

Chapter 47

Atlas POV (Five years before the last battle in book 1)

Peace. What is that? There is no peace for a king who controls an entire kingdom. Especially when this beautiful kingdom has no queen to help protect her. My beautiful kingdom of Draconis. We are the most powerful kingdom in our dragon realm, which is called Shadows. I stood on the balcony of my red and black-trimmed room.

The view overlooks the kingdom all together as the black bricks of the 900-year-old castle stand over 300 feet tall, nearly reaching the yellow clouds. To any newcomer, the view here would be magnificent, and rightfully so. Surrounding my castle are the homes of the families close to the royals. Further out are the extended families and friends. Farther out from them is Azure Lake.

It is a mystical lake blessed by our god, Typhon, that allows our other half to heal if injured in any way. It stretches out over three miles, with many beautiful flowers surrounding it, courtesy of the planters my mother hired before her disappearance six months ago.

Father and I looked for her everywhere, even searching other realms in hopes of finding her, but she was completely gone. Still, each day I have soldiers out scouting. I have to have hope, though my father has lost all of it.

I looked up at the red-colored sky, with its yellow clouds in full effect, and ended up in deep thought over my kingdom. My family has ruled the kingdom of Draconis for eons. We were not the most powerful for nothing. Our family name, Drakos, was feared yet respected by all, and with good reason. As long as a Drakos sat on the throne, the kingdom would forever be safe.

We keep everyone in the realm safe against all threats, with the main threat being the witches, who try time and time again to break the barrier that separates our kingdom from theirs. The witches of the Shadow Kingdom are strong, but our magic is older and more powerful. I had always suspected that they were behind my mother's kidnappings, but no trace of her was found. It was assumed she ran away.

The Drakos name, however, is strong due to our abilities. Our God, Typhon personally blessed my family line, with the ability to transform into his likeness. A dragon. One of the most powerful species to have ever existed. We shapeshift at will and have the ability to fly, as well as the ability to control fire while in our human form. Our dragons, much like werewolves, are a part of us.

We hear their voices in our minds, which are just a deeper and raspier version of our own. Some dragons, such as myself and my brother Adam, were blessed with additional abilities. Some of us could bend other elements in both human and dragon form. Some of us could control the minds of others, such as my Uncle Ellis, which is great for prisoners to spill their inner secrets. My younger brother, Adam, had the power of teleportation and opening portals, which he did not hesitate to use when it best suited him. Adam and I were the only two sons of our father, with me being born first and Adam two years later. We both prepped our whole lives on how to rule, though we always knew I would be the one taking the throne.

That meant training, for me, was harder. I had to be faster and stronger. I had to be the best. I admit, I was a hothead sometimes, even now, but that's for all male dragons. Only our mates had a way of quenching that fire inside of us, but not meeting mine, I had to learn how to control it. Adam was never good at controlling himself and even resorted to a chosen mate, which we knew would never work out. Our God worked with the other gods and goddesses to create matches. Going against

their wishes would mean a horrible future for all parties involved, regardless of the situation.

Adam, however, met his "chosen mate" Sorena a few months ago, and they claimed to be in love. Sorena was a witch, much to my dismay, with most of her power working with the dead, and I forbade them at first. My dislike for witches was incredible, and there was nothing that was going to change my mind. Adam explained that her background came from the witch kingdom, where she was shunned and mistreated. Taking pity on her, I allowed her to stay, though I always remained cautious around her.

I even had my uncle read her mind and control her to tell the truth, and she just repeated the same story with a determined look in her eye. It was only then that I agreed for her and my brother to be together. If I'm being honest with myself, it was more for Adam. His temper was out of control when she was gone, and I knew I would lose him to his inner dragon if I didn't allow her to come back.

When the human counterpart goes without their mates after they have mated, the "madness," as we call it, starts. It starts out as a temper. Even greater than the one we naturally have. It progresses to parts of your skin that start to scale, and your eyes change to the lizard-like eyes of your dragon. Your thoughts are taken over by a need to destroy, though the human part of yourself is the only thing that keeps you sane, until you can't take it anymore, and eventually, the worst of the worst happens. The final stage is a full transformation into your dragon. Your dragon is in control, and they are not the rational version of you. You will not be able to return to human form and will spend your final days until your death stuck in your dragon's subconscious, watching them burn and destroy anything and everything they come into contact with. There is no coming back from the final phase, as it has never happened before. When dad lost mom, he started to transform as well, but the water from the lake has been keeping his transmutation under control. It heals him, but at a slow rate. Since the loss of our mother, he gave me the throne and retreated into a house near the lake, away from everyone. He hasn't transformed into his black, white-striped dragon in years. Black dragons are common in royal families, but each dragon has their own streak of color on them to signify who was who. I am the only person in my entire

family who was born without a dragon streak, but Kai says only time will tell if we receive one.

As I am lost in my head, I hear a woosh sound behind me, but I am not alarmed. I could smell Adam before he even approached. All dragons have a great sense of smell. "You always seem too far away," he says, walking to stand beside me.

"As king, you know fully well the responsibilities I have," I told him. "It's not that I can't do it; it's just that one day I feel like this entire responsibility will be stripped from me. It's all I've ever known. Not to mention, I have yet to meet my mate. Who am I, if not the king?" I spoke.

"My annoying ass big brother," Adam replied, putting his lean yet muscular arm around my shoulder and looking out over the kingdom with me. I remained quiet but shook my head, my mind still clouded with so many thoughts. Self-doubt. It was not a pretty thing, but I had it.

"Sorena says come eat before she portals up here and grabs you herself," Adam says, patting my shoulder before transporting.

Sorena. My thoughts turned to her. When I first met her, I felt some sort of familiarity, but not enough to know that she would be my mate. I couldn't explain it. Still, there was some attraction to her, and I could never pinpoint what it was. Neither could Kai. However, she belonged to my brother, and there was no way I was about to act on that. Unlike werewolves, we were not compelled to only make love or fuck our mates. Our god granted us the freedom to do as we choose, other than who we are mated to. As a king, I have had many lovers, but I knew none of them would compare to how it might be with my own mate. Wherever she may be, Until then, I am still just a man. Sighing because I knew Sorena would bring her ass up here to tell me off for missing dinner for a sixth night, I made my way to the kitchens. The inside of our castle was magnificent, as it contained many beautiful and old antique decorations, such as the beautifully carved oak ash stairs or the marble floors.

Each room was beautiful, with its own design. The castle held up to 30 floors, each one dedicated to the royal family. Some had yet to be filled. Some of the floors were for the staff, who enjoyed working for me, as I never mistreated them. I always made sure, regardless of status, everyone here was treated with the utmost respect, and not one person was better than the other. That included my family, regardless of our powers. It was my mother who instilled this in me as I trained to become a king. As I reached the kitchen, I could hear the arguments over shows they were all watching and debating over.

Just another typical day in the house of Drakos, Kai said, and I sighed in agreement.