

Book 2 Dragon King's Forbidden Love Chapter 4 - Tips

LARA

By the time I see the White Archipelago from the sky, my body so exhausted that I feel I am going to pass out any moment now. The strength is leaving me and I can't hold my wings anymore. The muscles give out and I start falling through the clouds... All I think about is how close I was to home!

"Lara!" a familiar voice next to me appears out of nowhere and two strong hands grab me by my waist right before I fall into the sea from the sky.

Light! So much light! Wings...

"We have all been looking for you!" I recognize my brother's friend, Fabian, "Where have you been? Gideon is going crazy looking for you!"

"I've been... flying," somehow my tongue doesn't let me confess what really happened to me. I have nothing to be embarrassed about, but it feels like I need to protect this little secret from everyone. Everyone except for my brother, of course! I don't hide anything from Gideon. Ever.

Fabian is holding me uncomfortably, his light shining wings holding both of us in the air. They are a thing of beauty and something I desire to get more than anything in this world! But to no avail so far...

"Let go of your wings," Fabian tells me, pressing me tighter.

"But they will fall into the sea!" I say, looking at him in shock.

"You will not need them anymore, trust me," the guy chuckles, his short silver locks are blown by the wind, "Gideon destroyed the first prototype of them when you got lost. And judging by his mood, you know that he will not let you fly in the nearest future. So, drop it. Not like you can fly anymore anyway."

"All right," I sigh heavily and just do as he says, following the shining metal with my gaze right until it disappears in the merciless sea. I know that Fabian is right. My brother must be properly pissed by now. He hates it when I am late, but disappearing like that...

This time the Warrior of Light picks me up properly under my knees and back and I wrap hands around his neck for security. He speeds up fast, so fast that

at some point I have to close my eyes and tuck my face into his chest. I can feel how he is going down quickly but knowing how Fabian loves to appear spectacularly to impress all the girls around, I just grasp him tightly. And that was the wisest decision I've made in a while as he lands almost shaking the ground.

"Found her!" he chuckles, and I hear voices and sounds around us, still not being able to open my eyes as we are in a thick cloud of dust raised from the impact of Fabian's showing off.

"What the chaos are you doing with my sister in your arms?!" I hear Gideon's voice and cough, trying to speak up in defense of my saviour. But nothing comes out.

"My friend, you are so very welcome. How nice that you are grateful for me saving your unbelievably beautiful but helpless sister right before she was about to break her neck and..." Fabian snorts but I feel two warm hands, tearing me away from him.

"Thanks!" Gideon cuts him off and I feel his familiar scent of mint. I am finally home!

One second – and we tear off the ground again. Another – and we land softly.

"You can stand now," I hear my brother's stern voice, his fingers wipe my eyes and I finally manage to open them and look at his face.

Oh, yes, he is angry. So angry that I wish I had any kind of useful information for him to make up an excuse for myself. Unfortunately, I have nothing, so I look away in shame.

"Ignoring me now?" he exhales heavily and takes off my helmet without warning, letting the red locks fall freely down my shoulders and back. "You are hurt!" he states the obvious, taking a slow walk around me and tracing every scratch with his fingers, "There is so much blood on your clothes, Lara!"

"But I am fine," I hurry to calm him down, "It's not mine!"

And when his brow shoots up, I add, "I met... an animal."

He nods quietly and then pulls me into the tightest of hugs. And I lean to him feeling the warmth of the only person who cares about me.

"I am so sorry, Gideon!" I say regretfully, "It was very stupid of me..."

"It was," he admits, still not letting me go, "I was worried sick, Lara! I had to send two squadrons to look for you!"

"You shouldn't have, Deon!" I feel how my cheeks flush in embarrassment. So many warriors of light were looking for me? Crazy!

"Of course, I should have! You are the most precious thing I've got, Lara!" he retorts, and I smile.

My brother is always like that. He doesn't stay angry with me for long. And considering that I am an adopted child, I'd call myself incredibly lucky. Gideon's parents adopted me when I was found on the shore. The law of the White Archipelago says that all strangers should be killed immediately to protect our realm. To protect the Glowing Tower and our main source of power. But it was Gideon's father, Adrian Artes, who was the Custodian of the Glowing Citadel back then. He took pity on me, the girl of mere 5 years old... He asked the Leader to check me for the power of light. And when it turned out that I have it, I've been spared. The Arteses took me in as their daughter and all made me feel welcome every day since then.

Lidia Artes died first when I was very young. And Father was raising me and Gideon alone for most of our lives. He also died a few years back and now it's only Deon and me. Together against the world.

He accepted me from the very first day and took care of me just as a good older brother should. For that, I will always be in his debt. The debt that I will never be able to return though. Since Gideon already has everything. He is the richest man on the Archipelago, he is the most handsome, the best and the youngest warrior to ever enter the Assembly of Light. I can't help him in any way, I have nothing to give to him. Except for staying by his side as long as he needs me. This is the only thing he ever asked from me.

His lips press softly to my forehead and then he distances himself.

"Take a good long bath, Lara," my brother smiles, "And when you are done, I'll be waiting for you downstairs. I want to know everything that happened to you while you were gone! Every single detail. Got it?"

"Of course," I shudder slightly, and this does not escape him. He spreads his wings that are woven from light itself and I catch myself admiring them again. I

stretch my hand and touch one of the feathers. Usually, Warriors of Light do not let anyone do something like that. Wings are sacred. But Gideon is different, he always lets me brush over soft feathers...

He even made me my own wings, since we both know that I will never be accepted as the Warrior of Light. He knew how terribly sad it made me and wanted to cheer me up. The first few prototypes were awful. But the third one was fine, and I was able to experience for the first time what it's like – to fly!

And the fifth one was so good that the leader of the citadel ordered Gideon to make more of those for regular warriors of the White Archipelago. Giving other people a chance to fly. All this thanks to my brother trying to make me happy. Just like now.

“Your hair,” Gideon says all of a sudden, and I look at him questioningly, “Take off the illusion.”

“Fine!” I giggle and shake my head, getting rid of the intense red colour.

“That’s better,” my brother smiles and takes off my balcony.

I sigh, watching him in the sky and then see how he flies down to where our reception room is. Our house is one of the oldest on the Archipelago and is very tall. All houses here are like this, but ours is the tallest. After the Glowing Citadel, of course. No one can beat that height!

I get to my room, feeling so happy to see my pearly white walls and furniture and find that one of the maids already prepared a warm bath for me. I soak in it, thinking of everything that happened. It all seems like it was just a dream now that I am here.

After I am done, I quickly brush my hair with my element and watch it fall down my shoulders in perfect golden locks. Golden, not silver. Every time people see them, they know that I wasn't born here, that I am an outsider!

Sighing, I turn my hair into red again. A lot of people are using this colour with their illusions. Especially the warriors. They prefer vibrant colours, with red and pitch-black being the favourites... No one should recognize people from the Archipelago. At least not while it still matters.

I find an absolutely new and gorgeous dress in milky white with golden embroidery at the edges, hanging over my bed's canopy. Gideon probably wanted to surprise me before I disappeared.

Looking at the mirror, I see that the bruises and cuts that I have are definitely smaller than they should be. How strange! I check my palms, remembering how badly hurt they were and only now notice that they have healed already.

But this should be impossible!

Hmm... Maybe the water in the river had special properties? I need to tell Gideon about that! That may be the useful information I needed!

Suddenly feeling happy, I fall to my soft bed. My every muscle calls for a good long sleep, but I need to go and talk to my brother now...

I need to go no matter how tired I am! So, I'll close my eyes just for a second...

A soft touch on my cheek. Like a butterfly. Or a feather. It goes lower and tingles erupt all over me. That's something new...

But when it reaches my lips, I open my eyes with a gasp.

"I thought I'd have to wait forever!" the man chuckles...