

## Book 2 Dragon King's Forbidden Love Chapter 9 - Tips

LARA

I wake up in the best mood. I feel prickles on the tips of my fingers which let me know that I did use magic while I was still asleep. How in the heavens did that happen?

“Demir,” I say his name, tasting it on my tongue. I say it out loud a few times more as if I expect for something to happen. And when nothing does, I can’t help but feel disappointed.

Wait a minute, disappointed?! Why? I don’t even know who he is! And what is this strange connection between us! Why do I keep seeing him?

I crawl out of the bed and wash my face and teeth, trying to gather my thoughts when I come back to my room. I sit at my dressing table and start brushing the red locks vigorously.

He could be anything for what I know! The first time I ever saw him was in the cave where I fell with that dragon. But I am pretty sure that there were no humans or gerdians there. We were alone with that dragon. Until he appeared while I was washing...

The thought of what he saw makes my cheeks flush and I cover my face with my palms in embarrassment. That’s when I feel two hands on my shoulders and flinch, opening my eyes to see Gideon right behind me.

“Is something wrong?” he asks, giving my muscles a light squeeze and helping me relax at once, “You seem so tense...”

“Everything is fine,” I smile. My brother has a lot on his plate to know all the gory details of my hallucinations. Somehow, I can’t bring myself to tell him about that... gerdian.

Deon doesn’t look convinced but still nods understandingly. His fingers brush over my red hair and he leans lower to me.

“Lara, today is the Solstice,” he says, “It’s one of our greatest holidays and I will have a great surprise for you.”

“Oh, really?” my eyes lighten up. He always has the best surprises! The last one was my first wings! Even though I’ll never be a Warrior of Light, he still gave me an opportunity to fly and personally taught me.

“Yes, really,” my brother chuckles, “So, wear the best dress and...”

He picks up a lock of my hair and twists it in his fingers. “And wear your natural colour today. Don’t feel embarrassed about it, Lara.”

“You know what everybody will say when they’ll see it...”

“It’s beautiful, Lara,” Gideon gives me a hug, “And it doesn’t matter what everybody else would say. They will have to say it to me first!”

Easy for him to say... He is an example of a perfect citizen of the White Archipelago with his silver locks and golden eyes. This is the only look with which you can live here. Even though plenty of people are wearing illusions as I do. Underneath, it’s the silver shade only.

I still remember one of the days when my classmates were laughing because of my looks. They called me a mistake, an abomination... They said that my parents were so embarrassed by me that they threw me away. I cried the whole night in Gideon’s arms. And on the next morning, I put on the illusion for the first time. At first, I wanted to look like everybody else but then I decided that silver hair will not help me. So, I chose the colour that the leading female warrior of the time – my adoptive mother – was wearing. I wanted everybody to notice it, so I made it as red and bright as possible. The kids from my class still laughed at me... But then Gideon arrived from the sky and broke the nose of one of the boys with a hard punch. I still wasn’t accepted but no one said a word to me after that.

The memory left a bitter taste...

“I’ll think about it,” I say and disperse the illusion, making my brother smile. He is the only one who prefers me the way I am.

“That’s much better!” he approves, “I’ll see you at the festivities, Lara.”

He leaves, but when he is already at the door he turns and says seriously, “And try to avoid Fabian today.”

A smile wipes off my face. I completely forgot about the awkward conversation we had yesterday. Hopefully, Fab wasn't serious about all that...

"Don't worry," I chuckle, "I bet he already forgot about everything himself. You know your friend!"

"True," Gideon snorts and opens the door, freezing when he sees my friend, Bria, in the doorway.

She gasps when she sees him, fixing her posture and dress quickly.

"Captain!" she greets him with a smile.

"Ah, Bria," Deon nods, "Nice to see you! Can I ask something from you?"

"Of course," she agrees eagerly, "Anything!"

"Can you look after my sister today and make sure that your brother stays away from her?" Gideon smirks and I roll my eyes. My friend looks stunned by the sudden request.

"Deon!" I reproach my sibling, "Don't ask something like this from her! It's inappropriate!"

"I'll do it!" Bria suddenly interjects and I can swear I see the blush on her cheeks.

"Great!" my brother hits her on the shoulders just like he does with his male friends, "I knew I could count on you!"

He leaves us alone and my friends fall into a chair right next to me.

"It's almost midday and you are still not ready!" she complains, trying to change the subject.

"Uh-huh," I chuckle, "You know, one of these days you will have to learn how to say no to him..."

"Impossible!" she admits, "Especially now, when he is my superior. Just imagine, Lara, what if we end up together after all? Then we will be family!"

"That would be great," I admit.

“And if you and Fabian...”, she starts.

“Oh, no!” I stop her, “There can’t be Fabian and me... We just... We will never work. I would much better prefer you and Gideon.”

“Me too!” Bria giggles, shaking her short silver curls. And then she looks seriously at me, “Why are your hair like this?”

I suddenly feel a lump in my throat.

“I... I was thinking of going like this,” I confess.

“Lara...,” the girl takes my hands into hers and clenches my lips, “You know I love you, right? But if you go like this you risk your whole day to be ruined by stupid remarks...”

“I know,” I sigh, looking at my golden hair in the mirror, “But Gideon said...”

“Gideon is a powerful man,” my friend clenches her lips, “He is amazing but he would never understand... And he can’t keep creating more enemies while protecting your honour...”

“You are right,” I agree with her sadly and wave my hand, bringing back the red colour. I don’t want anyone to have problems because of me.

“That’s much better!” Bria smiles and pulls me by my hair, “Now, let’s find you a dress!”

We are in the centre of the island for the biggest celebration of the year. It seems like everyone is here today – I’ve never seen such a big crowd before. White petals are flowing from the sky, white ribbons are blown by the wind and everyone is wearing their best white clothes today. This is the one and only day in the year when light mages are the strongest.

Bria leaves me alone to greet some of her new friends from the Warriors of Light. I watch her with a prick of jealousy in my heart. In some sense, Bria has everything I ever wanted...

No, I will not think of that!

I turn on my heels to avoid watching them and bump into someone’s hard chest...

