary dragon.

"Ember, I am so sorry. I wish I could see you," I huffed and cast my eyes down. "I should have tried to talk to you long ago, I am sorry that I wasn't the mate you needed." My words were followed by my falling tears. As it finally sank in that she was my mate as well, she and Kemy were one. My heart clenched painfully, f*cking shattered into pieces.

My mate was half-dying and half-lost to the world.

I swallowed hard and let my tears fall as never before, rubbing my hand in the air. My eyes opened wide in surprise as I suddenly heard a deep whine and a rumble.