

# First Chosen by the Dragon

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## Dreams Beyond Broken Wings — Timothy Campbell 2

Jan 21, 2026 I don't know how long I stand there in the corridor, back pressed against cold stone, tears drying on my cheeks. Long enough for the laughter to fade. Long enough for the ache in my chest to dull into something hollow. Then Father's voice booms across the courtyard, cutting through the murmur of conversation. "Gather, all of you! The Selection begins!" The Selection. I'd almost forgotten why we were all summoned here in the first place. Today isn't just another gathering of Mintia's future warriors and dragon riders—it's the ceremony where Father will name his successor and grant them their first dragon egg. The ultimate honor. The ultimate proof of worth. I should leave. I should disappear back to my room and let them have their celebration without me. But my feet carry me toward the archway instead, drawn by something I can't name. Maybe it's the last shred of hope I haven't managed to kill yet. I stay at the edge of the crowd, hands clenched at my sides, nails biting into my palms. The servants' whispers from this morning echo in my mind—the way they avoided my eyes, the tension in Father's jaw at breakfast. I already know what's coming. But some desperate, foolish part of me still clings to hope. Father steps onto the raised platform, his voice booming with practiced authority. "As you all know, we were blessed with two daughters. But only one can be a true warrior and inherit the mantle of leadership of Mintia's High House of Blue Dragon." My breath catches. I feel like I'm drowning in open air, lungs refusing to work properly. "Today, we are gathered to announce that Cassandra has been chosen as your future leader!" He pauses for effect. "And the beloved of Kael, our strongest warrior!" The courtyard erupts in thunderous applause. Some even shout approving cheers that echo off the stone walls. My breath catches, sharp and painful, like swallowing glass. It was supposed to be me. My gaze falls on Cassandra, standing before Father with her hand intertwined with Kael's. The triumph on her face cuts deeper than any blade. "And today," Father continues proudly, "Cassandra will officially receive her dragon egg!" My heart stops completely. A servant approaches, carefully cradling something wrapped in dark silk. When the fabric falls away, I see it—green scales catching the sunlight like precious emeralds. My dragon egg. The one I found in the mountain caves two moons ago. The one that glowed beneath my touch and whispered to me in my head. "Father, I don't understand. I am the eldest daughter," I call out, pushing forward through the crowd. "It's my right to lead the army and become a chieftain." "Evelyn, Cassandra is better suited to lead. She's stronger, more... respected. The choice is obvious." "I've trained just as

hard, I've done everything! And that dragon egg is mine!" "Enough, Evelyn!" Father's expression hardens instantly, disappointment thick as smoke. "You will not disrupt this sacred ceremony with your lies." "They're not lies!" My voice rises despite my trembling limbs. "I brought that egg back myself. Cassandra wasn't even in the nest that day!" Gasps ripple through the assembled crowd like wind through dry leaves. Father descends from the platform, his face thunderous. "I said enough! Don't disgrace yourself and this family any further. Have you forgotten what you did? You're uncontrollable. A monster." "What are you talking about?" I ask, my voice breaking. "I did everything right." "You tried to steal your sister's egg," he says, loud enough for everyone to hear. "The dragon chose Cassandra. You couldn't accept it, so you schemed to take what wasn't yours." "That's not true! The egg responded to me!" Mother steps forward, her tone cold as mountain stone. "It never responded to you. We all witnessed it ourselves." "Because you took it from me!" Tears burn my eyes. "You took it while I slept! I know you did!" Cassandra shakes her head slowly, her voice dripping with false concern. "Listen to yourself, Evelyn. You sound completely unhinged, dear sister." The crowd murmurs in dark agreement. I search their faces desperately for any sign of support, but find only blank stares and skeptical glances. "Someone must have seen what happened," I plead. "Someone must know the truth of that night!"

"The truth is clear to everyone here," Father says, crossing his arms. "You are jealous. Unstable. Unfit to lead this house." "I'm the firstborn!" My voice cracks like fractured ice. "I have the right to claim—" "You have no rights here!" Father's roar silences the entire courtyard. "Not after what you've done to this family." "What I've done?" I stare at him in disbelief. "I've done nothing but serve this house faithfully my entire life!" "You attacked your own sister in the training hall," Mother says quietly, her tone measured and cold. "We all saw the terrible aftermath of your violence." "She threw a stone at my head!" I turn to Cassandra, desperate now. "Tell them the truth! Tell them what really happened that day!" Cassandra's eyes widen in mock hurt, her lower lip trembling convincingly. "I only went to practice," she whispers, clutching Kael's arm for support. "And she came at me with such unprovoked hatred..." "That's a lie!" I shout, my voice raw with frustration. "You're lying to everyone here!" "See how she rages without any control?" Father addresses the crowd, gesturing at me like I'm a wild animal. "This is exactly why Cassandra must lead Mintia. Evelyn is completely uncontrollable." "A threat to us all," Mother adds darkly, shaking her head with practiced disappointment. The crowd nods along, their judgment already sealed. Some look at me with pity. Others with undisguised disgust. I turn to Kael, my last desperate hope. "Kael, please. You know me better than anyone. You know I would never hurt my own sister." "I know what I saw that day," Kael says flatly, refusing to meet my eyes. "Cassandra was injured on the ground. You were standing over her." "Because she fell after screaming! She staged the entire thing to frame me!" "End this madness." Father raises his

hand for silence. “The decision is final. Cassandra will receive the egg and become the rightful heir of the High House of Blue Dragon.” He gestures to the servant, who gives him the dragon egg, and after approaching places it gently into Cassandra’s waiting arms. “You have earned this, my daughter,” Father said softly, placing a hand on sister’s shoulder. “Now lead us to greatness and victory.” She lifts it high for all to see, triumph blazing in her eyes like dragonfire. The crowd roars its approval but all I could do is just stand frozen at my place. It was supposed to be mine, I could feel it. Cassandra turns to me, her voice dropping to a whisper only I can hear above the celebration. “It’s not personal, Evelyn. Some of us are destined for greatness. And some are simply meant to serve them.” When Kael leans to kiss her cheek tenderly, my heart splinters into a thousand jagged pieces. I cannot watch this anymore. I turn and push blindly through the crowd, ignoring the whispers trailing after me like shadows. “Poor thing,” someone mutters nearby. “Always knew she was strange in the head.” “That temper,” another replies knowingly. “Bad omen from birth, that one.” I keep walking, my vision blurring with unshed tears I refuse to let fall. Not here. Not in front of them. Mother catches my arm roughly before I can escape the courtyard entirely. She leans close, her whisper venomous and meant only for me. “We only needed one daughter to rule. Don’t make this more complicated than it has to be. Accept your rightful place.” She releases me with a sharp shove, and I stumble toward the courtyard’s edge. The celebration continues without me—music begins, laughter rings out like cruel bells. I don’t stop walking until the noise fades completely into distant echoes. Only then do I allow myself to breathe—a ragged, broken sound that frightens even me. I stare up at the vast sky, searching desperately for dragons soaring overhead. There is nothing but endless blue and my family’s betrayal clawing at my chest. The egg’s warmth still lingers in my memory—that pulse of connection, that promise of something more.

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