

The Dragon King's Substitute Bride Chapter 120

HERA

Her...

Me...

I'm the reason all of this is happening.

If they succeeded in opening that portal, not only would the entire fifth realm be forced under the rule of Azarath but with every dragon and dragon Ryder under his control, not to mention the dark elves and their magic, there would be no stopping him.

The havoc he would reek.

I try to look away but they make me watch.

Holding my head in place and forcing me to see as they hurt the man I love.

The raised knife turns pitch black.

She must be coating it in dark magic to make sure the wound stays open for longer.

And then she cuts open the skin of his wrist, slicing deep and laughing when he cries out in pain from the poison of the magic.

She drains the blood into a bowl.

Red splashes against solid gold.

They are nearly salivating.

Hermani, the elves holding him in place,

Even the Hades blasted fool twisting my arm behind my back is drooling above my head.

Gods above what I wouldn't give to be able to be able to snap their necks in half.

I watch, breathless with anger and worry.

Why won't she stop?

Surely she must have enough by now.

My heart is racing, slamming itself against the bones of my chest over and over again.

I am starting to panic.

Why won't she stop?

The wound starts to close but she cuts it open again.

And again...

And again.

He grunts, slumping slightly against that hands holding him up and yet she continues to hold his wrist over the bowl.

"Midas!!...Midas!!.."

I struggle and kick but the one holding me is too strong and the only thing I succeed in doing is nearly ripping my own arms out of their socket.

Tears are running down my cheeks and I am aware that I am being hysterical.

Screaming and crying and barely making any sense.

But I do not care.

"Midas!!...Hermani!! Stop please, you're draining him!...Leo help him!!"

But the chief Ryder himself has lost so much blood, he is barely able to even stand.

As I watch, the dragon king starts to turn start to pale.

His eyes beginning to drift slowly shut.

"No...Please...Stop..."

My voice cracks and fades.

The lump in my throat is making me unable to do more than cry and I can feel myself starting to completely fall apart

Just when I think they intend to complete drain him of his blood, she stops.

Midas slumps completely, held up only by the arms of the dark elves.

He is still conscious but barely.

Hermani lifts the bowl, blood overflowing from it's edges and running down her arms.

All the dark elves in the room, including my captor hoot and howl in glee

Like wolves at a moon light sky.

And then cradling it to her chest, she turns around and starts to walk slowly up the steps.

Towards the arch where Midas and I had been bound together.

King and queen.

Husband and wife.

The place where I had sworn to do everything in my power to protect the dragon realm and the dragon king I did not yet know.

I force my gaze away from him and up at Hermani who places the bowl beneath the arch.

And then she begins to speak.

Words I do not know or recognize.

And as she does so, the blood in the bowl starts to rise up.

A steady stream of bright red.

It floats towards the arch formed by the two dragons.

Then it begins to follow the edges of the arch

An arch within another.

A door way.

The hairs on the back of my neck start to rise and my heartbeat triples.

I recognize the feeling as sweat trickles down my back.

Fear.

Suddenly all the flames on the pillars go out.

Extinguished at the same time.

Plunging the entire temple in almost pitch black darkness.

No one moves, no one breathes.

My heart falls to the floor the same moment the ground starts to rumble and shake.

“No....”

And then just as suddenly the flames flicker back on

All one colour.

The same blood red as the doorway stretching out from the bowl of blood.

A loud sound rents the air.

The ripping sound of two ends being torn violently apart.

And the portal, a large tear running the length of the doorway starts to open.

Two crackling edges pulling apart on either side.

Hermani, her pale skin awash with the blood red light, lifts both her hands, the knife she used to cut Midas still firmly clenched in it.

“Azarath the great, we call to you, patron God of shadows. Come forth!”

From the space within the portal, a darkness starts to grow.

A darkness so deep and so evil, it seems to suck the very air out of the room, making it almost impossible to breathe.

This is it.

Everything...life as we knew it...

It was all about to be completely destroyed.

And I could do was stand and watch, tears running listless down my cheeks.

Useless.... useless... useless.

I had come to the dragon realm to save my own.

And all I had managed to do, was destroy everything else.

Out of nowhere, a memory flashes through my mind.

The day after he saved me from the Elder forest.

“what did you call me?”

“It is Dragon tongue. It means one who has been touched by the sun.”

His hand brushes over my hair that glows a bright orange in the last rays of the setting sun.

The motion is a gentle caress that sends my foolish heart fluttering as he repeats the word, the vowels rolling and lilting. "Kāmahi."

Another loud rip and the portal stretches open even more. The darkness within it growing.

Another memory flashes in my the mind.

This one from when I walked the path of memories.

My mother shaking her head, tears rolling down her cheeks.

My father wipes her tears and I can see his heart breaking for her "Do you regret it?"

She shakes her head even harder. "Never and you should not either Elias. We did what we had to do."

"Even though it meant promising your first child to be used by the Fates?"

Tears run down my eyes.

It must have all been a big mistake.

The Fates, they had chosen the wrong child.

The flames on the pillars flicker violently and so does another memory.

The one from my dream.

I see her again.

The startlingly brightness of her eyes and the ethereal beauty of face.

Slanted eyes over a wide mouth, The fiery redness of her hair. Me staggering back in fright.

"But you are dead."

The Oracle of Daphne steps out into the light.

"No. Not dead. Not anymore. I am you now."

I shake my head and clench my hands in fists.

"No..."

But I can still hear her voice floating in my mind...In my head... everywhere.

"The Fates were right...You are stronger than I was. You do not need my help."

I am shaking so badly my head is starting to hurt.

But the voices in my head refuse to stop.

Memory after memory flashing through my mind.

The necklace around my neck is starting to get hot again.

The ground shakes once more, jolting me to reality and with a startled gasp I turn to see that the portal is almost completely open.

Arydian's voice in my head.

"You are the Oracle of Daphne Hera..."

My eyes squeeze shut but the voices do not go away.

Please...stop... please...there is nothing I can do.

"...queen of the most powerful mortal realm."

"What do you want from me?!"

"Act like it."

And then suddenly, time stops...slows...

At first it is like floating in a sea of darkness.

And I see it.

Like looking through a keyhole out onto a scene that is yet to unfold.

I see what will happen.

What needs to be done.

But before I can get to the end, my eyes fly open and as I glance up, my blood runs cold.

Skies above.

The portal is fully open and the darkness within it is almost entirely here.

They start to tremble and shake.

All of them.

Hermani cries out in a loud voice.

Over and over again, the knife in her hand shaking in tandem with her.

Continuing to repeat the same words over and over.

The portal is almost open.

I wet my lips and swallow hard.

I am Hera, human daughter of Elias, wife to King Midas the immortal, queen of the dragon realm and the Oracle of Daphne...

Here goes everything.

I close my eyes and I find it.

The place of memories and shadows. If I could pull someone out of it, then I could put them there as well.

So that is what I do.

I grab the arm of the dark elf holding me.

And I take him there and leave him behind

The grip on my hands falls away just like I knew it would.

And just like I knew they would, no one notices.

Just like I had seen.

They are all focused on the open portal.

All except Leo.

He raises himself shakily on his sword.

One silent nod.

And then we both start to run.

Leo towards the other dark elves to stop them from getting to me.

And I towards the altar.

Midas sees me first.

The dark elves who are holding Midas however are too busy transfixed by their blood thirsty portal and have not been paying attention.

They do not know that his wound has since healed.

So they do not see it happen.

He whirls around and takes their own swords from their sheaths.

One swish is all it takes and they both crumble to the floor.

Their heads rolling slowly down the steps.

Hermani hears and stops.

Her head whipping backwards in confusion.

But by the time she turns around, it is too late.

I grip Midas' sword I had taken from the floor firmly in my hand.

"You forgot one thing..."

The blade passes cleanly through her middle.

"I can see the future."

I push it in until it comes out the other side.

She shrieks loudly, gripping the blade and stumbling backwards.

But as she does so, she kicks the bowl of blood and sends it clattering to the floor.

Thick red blood spilling everywhere.

Just like I knew it would.

With the blood source gone, The portal immediately starts to close.

I stand close to her, chest heaving and wipe angrily at the tears in my eyes with one hand.

The other still firmly gripping the hilt sword buried in her stomach.

"That is for Garwith."

And then with all the strength and pain and hatred in my heart, I push her.

She trips over the fallen bowl and falls straight into the open portal.

Just like I knew she would.

"Hera..."

I turn around and my heart swells to bursting at the sight of the dragon king.

“Midas.”

He takes one step towards me.

“I had guards watching your tower.”

I attempt, unsuccessfully to sniff back my tears and smirk at him.

“I would think that by now, you would know that locking me up never works”

He smiles up at me.

That heartbreakingly beautiful smile of his.

And then his eyes widen in horror.

“Hera...look out!!”

“You stupid b***h!!”

Pain worse than anything I have ever felt in my life.

The knife pierces straight through my chest almost the same instant as her hand goes flying from her body and the portal snaps shut

My legs give way beneath me and he catches me before I can reach the floor.

He cups my cheek in his hands.

“Hera...Hera...can you hear me...stay with me. We’ll get you home. You’ll be fine.”

He lifts me in his arms.

Every movement sending shards of pain through my body.

The air outside is crisp and sharp.

A cloudless sky with a full moon.

“Midas?”

“I am right here.”

I feel cold. And tired.

So...so tired.

It hurts to keep breathing

And I want it to stop.

Maybe if I stop trying to breathe, the pain will go away.

Maybe.

“Midas will you tell Henette I am sorry... about Garwith.”

“Shhh...save your words...You can tell her yourself when we get to the castle.”

“Midas...”

“Hera stop talking please. We will take you back to the castle and...”

“Midas.”

My hand is shaky when I raise it and stroke my thumb over his cheek.

“You want to know Dragon king....the first thing I noticed about you?”

“Gods above Hera...”

His voice cracks...falters.”... please...stop talking.”

“It was your eyes. There were the most beautiful thing I had ever seen.”

The pain is still there.

But I am beginning to feel it less and less.

The darkness on the edges of my vision, rushing towards me.

Light taps on my cheek pull me forcefully back to the surface.

“Hera...open your eyes. Open them right now!”

I’m trying to but it is hard.

“Your highness!!”

Their voices sound like it might be coming for a place far, far away.

“Captain!”

I do not hear what follows next but the next thing I feel is the wind, sharp and biting against my face.

And I know instantly that we are flying.

I turn to blink up slowly at the man cradling me in his arms.

“Midas...”

“You are not going to stop talking are you?”

“You wanted to tell me something.”

“What?”

“After I saw you with her. When you came after me. You started to say it but I ran away. “

“I remember. But this is not the time to explain what happened.”

“I don’t... care about all that.”

“Hera...”

“I just need you to say it... please. I want ...I need to hear you say it.”

He pulls me closer to his chest.

I do not tell him it makes the knife dig in deeper.

He breathes softly into my hair.

“I love you Hera. I love your stubbornness and your big mouth.”

“Better not write that on my tombstone.”

“Stop it. We are going to get you home.”

I do not tell him that it is already too late.

That I cannot feel my legs and that the cold is everywhere...even on my inside.

Instead I tell him to keep going.

He sighs.

“I love how you call my title.”

“I hope you know I always mean to be disrespectful.”

He chuckles. “Oh I know.”

It is not a happy chuckle. It is a sad one and it hurts even more than the knife in my chest.

“Keep going.”

“I love how you look at me like you aren’t afraid of me.”

“That is because I am not.”

“and I love that too. How you are never afraid to stand up for yourself or anyone else even if it gets you in danger. I love you Hera and I love how recklessly you love.”

I smile.

At least I hope I do.

“I like that one. You can use it.”

He doesn’t reply me this time.

I sigh.

“This isn’t fair. I should have been allowed to love you longer.”

His grip on my hand tightens.

“I know my love, I know. And you will. I swear it.”

I feel something wet and cold on my face.

It takes me a while to realize them for what they are.

Tears.

Mine... and his.

My mouth opens but no sound comes out.

Not anymore .

And as my mind drifts away for the last time.

I realize...

I never got to say it back.