

Book 2 Dragon King's Forbidden Love Chapter 109 - Tips

LARA

These were the strangest few days in my life. More and more members of Darmerion Derwood family were arriving at the White Archipelago every day and they definitely were a very interesting crowd!

I loved getting to know them even though the circumstances were not the best. Initially, I was afraid that they would be blaming me for everything that happened. Clearly, they all knew about Demir's prophecy and could connect the dots easily. I was the golden-haired girl they were afraid of for so long, I was the one who became a catalyst for the prophecy to fulfill itself. And last but not least, it was my mistake to go and visit my brother in the dungeon. It was my stupid trust in him and the fact that he would never hurt me that led to the situation we were in now. But the worst part of all of this was that not only they lost the beautiful Empire that they had built, but also were at risk of losing their daughter and sister. I could tell by their faces that they were worried sick about her. Which was understandable. of course.

The guilt was eating me alive, no matter how many times I tried to shove it down, and no matter how many times Demir told me that the villains had to be feeling this way and not me. But I knew that he also had trouble forgiving himself for failing to protect his sister and his country. On the first day that his parents arrived here, he kneeled before his father when they were alone, even though he still could hardly move, and begged for his forgiveness like a man that he was – noble, proud, but just. And when his father placed a hand onto his shoulder, he told him that there was nothing to forgive and that he was not the one to blame.

I just hope that the former emperor didn't think that I was the one to blame...It also did not help at all that I was aware that his whole life they tried to avoid this exact thing from happening – they try to avoid him meeting me. They even went to the extreme and at some point, empress Miradora banned all blonde girls of Demir's age from her court.

The former empress was a beauty. She didn't look a year older than a human 35, although I was aware that she was much older. The first thing that she did to Demir, after scolding him for that "gone to Agnegard" thing, was giving a big and tight hug. And for the first time ever I felt a bit jealous. I know that in

some sense the Goddess of Light herself could be considered my mother. But I never had what Demir and his siblings had. Nothing of the sort for me... Lady Artes was my mother just for a few years before dying and I always missed that warmth that only a mother can give.

She woke me up in the middle of the night, while I was still holding Demir's hand and motioned for me to follow her. We went out to the balcony and stood there silent for a few good minutes, before she sighed heavily.

"Thank you so much, Larissa," she smiled at me and my lips parted in shock, causing her to let out a little giggle.

"I didn't do anything," I mumbled, "If anything, I need to apologize before you."

"Nonsense!" she splashed her hands, "You are a good girl. I can tell just looking at you. And trust me, back in the day I was worried for my son. Well, not anymore. As long as he has you, he will be fine."

I bit my lip almost to the point of bleeding, "Are you sure about that? It feels like all this is my fault..."

"But it's not," she took my hands into hers, "You did not make Xander Rust rebel and start the war. If anything, all that started before you were even born. You did not make your stepbrother kill all those people and use you the way he did. You are a victim here, Lara. None of us will blame you. And I am proud that my son was ready to protect his beloved woman and his sister with his life. Gods know, this was the way we taught him. But I am also proud of you, his beautiful warrior soulmate!"

"Me?" I gasped and felt my heart clenching from all the warmth that this woman was radiating.

"You," she beamed at me, "Believe it or not, but not many women will carry their men in their arms for miles and miles! You even outdone me and I was ready to do a lot for Rien."

She smiled when she remembered her husband. As if they were young couple in love and not a married one with thirteen kids and centuries spent together. I looked at her and I wanted that for Demir and me. I wanted our love to last that long and not fade under the pressure of time and troubles.

“Thank you,” I said to her, feeling how tears started to form in my eyes, “Goddess knows, I needed to hear that!”

“Come here, child!” she pulled me into a motherly hug and I allowed myself to enjoy it for a few seconds. But when I wanted to distance myself, she did not let me. “Let it out, Lara. You need this,” she whispered and I burst out crying. I did not sob loudly, just stood there quietly, letting myself be weak again for those few minutes that she was covering me. And when I was done, I told her everything from the very beginning. I told her how I met Demir in his dragon form and how we started to see those dreams (that one made her chuckle for some reason), I told her how he came for me to the White Archipelago and how he practically kidnapped me. I told her how I ran away and I told her about the Dark Selection. And then I told her about Gideon and Sean, and about what Xander was doing to Primrose. But for some reason she was most worried when she heard about Ryker’s death.

I felt better after our conversation that lasted almost the whole night. And during the day we were discussing our battle plans. I got to meet all of Demir’s siblings, worried sick that they would be blaming me.

But to my surprise, none of them said anything or even implied that I was at fault. On the contrary to what I used to believe, they all tried to accept me in the family as best as they could. Not everyone at the same level of willingness but it still felt amazing.

Looking at them now, I realized that I never had a real family before...

After Darius and Demir’s parents, one of his sisters arrived next. Layla was also a dark dragoness and a beauty with long, sleek and mesmerizingly shining black hair, just like your father’s and brother’s. And green eyes that were piercing through your soul when she looked at you. She didn’t resemble Primrose at all and at first, I was shocked by that difference. While Prim was wearing beautiful dresses and always looking elegantly as a court lady and a true princess, Layla preferred to dress like a warrior, always choosing dark colours just like her brothers, though I had to admit that all her outfits were expensive looking and well thought-through. She had an interesting story of her own behind her as she was engaged to a prince from a neighboring country. But when she went there for a visit, she found her soul mate in a simple knight. She dumped the prince without giving it a second thought and almost caused a war by that decision. But she did not budge since her knight was the one who truly made her happy. However, her prophecy was that she would marry a royal from that very country and will give him three sons. She

thought that she defied the prophecy, bringing relief to Primrose and Demir for some time, only to find out in a few years that her knight in shining armour was actually a bastard of the previous king. And since that royal family was not leaving the Gerdian Empire alone, Demir helped her and her husband to dethrone her former fiance and put the crowns on both their heads. As warrior leaders, they ruled their country together for many years. They were so good that no one actually wanted to go to war with them anymore. So, naturally, Layla was beyond excited to take part in the new adventure. In fact, she was so eager to fight that I was slightly worried that she might start to attack earlier than needed and ruin our perfect plan.

Then there was Ryar, a gentle soul and one of the siblings who never wanted to become a king himself. He was traveling around the world, looking for his soulmate while exploring new places. He was a painter and in every city he visited, he was leaving a masterpiece behind at the local palace or temple. He was probably one of the most charming siblings and shared dark hair and blue eyes with his father.

The twins Caiden and Cassian were the ones who were almost always joking around. They played a trick on me on the first day here, trying to make me believe that they were just one person name Danian. But since there wasn't a sibling like that in the Darmerian Derwood family, I hit the one in front of me with my light, thinking that it could be a possible intruder and now it was very easy to tell one from another since Cassian now had a tiny scar above his eyebrow and would she refuse to heal it, saying that "the girls would be crazy over it." Unlike their older brothers, they both were redheads. It was another reason why I didn't hesitate to attack Cass – since he resembled a red dragon a lot. And that quickly gained me popularity among other siblings, who seemed annoyed with constant tricks.

Meadow was one of the youngest, although it didn't mean much since they all were dragons and hundreds of years old. She was the only one who wasn't technically a princess anymore or a queen, since she got married to a duke from Akyria, their mother's motherland and now worked at the Akyrian Royal Academy of Magical Arts. This was where she met her husband when she came there to study and now they both stayed there as professors. He was teaching students battle magic while she was one of the best artifactors in the world. Her creations were considered priceless and kings from all over the world were fighting at the auctions to get anything that she created. However, Meadow, the girl with light ginger hair and freckles, decided not to sell any of her works anymore when she found out that not all of them were used as she intended, causing a lot of disappointment.

Ronan was one of the younger ones as well. But he was already happily married and had about a dozen children to prove that. He went abroad a few years ago to help one of Demir's allies. And that was where he found his soulmate. She was a Princess of the enemy Kingdom and truly hated him when they first met. He was conquering her heart for a long time before she finally gave up. And their marriage put an end to the war. He was a king as well and his army was one of the biggest.

Bridgit had the most interesting story of them all by far. The girl with hair as red as blood was one of the most fierce warriors ever known. And her soul mate turned out to be none other than a deadly assassin, sent to kill her as a way to send a message to her father. They almost killed each other on the day they met and their love that blossomed ever since. Together they discovered a huge conspiracy within the Gerdian Empire and now were travelling around the world on secret missions, living the thrilling life they both wanted. She actually offered to take care of Xander herself but everyone at the dining table rolled their eyes.

Derek was the serious one. He hadn't met his soul mate yet but according to his siblings, he was trying to visit all the royal families around the world, sure that she would be one of the princesses. Human lives were short compared to dragons' and he had to repeat his journey every couple of decades and hope that a new Princess was born somewhere and ready for him to claim as his own.

"See!" Caiden snorted, "I told you! This is ridiculous!"

"So many years of travels and you still haven't met her," Cass joined him, "Maybe it's time to change strategy, brother?"

"What do you suggest exactly?" Derek was stabbing the meat on his plate, clearly unhappy with where the conversation turned just a few minutes ago.

"I don't know," the redhead guy chuckled, "Maybe you should start checking all the commoners as well? Why are you so sure that your soulmate is a Princess?"

"Simple logic, brother," Derek narrowed his eyes at him and dark magic sparkled, at the same time Cass's dinner turned into coals, "All our family soulmates were exceptional. And that's exactly how mine is going to be!"

"Touchy-feely", Cassian moved his plate away frowning, and took his wine glass into his hand, gobbling everything in one go.

"And that is our family," Demir rolled his eyes, "Not crazy at all, right?"

"It's perfect," I smiled at him and they all gave me approving glances.

"Of course," Mira said and placed her hand on her husband's, "Not everyone is here tonight..."

"We will get Prim back," Derrien, the former emperor, promised to his beloved wife and lifted her wrist, bringing it to his lips for a kiss, "that's a promise."

"I know that," my future mother-in-law sighed, "But Egan and Morgan..."

Her voice dropped and everyone around the huge long table got quiet, looking at the former Empress, who had momentary tears in her eyes.

I already knew who Egan and Morgan were. They were two brothers who already died several years ago. One of them decided to join their parents during a battle while still too young and inexperienced. They could never forgive themselves for losing him. The other died during a different battle, protecting Demir with his life. And that was another hard loss for the family... In a way, they never recovered from that.

That's why I knew that getting Primrose back was so important to them. They couldn't do anything in Egan and Morgan's cases as everything happened too quickly. But now they had a chance to fix everything.

"To staying always by each other's side," Ryar raised his glass and others followed his example.

"To staying always by each other's side," we all repeated.

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I was standing on a cold terrace and watching new Warriors of Light training at the distance. Since we had not too many teachers available and an enormous number of recruits, we had to run groups exercising day and night. It still wasn't enough, of course. So, we had to sort them according to their age, strength, and abilities. Thanks to the goddess, the training was compulsory for anyone under the age of 19. And this kind of training was not

easily forgotten. So, at least among the younger groups, we had some good warriors on our hands. And where they had not enough experience, they compensated with eagerness and newly-gained power of Light. Thanks to all that, we stood a chance. Or at least that was what I hoped for. My Warriors of Light were essential for our plan.

Demir's siblings were leaving tonight since we had to get our plan in action and their armies were already on the way. I just hoped that everything would play out nicely and we would be able to fix as much as possible.

Two strong hands wrapped around me and I smiled as Demir kissed me gently on my neck, breathing in my scent at the same time.

"You are still worried," he sighed, "Tell me why."

"I am afraid to lose you again," I confessed without even thinking. Since I was so close once, this horror was still haunting me. "I just can't... If something happens to you... If you die..."

He grabbed the back of my head, entwining his fingers into my hair, and kissed me greedily.

"Lara, Lara, Lara," he breathed into my lips, "Haven't you heard? You have nothing to worry about – I am already dead!"