

All OR Nothing

The Chosen One:
Book One

MACY BLAKE

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CONTENTS

[Sawyer](#)

[Draco](#)

[Sawyer](#)

[Sawyer](#)

[Draco](#)

[Henry](#)

[Sawyer](#)

[Draco](#)

[Sawyer](#)

[Draco](#)

[Andvari](#)

[Draco](#)

[Eduard](#)

[Draco](#)

[Henry](#)

[Sawyer](#)

[Henry](#)

[Sawyer](#)

[Eduard](#)

[Henry](#)

[Sawyer](#)

[Draco](#)

[Sawyer](#)

[Eduard](#)

[Draco](#)

[Sawyer](#)

[Andvari](#)

[About the Author](#)

Love comes into the body like lightning - without fear. The spirit opens laughing. Love comes without hesitation. It comes with roses and knives. Love does not knock on the door, it burns it and throws all your walls into the fire.

-Rune Lazuli

SAWYER



Sawyer bounded up the steps to Draco's house and pounded on the front door. Draco opened it a moment later, glaring through the black-framed glasses he wore when he was working.

"I was recording," Draco complained. "Now I have to do it again."

"You'll survive. Besides, the crankier you are in the review the better. Why do you pretend otherwise?" Sawyer flicked him on his T-shirt covered chest, an action which annoyed Draco to no end and earned him one of Draco's world famous scowls.

Draco reviewed technology for a variety of companies and he had hundreds of thousands of followers on various social media platforms. No one was more surprised than Sawyer when the video he'd shared of Draco attempting to open the box of a new phone went viral. He'd bitched and moaned through the entire process, and then when the phone failed to perform in the way he wanted, Draco had thrown it across the room in a huff, picked up his old phone and told Sawyer exactly what they should have done to make it better.

And of course, Sawyer had it all recorded for posterity because Draco in a huff was one of his favorite things in life,

as long as it wasn't directed toward him. And, because he couldn't keep all of Draco's awesome crankiness to himself, he'd shared it online. Once he'd posted it, everyone had agreed that it was hysterical, and before they knew it, Draco was an Internet sensation. Grumpy cat had nothing on his scowls and frowns. But better than that, the phone company listened, and then sent him a new test model a month later after the original video had over a million views and most of the comments agreed with Draco's verdict.

It also didn't hurt that Draco was one of the most beautiful men who had ever graced the planet. With his black hair and amber eyes, strong jawline and perfect body, it was no wonder half the comments included some sort of offer to provide sexual services for Draco. Needless to say, Draco was less than amused by the crudeness and he had this righteous indignation thing that he did that spoke of his truly epic disappointment. Sawyer had been on the receiving end of that disappointment a couple of times and he never wanted to be there again.

Then there was Draco's smile. Even though he rarely made that expression and only when Sawyer caught him off guard, it was worth the wait. When one of the products he reviewed pleased him, his smile lit up the screen. Advertisers hoped and prayed they got one of those smiles, but they were few and far between. Sawyer had only witnessed a true smile a few times, and he treasured those moments.

Draco huffed, pulling Sawyer's attention away from his wandering thoughts. Draco opened the door further, allowing Sawyer and his trusty black lab, Pearl, inside the house. "What do you two troublemakers want?"

“Nothing. Did you see across the street? I mean, seriously, is that place a McMansion or what? It’s ginormous. You still have not explained to me why the heck they are building that monstrosity all the way out here. I mean, I know that land has been empty forever, but my place is going to look like a shack sitting there next to it in all of its rustic Victorian farmhouse turreted glory. I mean, who builds a house with a turret anymore anyway?”

“People who build McMansions. Also, don’t say that. I like your house.”

“I do, too. But that’s not the point. It’s huge, Drake. Like, so huge.”

“Really? Is it huge?”

“Shut up. You know what I mean. Who bought it? Do you know? Did you find out? Who’d you ask? You know Becky at the city planner’s office would tell you. All you’d have to do is wear that tight white—”

“No. You call and flirt with her to get your answers. I don’t care who is moving in.”

“But—”

“And I hate McMansions.”

Sawyer grinned and Pearl bumped up against him in agreement. “I know. It’s like *destiny* that one would go in right across the street from you so you’ll have to stare at it *every single time* you walk out of your house. I think even the universe likes it when you’re cranky. I can’t explain it any other way. Your scowls make the world go round or something.”

Draco sighed and reached down to scratch Pearl behind her ear. “You hungry?”

Sawyer's stomach chose that very moment to growl obnoxiously and he looked down at it in wonder. "How do you do that?"

Draco smirked and glanced into the kitchen. "It's easy. You're always hungry."

"I'm a growing boy."

"That argument hasn't worked for several years now. Ever since your brothers decided you were grown up enough to live by yourself."

"Puh-lease. My brothers knew you were here to keep me out of trouble. That's the only reason they dared to leave me alone. I can't wait to tell Mikey the McMansion is finished! He hates them more than you do."

Draco opened the fridge and pulled out a tray of chicken. Sawyer could always count on food when he came by, which he did almost every night when he got home from school. He was on his last semester of grad school, only a week away from having a master's degree in business that paired horribly with the honors degree in history he'd gotten in undergrad. No one understood why he'd made the choice he did, and hell, Sawyer hadn't been able to explain it himself. It just felt right and when he'd explained to Draco what he wanted, he'd gotten the other man's nod of approval. It was all he needed.

"I'm going to start the grill. There's stuff for a salad in the crisper. Start chopping."

"Sir, yes sir!" Sawyer saluted and grinned at Draco's frown before he turned and picked up Pearl's water bowl from the floor by the door. He gave his girl fresh water before getting the vegetables out of the refrigerator and his favorite knife from the stand on the counter.

He'd barely sliced into the tomato when something sent a shiver of fear down his spine. The knife slipped and cut into his finger. Sawyer yelped and hurried over to the sink to get the cut under water so he could see the damage. He'd barely gotten the faucet on when Draco was at his side.

“What happened?”

“Cut myself. Obviously.” Draco frowned and looked around the room, as if seeking some hidden enemy.

Before he could comment on Draco's overprotective ways, Pearl jumped up from her position on the floor and ran to the front door. Draco scowled, obviously torn between going to see what had drawn her attention and the still-bleeding cut on Sawyer's hand.

“Go. I got this. It's not bad.”

Draco glanced at the wound, and obviously agreeing with Sawyer's assessment, followed the dog through the house to the front door.

Sawyer didn't want to miss the excitement if some rookie salesman dared to knock on Draco's door, so he snagged a wad of paper towels and quickly wrapped it around his finger before racing after him to the door.

He couldn't have been more surprised to find both his neighbor and his dog standing on the front porch watching an obnoxiously large bus try to maneuver its way into the driveway of the McMansion.

“Oh my God,” Sawyer gasped. “Someone famous is moving in. That's why the house went up so fast. They're throwing money around left and right, making everyone work double or triple time to get the house up as quickly as possible and—”

“Your imagination is running away with you again.”

Sawyer scoffed. “You tell me how that house went up so fast then. Go on. I’m waiting. Moneybags McDuck is throwing wads of cash around and making everyone jump to his whims. There’s probably a solid gold toilet in there.”

Draco smirked and looked away from the bus to meet Sawyer’s look. “Where do you come up with this stuff?”

“My brain is a smorgasbord of knowledge and valuable insight.”

Draco huffed and turned his attention back to the bus, which had finally managed to make the turn into the driveway. “Those buses are incredibly expensive.”

“I know. Remember when we looked at renting an RV and making a road trip?”

“I would not have *rented* an RV. I wanted to buy one.”

It was Sawyer’s turn to scoff. “Right. Like I was letting you spend your inheritance on something you might have hated. That makes sense. Renting first was the logical choice.”

Draco’s lip curled in disgust. “One, it’s a trust fund. Two, I wouldn’t sleep in someone else’s...” he stopped and shivered in disgust. “And three, *let* me?”

Sawyer waved his hand in the air, attempting to dismiss his poor word choice with the gesture. He turned his attention back to the bus, which had made it to the top of the hill. The way it sat blocked the door from their view. But... if he...

“Don’t even think about it.”

Sawyer looked up at Draco with a grin. “What?”

“You’re thinking about taking Pearl for a little stroll to try to catch a glimpse of the new neighbors.”

The man did know him well. “Yeah, and?”

“*And* at least let them settle in first. We’ll meet them another day.”

Sawyer sighed and leaned against the porch railing. “You’re no fun.”

“I know. You remind me daily. Now I’m going to go put the chicken on the grill. Put a glove on and finish chopping vegetables.”

Sawyer snickered and followed Draco back into the kitchen. The poor guy hated germs and constantly worried that Sawyer was going to catch the plague. It was cute, mostly. “But... what if I already got something on the tomato. I *might* have forgotten to wash my hands before—”

“Stop.” Draco gulped and looked at the tomato. “Don’t touch anything else. I’ll handle the salad. Go... disinfect yourself.”

Sawyer grinned and went down the hall to the bathroom where Draco kept a well-stocked first aid kit. As much fun as he had teasing Draco, he wasn’t completely heartless. After unwrapping the paper towels from his finger and throwing them away, he washed his hands thoroughly before pouring some disinfectant over the small cut. Once he’d dabbed some ointment on it and covered it with a Band-Aid, he tugged on one of the hospital style blue gloves Draco kept stocked in the house and returned to the kitchen.

He tossed the tomato in the trash, put the cutting board and knife in the dishwasher, and then started over again with a clean knife and board. Luckily for them, Draco stocked up on

produce at the farmer's market so they had another tomato ready and waiting for the salad. He wouldn't even pretend it was the same one to try to gross Draco out. Because he was a good friend like that.

Draco came back inside with a now empty platter and eyed Sawyer's set up suspiciously. He only swallowed nervously once, a personal record, then rinsed the platter and loaded it into the dishwasher as well. He disinfected the sink and his hands before moving to Sawyer's side.

"Yes, I'm clean. Yes, everything else is clean, too. I promise."

Draco nodded and squeezed Sawyer's shoulder in thanks. It took everything in him not to turn into Draco's arms and wrap him up in a hug. He'd tried a few times to initiate a little more touch between them but Draco had shied away each time.

"I was thinking about making an apple cake for the neighbors," Draco said.

"You mean, you were thinking about making an apple cake for *me*. That's what you meant to say, right?"

"Sure. That's what I meant."

"You know that's my favorite," Sawyer pouted. Not that Draco hadn't learned years ago to guard himself against Sawyer's puppy-eyes. They were deadly if you weren't immune. Which sadly, both Draco and his brothers were.

"I know," Draco said.

"And you'd just give it away? Like a heartless creature who had no heart?"

Draco grinned and adjusted his glasses. “I might have enough supplies to make two.”

Sawyer grinned happily and finished chopping the last of the veggies. “I’ll peel if you mix?”

“Deal. I’ve gotta go check on the chicken. Preheat the oven for me?”

DRACO



Draco couldn't help his snort of laughter as Sawyer and Pearl practically skipped across the road to their new neighbor's house. He was such a breath of fresh air and the best thing about the life Draco had built here. His entire life had been built around duty and honor and he was here, in this place, for some reason he didn't quite understand. But he'd made the most of it and found a person who made his days brighter and filled him with hope for...

No, he couldn't go down that path. He wouldn't be the one to break Sawyer's heart, and if he allowed his feelings to show, allowed one more inch of love to develop, he'd be lost. It couldn't happen. He'd continue to focus on the now and if the time came... he'd figure it out then.

Draco breathed deeply, his senses on high alert, but the only thing filling his nostrils was the vague scent of the new people across the street and the sweetness of the still warm apple cake. Movers and delivery trucks had been arriving for weeks, so it really wasn't that unexpected for someone new to be arriving to their little neighborhood. He'd been expecting their arrival after the influx of traffic.

He caught up to Sawyer just as they crossed some sort of barrier and his senses were flooded with the presence of *other*.

He reacted immediately, pushing Sawyer behind him as two men appeared in front of him, one with a magically-forged sword which shimmered in the setting sun. It would slice Draco's arm off with one swing, although it wouldn't even dent his dragon hide. That would require revealing himself to Sawyer, but he would do it in a second if it meant keeping him safe.

“Dragon,” the swordsman hissed. His face shifted and fangs emerged. A vampire then, which explained the scent of blood so heavy on the air. Whatever ward they had surrounding this place was strong, stronger than Draco had seen in his lifetime if a vampire had managed to get this close to him— to Sawyer— without his knowledge.

The other man, even though he was taller, his red hair slicked back and his dark suit impeccable, had a set of daggers, one in each hand. Draco recognized that the blades were magically formed as well. He was in trouble, no matter that the guy looked like he'd stepped out of some fancy office downtown. He reached back and began to step away, making sure to herd Sawyer with him. “We mean no harm,” he said.

Then he heard more footsteps approaching, these moving quickly, and a third man appeared. This one was younger, his face unlined and with a beaming smile that belied the danger they were currently facing. “Dude, something just set off the wards.... And that would be...holy hot. You are almost as delicious as...um... never mind. Speaking of delicious, what *exactly* is that awesome smell?”

“Apple cake?” Sawyer said from behind Draco.

“Oh man. That sounds good. I'm starving.”

Pearl took a tentative step toward the young man, responding to the friendly tone of the new arrival. “Pearl,

heel!”

Draco never spoke to her so harshly, never had to, but he hadn't been able to take his eyes away from the blades currently held by the two fighters. She immediately obeyed and moved back to Sawyer's side, but not without looking up at him with a pout of her own to find out what she'd done wrong. She clearly wasn't the only one his tone bothered.

“What's going on?” Sawyer whispered behind him. “Drake?”

“Everything's fine. We're leaving. We didn't mean to intrude.”

“But you brought cake!”

“We did,” Draco said softly. “We were coming to welcome new neighbors. That's all.”

The young man slipped between his protectors and they both growled at him in protest.

“Down boys. I got this.” He stepped forward, and Draco held up his hands to try to show he wasn't a threat.

“Oh,” the young man sighed as he got closer. “You're one of us.”

“What?” Sawyer peeked his head around again and stared at the newcomer. Draco stepped in front of him again.

“And who's this?” The guy dropped down to one knee and looked at Pearl.

“Uh, that's my dog. Pearl,” Sawyer said. “I'm Sawyer. This is Draco.”

The guy smirked. “Draco? Really, Dragon? I'm Henry. Come here, girl.”

Pearl glanced at Draco, holding her position as he'd commanded even though she was eager to scent this new person. "Go on, girl."

The warriors took up defensive positions, but didn't move closer. Pearl darted over to the guy and began sniffing his face enthusiastically. Henry laughed and scratched her head. "Oh you're a pretty girl, aren't you? You're very well loved. That's a good girl."

Pearl laid down and rolled onto her back, allowing Henry to scratch her stomach nice and hard, just the way she liked it. When he looked up again, it was with a beaming smile.

"You can tell a lot about a man by how happy his animal is," Henry said. "And this one is very happy indeed."

"She's mine," Sawyer said. "And she is a good girl. A bit of a slut for belly rubs as you can see."

Henry laughed and stood again. He closed the remaining distance between them and stared at Draco. "I'd like to touch your arm, Dragon."

Draco could feel the barely restrained power coming from the man, so he held out his arm. Henry laid his hand carefully along Draco's wrist, then his head fell back with a gasp. His eyes glowed the bright blue of the mages and he closed them a moment later with a sigh. "You bear the mark?"

Draco's stomach fell. "I do."

"I've been wondering when we would find the others. And who is your friend? May I?" Henry raised his hand again and Draco tried not to balk. No one touched Sawyer.

But Sawyer didn't seem to know that. He stepped up beside Draco, shoulder to shoulder, then pushed the cake pan into Henry's hands. "I don't know what's going on here,"

Sawyer said. He glanced at Draco with a hurt look in his eyes before turning back to Henry, “but if you need to... touch my arm? You can.”

Henry bowed his head for a moment before glancing back to Draco. “That’s not necessary, Sawyer, but thank you for the offer. Oh my God, that cake smells so good.”

His tone shifted again, going from serious to carefree in a moment.

“Right? It’s my favorite. We saw you guys pulling in earlier and thought it would be nice to introduce ourselves.”

“Awesome. You’re my new favorite. These two wouldn’t know fruit if it bit them in the ass. Meat eaters all the way.”

Draco glanced at the warriors again, still not entirely convinced they weren’t going to wield the weapons against them. “We mean no harm.”

“I know,” Henry said. “These are guard...uh, my guards.”

“Whoa,” Sawyer said. “You have bodyguards?” He glanced at Draco before turning back to Henry. “I told him somebody rich was moving in.”

Henry laughed and looked over his shoulder at the tall red-haired guard. Draco hadn’t been able to identify what exactly the other warrior was, but he understood by Henry’s look that this guard was in charge of the tributes the clans had all paid as they waited for the prophecy that bound them all together to unfold.

SAWYER



Sawyer sat on his couch with Pearl's head resting in his lap. She was snoring softly, the excitement from earlier having worn her out. Unfortunately, the events of the evening had left Sawyer with the opposite problem. He was wired. Confused. A little angry. Hurt. He'd seen a side of Draco he hadn't known existed, and learned that the man he considered his best friend had been keeping some very big secrets from him.

Draco had promised to explain more later and had delivered Sawyer and Pearl home with a quick hug—for Sawyer—and ear scratch—for Pearl—that had only served to annoy Sawyer further. He'd been treated like a child, like a bothersome kid brother who was trying to play with the big boys. Draco hadn't treated him that way in years, not since he was a pesky sixteen-year-old and the hot older guy closer to his big brothers' age moved in across the street. Sawyer had worked hard on his friendship with Draco and it had become the most important relationship in his life. He did not plan on going back to the way they were when they first met.

A quiet knock on his front door pulled Sawyer from his thoughts. Pearl hadn't even budged. Some guard dog she'd turned out to be. He slid from beneath her, laughing at her annoyed huff at him daring to move his leg from its position as

her pillow, and walked slowly to the door. He opened it to find Henry standing on the porch, looking mischievous and ready for trouble. His light brown hair was tousled, and his blue eyes sparkled. He was definitely going to get Sawyer in trouble. So Sawyer opened the door further and gestured him inside.

“I bet you’re confused, huh?” Henry asked.

“Something like that.” He wasn’t quite able to keep the hurt, anger, and confusion from his tone.

“Well, I don’t blame you for being cranky. You aren’t the only one in a mood. Thing one and Thing two didn’t want to let me out of their sight. It’s like they forget that I can take care of myself.”

Sawyer didn’t know what to say so he stood quietly aside while Henry walked around his small living room, glancing at the little mementos he had sitting around. He touched a few things, smiled over at Sawyer, then continued to circle the room.

“Do you have any junk food?” Henry asked.

“Uh, yeah. I’ve got some stuff. Chips. Soda. Cookies.”

“Yes to all of those.”

Sawyer led the way to the kitchen and pulled out the requested items. Henry leaned against the kitchen counter and opened a bag of sour cream and onion chips. He chomped down on one and made a happy noise. Sawyer snagged a couple cans of cherry coke from the fridge and sat one down in front of Henry before flipping the tab on the second and taking a long gulp.

“We’re going to be friends,” Henry said suddenly. “Good friends. I can tell. I wish I could let you in on all of our secrets, but I can’t. I mean, I’m already going to have to make you

forget a few things you heard earlier. But don't worry. It won't hurt. It's better this way. Maybe one day I can get permission to tell you more, but now's not the time for that."

"What do you mean, make me forget?"

Before Sawyer could even blink, Henry had reached over and grabbed his wrist. His eyes glowed blue and Sawyer tried to pull away. He couldn't. The skin on his wrist heated and Henry's grip tightened. Henry was stronger than he looked.

"Henry, you're scaring me."

Henry frowned and looked down at his hand on Sawyer's arm. "What the ever loving—"

Sawyer jerked his arm away, rubbing the now-tender skin where Henry had held onto him.

"Henry, I think you should—"

"Holy crap. You're a null. What even is that? *How* even is that? I don't know. I don't even know." Henry stood and began pacing the small distance between the kitchen and living room. He kept glancing Sawyer's way. "This is gonna be interesting."

"Henry. Stop. I think you should go."

"Oh! Oh, shit! I totally just scared you, didn't I? I bet I did. See, I thought it would be okay and you just wouldn't remember. I wasn't going to like... erase your memories completely or whatever. It wouldn't have changed much, I promise. Dang it. Now you think I'm some weirdo but honestly, I'm like... *honor bound* to protect the secret but I can't take the memories away from you. Which makes my life once again a bit of a conundrum. I love the word conundrum, don't you? Anyway, you're not supposed to know about us. That's kinda rule number one. *Crap*. Uncle Meshaq is going to

be so ticked off with me. I'm going to have to call him. And he'll have to come here, but look, I know he'll probably scare you even worse, because seriously, he's like the scariest looking guy, but he's— well, he's totally scary actually but he won't hurt you. I promise. But there are rules and I had to make like a *million* promises to my family before they let me out of their sight, even with Dumb and Dumber showing up like dark angels to watch over me.”

The front door burst open and Draco ran inside. His eyes were a deep amber, glowing in that same unnatural way that Henry's had earlier. “What did you do to him?” His voice was low, deep, scary and *furious*.

Sawyer had seen Draco annoyed about a million times. He'd even seen him pretty ticked off a time or two. But he'd never seen him truly pissed off until this moment. His voice had bottomed out and was shaky in a way that Draco never was. He looked at Sawyer's arm where he held onto his sore wrist before snarling at Henry.

“Okay, okay. It's okay, Dragon. I just... did you know he was a null?” Henry asked.

Draco glanced at Sawyer and shook his head. His scowl had deepened and he looked just as confused as Sawyer felt. He maneuvered his way between Sawyer and Henry, his breath still coming fast and his hands clenched into fists.

“Well, he is,” Henry continued when Draco remained stubbornly silent. “I thought I'd be helpful and just.... Take away those couple of words that he shouldn't have heard. Like, you know, *dragon*. Probably not one he's heard you mention, huh? And that way he wouldn't have to know and I could talk to you and figure out exactly what he is to you without an issue. But he's a null. It didn't work.”

“You hurt him,” Draco snarled.

“I’m fine,” Sawyer said. He laid his hand on Draco’s back, not understanding exactly what was going on but knowing he needed to diffuse the situation. “I’m fine, Drake. Confused as hell, but fine.”

“It’s okay, Sawyer,” Henry said. “He’s allowed to be mad at me. But look, I’m going to tell you a story, because honestly I’ll be the only one who can get away with it without getting into trouble. I *might* have my uncle wrapped around my finger and he’ll be annoyed with me but he won’t actually punish me or anything.”

Draco pulled in a breath and took another step back. “Your uncle?”

Henry sighed and shoved another chip into his mouth. “Meshaq. But don’t freak out, okay? Dammit, you’re freaking out.”

And Draco was. Sawyer felt the tension rocket up about twelve notches in Draco’s body even as he began to actually heat up, his back becoming almost too hot for Sawyer to touch. “He won’t take him,” Draco growled.

“Of course he’s not going to take him! I *promise*. Look. Let’s just all take a breath and move the snacks to the table and I’ll tell your friend here a little story and bring him into the loop so you don’t have to keep any more secrets from him. Wouldn’t that be great? Isn’t that what you want?”

Draco’s breath caught and a tiny bit of the tension eased. “I would like that.”

“Excellent.” Henry scooped up his soda and grabbed the chips. He carried them over to the kitchen table and plopped

down. “Goddess, if my brothers and sisters knew about this, they’d be laughing their asses off. You have no idea.”

Sawyer rubbed his hand down Draco’s back before moving to grab the cookies and his soda. He sat down at the table across from Henry. Draco pulled one of the side chairs next to him and sat down so close that their shoulders were touching.

Sawyer leaned into Draco as he opened the cookies and offered one to him. “Chocolate chip. Your favorite.”

Draco grunted but looked at him, took a cookie, and relaxed a bit more.

“Okay, where was I? Right. So, about like.... Four hundred years ago or something, a seer had a vision. A prophecy. Blah blah chosen one. Blah blah, savior of the supernatural. The details aren’t all that important except that a warrior was chosen from each clan to form the chosen one’s circle of protection. And each generation since then, when one guardian passes on, another is chosen.” Henry lifted his arm and held out his wrist. He had a mark there, almost like a tattoo, of two concentric circles. “I’m one of them. These marks appear when we’re chosen. Your friend is a guardian, too. And Beavis and Butthead up the hill, who are probably going to realize I snuck out any second now and come barreling in here, are also guardians. Fair warning.”

Sawyer looked over at Draco, who’d stiffened up again at Henry’s recitation. “What does that mean, you’re part of the circle?” Sawyer asked.

Draco looked over at him with a sad smile. “That means that I have a duty to protect the chosen one should he or she be revealed in my lifetime. And the portents have all shown that the time is near.”

Henry made a noise and slurped on his coke. “That’s a fancy way of saying that yours truly, whose job in the circle is officially listed as seer by the way, received a vision of his own. I saw that land,” Henry pointed up the hill toward the McMansion, “and that house. I knew the plans, knew what we were supposed to build. And the next day, Shaggy and Scooby up there showed up on my family’s doorstep because they’d like, smelled me or something ridiculous, and were called to my side. Honestly, it’s all a bunch of mystical hoo hoo if you ask me. My little brother laughed for two hours straight. My dad about had a coronary and called Uncle Meshaq and it was this big thing. Like I’m not twenty-one-years-old and perfectly capable of having a life outside of my pack.”

“Pack?” Sawyer asked.

“Oh right. It’s going to take me a bit to remember you know none of this so just, like, ask me if you don’t know what I’m talking about, okay? But yeah, pack of shifters. What you might call werewolves, but shifters don’t have to be wolves. They can be a ton of things. Like, I don’t know, *dragons*. Although dragons aren’t technically considered shifters, but still...” Henry looked at Draco and grinned.

“You can shift into a dragon?” Sawyer asked.

“I can,” Draco said.

“Show me. I wanna see!”

“Maybe later. The other guardians are almost here and they are not happy. I’d rather they not see me in my dragon form and think I’m trying to hurt him.”

Henry groaned and shoved another chip into his mouth as the front door to Sawyer’s house burst open. The vampire from earlier came charging into the room, sliding to a stop

beside Henry. A moment later, the other man came in with a cell phone pressed to his ear. “No problem, Alpha Jerrick. I have eyes on him now. I will absolutely have him call you back. Thank you, sir.”

He ended the call and tucked the phone into his pants pocket with a wicked smile.

Henry’s mouth had fallen open and he was glaring at the guards angrily. “You called my dads!”

“If you want to sneak out like a teenager, I plan on treating you like one.” The two glared at each other.

“I don’t have to ask your permission to do anything. I am an adult and I have my magic to protect me,” Henry hissed.

Sawyer wanted to jump in and defend Henry, especially since he was often treated like an unruly teenager himself. His brothers usually forgot that he was in his twenties and able to take care of himself. He kept quiet though, sparing a quick look to Draco to see how he was handling the confrontation.

He was more than a little surprised when Draco intervened. He pushed to his feet and pulled both of the guards attention to him before lowering his head in a bow while placing his right fist over his heart. “I am Draco of the Volsunga clan, guardian of the chosen one.”

There was clearly some sort of protocol here that they all knew. The tall red head who’d tattled on Henry scowled for a moment before bowing back to Draco and introducing himself. “I am Eduard of Arimaspia clan.”

Draco grinned and held out his hand for a traditional handshake. “Arimaspia? So you really are the money man,” he said. “I wondered when I saw that fancy bus pull in.”

“I am,” Eduard said with a smile.

The other guard stepped forward next. “I am Andvari of the Passarowitz clan.”

Draco turned his attention to Henry next. Henry sighed and stood, wiping the chip crumbs on his pants. He bowed his head and then stuck out his hand for a shake. “Henry Jerrick, at your service. And can I just say that I hope the chosen one appreciates man candy because I swear to the goddess each one of you guys is hotter than the next.”

Sawyer couldn’t deny that Henry had a point. He caught Henry’s gaze and nodded his agreement.

Henry had barely managed a grin in return when his face suddenly blanked and his eyes rolled back. A white haze developed over them and he nearly fell but Andvari caught him and lowered him to the ground.

“Henry!” Sawyer jumped up and ran around the table to his new friend’s side. He hadn’t completely forgiven Henry for trying to wipe his memories earlier but the more he learned the more he understood why he’d tried.

“Dammit,” Eduard said. “We need to get him back inside the wards. Quickly.”

Andvari lifted Henry like he weighed nothing and started for the front door. Draco gave Sawyer an apologetic look before running after him.

“Fuck that,” Sawyer said. “Come on, Pearl!”

She jumped down from her position on the couch and followed Sawyer.

“You are joining us?” Eduard asked.

“Yes.”

“Come along then. This should be interesting.”

Sawyer slipped his feet into an old pair of beat up vans by the door while he grabbed his keys from the hook. He locked it behind them before turning and starting up the hill at a jog. Eduard ran beside him, although Sawyer could tell he was holding back. It was odd, but a bit comforting to have him there. When they reached a certain point in the drive, Eduard paused but Sawyer kept going. He felt something, a little shiver of warning but only slowed when he realized Eduard had stopped completely. Eduard gasped and then hurried to catch up to him.

“What?”

“The wards didn’t stop you.”

“Should they have?”

“Yes.” He held out his hand, gesturing for Sawyer to stop.

“Henry said I’m a null,” Sawyer explained. “He tried to make me forget but it didn’t work. Then he said we were going to be good friends. I... don’t have many friends and I don’t know, if Draco is involved in this, then I am too.”

Eduard paused for a moment, then nodded. “I will discuss security protocol with you once we see to Henry’s well-being. If you do not do as I request, I will not allow you onto this property. Henry must be kept safe.”

“Okay. I swear it.”

Eduard searched his face again, and then nodded once more. “Come.”

He followed Eduard into the house, where Draco was holding a small trash can in front of Henry as he vomited. Andvari was still supporting his weight. Eduard ran forward, helping to support Henry as he dry heaved repeatedly.

“Bathroom?” Sawyer asked quietly.

Andvari looked toward a hallway so Sawyer darted that direction. He found a small powder room and pulled the hand towel from the rack. After dousing it with cold water and wringing it out, he returned to the living room and placed the cool cloth against Henry’s forehead.

Henry immediately reached out and grabbed his wrist and then he suddenly went lax in Eduard and Andvari’s hold.

“Oh that’s better,” Henry rasped. “Don’t let go, okay?”

“Okay,” Sawyer said. “Whatever you need.”

“Just keep touching me for a few minutes. Please.”

“Sure.”

“Let’s put him on the couch,” Eduard said. They moved quickly, with Henry still clinging to Sawyer’s arm.

“That was a bad one,” Henry said. His voice was low and slurred. He blinked up at Sawyer, who had knelt by the couch and was holding the cool cloth against Henry’s forehead. “Now I know why you’re here, why the magic chose this place. I didn’t know a null could help me.” His voice slowly drifted away and his eyes closed.

Sawyer sucked in a nervous breath. “Is he okay?”

“He will be,” Eduard said softly. “The visions tire him but he normally isn’t able to sleep as quickly as this.”

“I should call his fathers back,” Andvari said. “They are expecting his call.”

Andvari walked out of the room and Draco knelt beside Sawyer. “You okay?”

“Yeah.”

Pearl wiggled her way between them and stuck her nose against Henry with a whimper. Sawyer leaned into her warmth, and if that put him closer to Draco as a result, well, that was very convenient.

Eduard moved to stand on Sawyer's other side, then leaned down to place his hand on Sawyer's shoulder. "He knew you would help him. His magic somehow knew. Strange that a null is living next door to the place our seer says the most powerful of our kind will soon be appearing. It must mean something."

Sawyer had no clue. He stared down at Henry, at his overly pale face and wondered if maybe Eduard was right. Maybe he was *exactly* where he was supposed to be, even if had absolutely no idea what that meant.

SAWYER



It took Sawyer a minute to figure out exactly where he was when he woke up, and even then, most of his brain thought he was dreaming. He could feel someone laying behind him, curled against his back. And he was curled up against someone else's back. He had a sneaking suspicion the person he was spooning was Henry which probably meant that Draco was the person curled around him. Or he was having a really, really good dream. It could be either.

He really needed to pee, though, which meant it wasn't a dream because who actually needed to pee in their dreams? He had no idea how he was going to extricate himself from the tangle of arms and legs surrounding him. He looked up and noticed someone standing at the window. "Eduard," Sawyer whispered.

Eduard turned to face them. "You okay?"

"Can you help me up?"

"It's early, my friend. Go back to sleep."

"I will after I pee."

Eduard chuckled and walked over to the bed. He leaned down and somehow managed to lift Sawyer out of the pile of bodies without jostling anyone else too much. They stood

close together, pressed chest to chest until Sawyer stepped back nervously.

“How did you do that?”

“Super strength.”

Sawyer didn't need to see Eduard's face to know he was smirking. “Where's the bathroom?”

Eduard took his hand and led him across the dark room. He flipped a switch and a strip of under-cabinet lights came on, giving the bathroom a soft glow.

“Thank you.”

Eduard nodded, then closed the door behind him as he left.

Sawyer did his business, then washed his hands and went back into the bedroom. He'd miscounted earlier. There'd been *four* men on the bed, with Andvari curled up on the other side of Henry, who was now in a Draco and Andvari sandwich. And damn was that hot.

“Like what you see?” Eduard whispered from behind him.

Sawyer held back a shriek, just barely, and whirled around to face him. Eduard was really close. Like, right there close. “And what if I say yes?”

“Then I say you have excellent taste. Our friends are incredibly handsome.”

“No kidding.”

“You should rejoin them,” Eduard said softly. “You need rest.”

“What about you?” Sawyer asked.

“I'm keeping watch.”

“Then I’ll keep watch with you.”

He followed Eduard back to the window and sat down on the window seat. It didn’t have a bunch of pillows or anything, but Sawyer could imagine that it would some day. “Oh my God. Where’s Pearl?”

Eduard smiled and gestured to the foot of the bed. His girl was laying across Henry’s feet and probably had been on his as well before he got up. She raised her head at the sound of her name.

“It’s okay, girl. Lay down.” She sighed and lowered her head again. Sawyer looked out the window and down the hill to his house. It seemed even smaller from up here. He hadn’t turned any lights off before they left earlier. It was still lit up like he was home, sitting at the kitchen table. Maybe his foster parents hadn’t really passed away, but were down there, making dinner and laughing over something or other that happened at their jobs that day. Maybe his foster brothers hadn’t really moved away to start their own lives, but were home from college, bragging over their sports achievements and even over the girls they’d managed to charm.

“You okay?” Eduard asked.

“Just thinking,” Sawyer said. “A lot changed today, you know?”

“I can’t begin to imagine.”

“So, is it rude if I ask what you are? I mean, Henry is a seer and I heard Draco say that Andvari is a vampire. I’m wondering what you are.”

Eduard lifted Sawyer’s legs and sat down on the window seat before lowering Sawyer’s feet into his lap. “It’s not rude. Unusual, yes, but not rude. That question is usually answered

once we reveal our clan name. You have much to learn about our world if you care to take part in it.”

“Yeah. I do.” Sawyer glanced over at the bed where Draco lay, then turned his attention back to Eduard.

“I am a griffin,” Eduard said.

Sawyer blinked, then blinked again. “Isn’t that like... Eagle head and lion body, right?”

Eduard nodded.

“Whoa. I would never have thought griffins were real. I mean... I never thought any of this was real, but at least when you’re talking vampires and werewolves and guys who see the future or whatever... I’ve got pop culture references for them.”

Eduard smiled and laid his hand over Sawyer’s bare foot. “We are a quiet group and our primary talents lie in the protection of wealth.”

“Right, the money man. Isn’t that what Draco called you?”

“Yes. For many centuries, my clan provided protection over the treasures of the wealthy, their gold and jewels, important documents. We were their bank vaults, to put it in modern terms.”

Sawyer nodded. “That’s cool. Sounds a bit like dragon lore, though. Don’t they protect their hoard up in their dark and gloomy cave while breathing fire at the poor villagers who dare to disturb them?”

Eduard smirked and began to rub his thumb along Sawyer’s ankle. He tried to hide his body’s instant reaction to the touch, but he couldn’t stop the shiver that ran through him.

Eduard didn't comment, simply continued the soft movement against his skin.

“Dragons do have their treasure but it is a bit more mercurial. Don't tell Draco I told you this, as he would likely remove my head from my neck, but they are a bit of a magpie group. You never know what will catch their eye, but once they have seen what they want, they claim it as theirs and guard it fiercely.”

There was weight behind Eduard's words and half of Sawyer hoped it meant that Draco had claimed him, that Draco treasured him. But he knew better. Draco had kept a very firm line between them, and at least now Sawyer understood why. The most he could hope for was for the guards to wait here for this mysterious chosen one to arrive. And since Henry had seen the house here, had gone to all the trouble of actually having it built... maybe he wouldn't lose Draco at all. He'd still be right next door.

“So you just... what... keep the chosen one's money?”

Eduard smiled. “Something like that. Each clan provides an offering each year to the chosen one. A tithe, if you will. My clan has been responsible for growing that investment over the centuries. Our goal has always been the same. Provide for the needs and protection of the chosen one and his guardians. Financial needs fall under that equation, especially as a griffin has always been called as one of the guardians.”

“Makes sense,” Sawyer said. “So this chosen one, he or she is some kind of... what? I mean, chimera is the word that pops to mind, but I've probably read way too many fantasy novels and have it all wrong. Some sort of magical combination of all of you or something?”

“That is one question I cannot answer. All the prophesy told was of a very powerful person who would come at a time of need to unite the clans.”

“Hmm. How many clans are there exactly?” Sawyer asked.

“There are many clans, but generally we are broken down into eight.”

Sawyer glanced back over toward the bed and the sleeping men. “So, Henry’s pack is part of a clan?”

“Yes and no. The Jerrick pack is well known and respected, but they aren’t considered shifter... I hesitate to use the word royalty, but it is close. As I’m sure you can imagine, clan size has grown considerably since the original prophesy. The chosen one and their guardians can come from anywhere, and have, on occasion as witnessed by our Henry, but the majority have come from the descendants of the original guardians.”

“Sorry to bug you with so many questions,” Sawyer said. “I can shut up if you want.”

“It’s fine. I find myself intrigued by you and by your role in our future. A null, one who can assist Henry through his visions. I had worried. They are very draining for him, and extremely painful. But you helped him tonight, and that gives me hope. You were where you were meant to be, young Sawyer.”

Sawyer snorted and pulled his leg out of Eduard’s grip. “Right.”

“I’m sorry. Have I said something wrong?”

“No, not at all.” Just another case of him being treated like a child. He was even being pet soothingly like he was a toddler who needed comforting. “I’m going to go downstairs and see

if I can find something to eat. I rushed through dinner because I wanted to come over here and meet the new neighbors and now I'm really hungry.”

“We...actually, we have little food in the house,” Eduard said softly. “Perhaps I can order—”

“Yeah, no one's going to deliver at this time of night. I'll just head home. It's fine.” He made it down the stairs and to the front door before Eduard appeared again. His hand pressed against the wood, preventing Sawyer from opening it. Before he could snarl out a demand to move, Eduard had stepped closer and cupped his hand around Sawyer's cheek.

“I didn't mean to upset you. Please tell me what I did.”

Sawyer looked up at him, unable to see a hint of anything but regret in Eduard's gaze. “I hate being treated like a child. I'm a grown man, weeks away from having a master's degree, and yet you and Draco both treat me like I can't even take care of myself.”

“I see. When I called you young Sawyer, yes?”

Sawyer scowled. “Yeah. That. And you were petting me like I was a toddler needing to be soothed back to sleep. I mean, for a minute there... but yeah, I'm not a child. Let's just leave it at that.”

Eduard's thumb moved in that slow rhythmic way again, this time against Sawyer's cheek. “I don't think you're a child, Sawyer. But you are young. Much younger than me.”

“Yeah? Really. What are you? Thirty, maybe?”

Eduard grinned and moved his hand slightly. He ran his thumb gently over Sawyer's lower lip. “Closer to a hundred and thirty, if I'm honest.”

Sawyer blinked. Then gasped. His mouth fell open and Eduard's thumb slipped inside. Eduard instantly reacted, a quick indrawn breath that Sawyer recognized. Oh no, Eduard wasn't thinking of him as a child at all. He teased the tip of the digit with his tongue, then closed his lips around it. Eduard gasped again, then stepped closer, his other hand moving from the door to Sawyer's back.

"I take it my age doesn't bother you? Much like yours doesn't bother me. I find you fascinating. Delightful. Beautiful. Your eyes are the most stunning thing I've ever seen. I want to see how many colors I can find in them. Greens and blues and grays."

Sawyer stepped closer, let Eduard's thumb slip from his mouth. He was drawn to Eduard as well. Had been from the moment he'd appeared earlier in front of them with his daggers ready to guard and protect. It had caused something in Sawyer to light up then, and it hadn't hurt that it had triggered a protective response in Draco as well. No, Sawyer didn't consider himself a damsel in distress, but there was something about being safe and secure that always tripped a few triggers for him.

It probably had to do with his past, with a childhood spent alone until he'd been placed with his foster parents. They'd helped him become the man he was now, but there'd been a few bumps along the way.

"I can't believe you're over a century old," Sawyer said. "I bet you have a lot of experience, huh?" He stepped closer until he was pressed against Eduard from chest to hip.

"I do." The words were whispered against Sawyer's, barely there.

“Why am I so drawn to you? This is... not what I thought would happen.”

Eduard sighed and stepped back. “And that is why I need to step away now. Your dragon will not be pleased that I have taken such liberties with you.”

Sawyer frowned again. “I’m not some shy maiden in a regency novel, you know, and *my dragon* as you put it doesn’t give consent for me. I make decisions for myself.”

“I know. But you also don’t understand the world you’re stepping into or the significance of some of your actions. If I were to... challenge Draco’s hold on you, it would cause conflict among us. So I need to speak to him before I touch you further. It is the honorable thing to do.”

It really was. Sawyer knew that in the part of his head that wasn’t so into this moment. But he’d never do anything to hurt Draco, so he took a step back and breathed deeply. Then he leaned in and quickly pressed a kiss to Eduard’s cheek before turning back to the door. “Turn the oven on for me. I’m bringing food from my house, okay?”

Eduard nodded and opened the door for him. “Hurry back, Sawyer.”

DRACO



Draco woke to the smell of bacon. He opened his eyes and started to stretch, then remembered that he'd carried Sawyer up to bed the night before. He'd fallen asleep while sitting with Henry, and the other two guardians had suggested they keep the two together for a while longer. They'd only separated them long enough to carry both men upstairs, where they'd settled them both in the center of a massive bed in the large master bedroom of the house. He'd raised a brow at the bed, wondering what had prompted its purchase, but he was thankful when he'd been able to slip in behind Sawyer and hold him close. Andvari had done the same for Henry while Eduard kept first watch.

He moved to pull Sawyer closer, to take advantage of this moment just a bit, before the scent in his nose caused him to bolt upright in surprise. It wasn't Sawyer curled up against him. It was Henry. Andvari still held his position on the other side of the bed, and Pearl was lying across his and Henry's legs. She huffed at him at the sudden movement, but he ran a quick hand over her head in reassurance.

Eduard wasn't at the window anymore which meant that the smell of bacon which had woken him was...

Draco scrambled out of bed and hurried downstairs. He smelled his way to the kitchen, having not taken the time to explore the house the night before. He found Sawyer sitting on the counter, his bare feet dangling. Draco had taken his shoes off the night before so he'd sleep more comfortably. Luckily, Sawyer had already been dressed casually in sweats and a T-shirt.

"Hey," Draco mumbled. Eduard was standing at the stove, a pile of bacon already cooked on a stack of paper towels beside him.

"Hey," Sawyer said. "Did we wake you up? I'm sorry. I was hungry and—"

"It's fine," Draco said. He stepped closer, wanting to put himself between Sawyer and Eduard once again.

"You okay?" Sawyer asked. He glanced toward Eduard, then back to Draco.

"I'm—"

"Come here, big guy." Sawyer reached out and grabbed Draco's wrist, tugging him forward until he was in front of Sawyer, standing in between his spread legs. Draco's breath caught and he started to put some distance between them, but Sawyer wrapped his arms around Draco's neck and held him close. "We have so much to talk about."

Draco nodded, unable to meet Sawyer's gaze. He'd kept so much from him over the years, so many secrets and half-truths. How could Sawyer ever forgive him for that breach of trust?

"But until we do, I could really use a hug."

Draco lifted his face and searched Sawyer's eyes. He didn't see the anger or hurt he'd been expecting. He leaned in

and pressed his forehead to Sawyer's, breathing in his clean, crisp scent. It comforted him more than it should, but then, Sawyer had always been more to him than he should be.

"I'm sorry," Draco whispered. "I thought you would hate me."

Sawyer's arms tightened around him, pulling him even closer. "I could never hate you. But, and I say this in all seriousness, so you better listen up because there is exactly one way for you to earn back my trust. Actually, make that two ways."

Draco took another deep breath and leaned back so he could stare into Sawyer's eyes.

"Anything," he promised.

Sawyer grinned and wiggled his eyebrows and Draco knew he was in for it. "First, you can't lie to me anymore. That's a deal breaker. I get that you had to keep things a secret before, but now that we know what we know, I'm in. If there's something you can't tell me because you're a guardian or whatever, then just tell me that. I talked to Eduard earlier and I respect your ancient role and duty. I won't get in the way of it, but I'm not willing to just go away either. You're part of my life and I'm not giving you up without a fight. So no lies and you tell me if you have some important dragon business that you can't talk about and I'll be okay with that."

"I swear it."

"And second, and this is *critically* important—"

Draco sighed. "Yes, I will shift into my dragon and light marshmallows on fire so you can make s'mores."

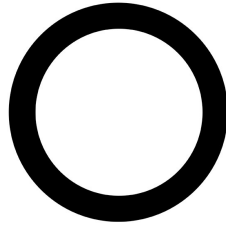
Sawyer cracked up and pulled Draco into another hug. "And that is why you are now, and always will be, my best

friend.”

Draco couldn't help the way his arms tightened, instinctively trying to keep Sawyer as close as possible. “Promise?”

“I swear it,” Sawyer replied.

HENRY



Waking up plastered to the front of an extremely hot guy wasn't exactly a hardship. Realizing there was a puddle of drool on said hot guy's chest? Priceless. Henry wiped at his mouth and began the process of untangling himself from Andvari's hold. He wasn't surprised when the vampire tried to tug him back down beneath the covers. For all of his fierceness, Andi wasn't exactly a morning person.

"I need food," Henry whispered. "Let me up."

"Humans," Andvari growled in reply. But he loosened his hold and let Henry climb from the bed.

Usually, the morning after a vision was spent with his head hanging in a toilet. The thought of food didn't cross his mind for hours, sometimes even an entire day, depending on how tight a hold the resulting migraine had on him.

This morning, however, wasn't like that at all. Not even the dim light from the bathroom was bothering Henry's eyes. He carefully opened the bedroom door, waiting for the light to be too much. But nothing happened.

Henry followed the sound of voices to the kitchen and found Eduard standing at the stove while Draco and Sawyer cuddled against each other. He missed cuddles, and he was man enough to admit it. Growing up in a pack with five shifter

siblings meant that Henry rarely woke up alone. Even before he'd been rescued by his dads, his brothers and sisters were always with him.

Ignoring that he barely knew the two men, Henry stumbled forward and managed to wiggle his way between them. When Draco tried to pull away, Henry grabbed his arm and kept him in place. Then he leaned against Sawyer, letting the coolness of his being null wash over him.

Sawyer chuckled and leaned his head against Henry's for a moment. "Morning," he said softly.

Henry grunted a reply. No one moved for a long minute, then Draco pressed up against his back and Henry let himself lean more heavily. This was the life. He'd much rather have these two hot guys curled around him than his brothers. It wasn't the same at all and he liked that a whole lot.

The smell of bacon finally convinced him to open his eyes, at least long enough to find a piece for himself. He spied a pile of cooked slices on some paper towels and reached out his hand to steal one. He couldn't reach. With a pitiful groan, Henry pushed away from Sawyer and leaned back against Draco. "I can't reach the bacon," he whimpered.

Draco chuckled and snagged one of the crispy strips for him. He dangled it in front of his face until Henry chomped off a bite. Sawyer began to laugh and Henry mock-glared at him.

"Oh come on, you're pitiful. I thought I was bad in the mornings."

"How are you feeling?" Eduard asked quietly.

"Surprisingly good," Henry answered. "And hungry. Which is a first."

“Sawyer brought food from his home. We will have to supply the house and repay his generosity.”

“Bacon,” Henry said and grabbed another slice. “And thank you, Sawyer. Everything was kind of crazy last night. I meant to go online and get food ordered so we could pick it up today.”

“We need to hire staff,” Eduard said.

“Staff?” Sawyer asked. “Why? I mean the place is big, but not *that* big.”

Henry laughed and hopped up on the counter so he was sitting thigh to thigh with Sawyer. “Eduard isn’t used to doing menial tasks himself. Cooking is beneath him, but since Andi and I are both helpless at it, he’s had to help out. My Nana made them promise they wouldn’t let me eat fast food all the time. And oh my God, I’ve got to call them back! Dad’s going to kill me.”

“Andvari called your fathers last night and told them of your vision. They will not be expecting a call from you this early.”

Now that Henry was beginning to wake up, he could see the hurt in Eduard’s stance. He shouldn’t have acted like such a brat the night before by sneaking out. As much as he chafed under their constant protection, he knew they were doing it for his own good. Until they found the chosen one, Henry was extremely vulnerable. It grated on his nerves but it was the truth. Once all the guardians were gathered, he’d be safer, but without their advanced strength and other powers, he’d be a sitting duck. And without his visions, he didn’t know how they would all come together to keep the chosen one protected. Until the chosen one came, Henry was the one they had to keep safe, no matter how much it annoyed him.

Henry slid back off the counter and walked the few steps to Eduard. He nudged him with his forehead, and kept his head lowered as his alpha and father had taught him. Apologies were more than words, they were actions, too. Griffin's may not follow the exact same protocols as his shifter family, but Henry hoped his point would be made. "I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to scare you last night."

Eduard cupped his hand around Henry's neck and gave it a gentle squeeze. "You're still learning to trust me, oh Seer mine."

"Nah, I trust you," Henry said with a smile. He looked up at Eduard, making sure he understood his seriousness. "I really do. I just... I know I'm the weakest link and all, but it doesn't mean I'm powerless. My magic has always protected me."

"I know. You have survived more than I can imagine."

"I have," Henry said. He tried not to think of the years he'd been held captive, the years before his dads found him and his siblings. "But that doesn't mean that I don't need you. I won't run off again."

Eduard nodded and gave Henry's neck another soft squeeze. "Now, back to hiring staff..."

Henry laughed and moved back to his spot on the counter by Sawyer. "I've never seen anyone here in the house in a vision, so I don't know what that means. Then again, I've never even seen *us* here either, but I know we're supposed to be here. Does that make sense?"

"It does," Draco said. "Did you ever see visions of the other guardians?"

"No," Henry said. "I tend to see places. At least for now. I saw visions of people when I was younger, though. I mean, I

knew someone was coming before Andvari and Eduard showed up at home, but I didn't know who. Why, is that important?"

"I saw this place, too," Draco said. "That's why I'm here. I bought the house across the street years ago because I saw it in a dream and knew I was supposed to be there."

"And Andvari and I knew we had to go to your father's clinic," Eduard said. "We both saw it in a dream as well."

"So your dreams are talking to you?" Sawyer asked.

"It seems that way," Henry said. "The pieces are beginning to move on the chess board at any rate. I wonder if we would ever see you in a dream, Sawyer, or if your ability makes that impossible."

"Oh, you can dream about me as much as you want," Sawyer said with a wink.

Henry cackled and leaned against him. "That's perfect," he said as he laughed. "So perfect."

"So what was your vision about last night?" Sawyer asked.

Henry shrugged and grabbed another piece of bacon. "I'm not sure. Sometimes they're really clear and other times they're more hazy and it takes a while for me to figure them out. I mean, this house came to me over months. Eduard has been working with me since— how long have we been together?"

"Eight months," Eduard answered. "Henry knew the place right away and I was able to make arrangements to purchase the property on the chosen one's behalf. Then we went about turning his visions of the house into reality."

“Whoa. Eight months.” Sawyer looked over at Draco again. “And you’ve been here for about eight years now.”

“Yeah,” Henry said. “So we really have no clue exactly how long its going to be for us to find the chosen one. But hey, if we went from Draco arriving eight years ago to us finding out eight months ago, maybe the rest will arrive in eight days?”

“It is possible,” Eduard said. “However unlikely. Nothing will surprise me at this point.”

“Is the eight significant in some way?” Sawyer asked.

Henry froze, then looked over at him. “Uh, yeah actually it is.”

Eduard paused as well, turning to look at Henry. “There are eight guardians.”

“You think that’s just a coincidence?” Sawyer glanced back and forth between them, waiting to be enlightened.

“It could be. Then again, it might just be the right timing. I’ll pay more attention now and see if I see other significant eights,” Henry said. “And as to your staff, Eduard, I don’t see why you can’t bring them here, at least until the chosen one arrives. I mean, we all serve his or her needs, right? So I mean, technically, the staff would belong to them?”

Eduard nodded. “Until then, I would happily turn over the household management duties to someone else so I can return to my own responsibilities.”

“Man, this is crazy,” Sawyer said. “It’s so hurry up and wait. And you have no idea who this chosen person is or when they’re coming. You just have to wait on them?”

“Yes,” Eduard said.

“But in the meantime,” Henry said, “why don’t we do some research on nulls? I’ve not come across someone like you before so I’m curious. I had a bunch of books delivered here so you can help me unpack and research.”

“I can do that, but I’ve got to finish some school work tonight. I’m finishing up my final semester now.”

Draco huffed beside him, drawing Henry’s attention.

“What was that noise for?”

“Eight days left, as of yesterday.” Draco said. “He’ll be done a week from today.”

“Oh man,” Henry said. “That’s gotta be important. This is *crazy*.”

“I think...” Eduard began. He paused for a long moment, looking at all of them before he turned to Sawyer. “I think this proves that Sawyer is important to us, to what we are doing here.”

Draco reached out and grabbed Sawyer’s hand before reeling him into a tight hug. Henry couldn’t help the quiet sigh of envy that escaped. He’d prepared for a long time for whatever was coming, but even though he was surrounded by people, he’d never felt quite so alone.

SAWYER



When Eduard mentioned staff earlier, Sawyer hadn't actually thought he was entirely serious. But within a couple hours, Cecil and crew had arrived to "take the house in hand."

And he'd called Eduard "Master Eduard" like they were in some historic novel with lords and ladies.

It was weird, for about an hour. Then a snack appeared at Sawyer's elbow while he was elbow deep in final research for his project. He'd taken over the table in the breakfast area, even though Henry assured him it was fine to use the upstairs office. Eduard had wanted to work in there as well, though, and after the close call from earlier, Sawyer thought a little distance might be a good idea.

Henry hadn't been wrong when he said that each of the guardians were better looking than the last. Of course, Henry hadn't been including himself, but Sawyer could. Eduard had a classic elegance to him, almost a James Bond suaveness that lent itself to high class surroundings and, well, to having a *staff*. His suits were pressed and his hair never out of place. Even his hands were elegant, with long lean fingers that... no, he needed to stop that line of thinking in its tracks.

Draco was a bit more rough and tumble, a guy suited to the black clothes he tended to wear, but his black framed glasses made him seem more hot nerd than fierce fighter. It worked, especially for Sawyer. He'd had the hots for Draco from the moment he'd laid eyes on him, and his interest hadn't waned at all as the years passed. In fact, it had grown stronger the closer he and Draco had grown as friends.

And he certainly couldn't forget Andvari. The vampire had a quiet strength to him that Sawyer wanted to explore more. He'd also taken a minute to admire the actual strength of him earlier when Andvari had arrived downstairs shirtless and searching for Henry. He had shoulders for miles and a light dusting of hair over his muscled chest and his biceps... well, he and Draco were *welcome* to have a shirtless muscle contest and Sawyer would sign up to be the judge. He could even think of one or two grand prizes he'd gladly offer.

And then there was Henry himself. Henry was just as hot as the others, although in a totally different way. He was hot in that boy next door way, with a smile that lit up a room and Sawyer already loved to hear him laugh. It was hard to be worried or scared with Henry looking at you with that mischievous twinkle in his eyes. They were quite the combination. It made Sawyer curious about the others who were supposed to join the mix.

At any rate, Sawyer had quickly begun to understand that although he was part of the equation for the time being, if the chosen one wanted him gone, he'd be gone. The guardians didn't seem to have much to say about the matter. In the end, Sawyer had decided to take what he could get. He wouldn't leave Draco unless he was forced to, and if Draco had to be here, then so would Sawyer.

“Mister Sawyer, I’m sorry to disturb you. Lunch is ready in the dining room.”

Sawyer pulled his head out of his thoughts and glanced up at the older man with a smile. “Just Sawyer. Thanks, Cecil.”

He wandered into the dining room, taking in the twelve seater table with a smile. Henry really had known exactly what this place needed. The others were already seated so Sawyer took the empty seat between Draco and Henry and sat down. Cecil appeared moments later carrying a large tray that he sat in the center of the table.

“Lunch today is salmon cakes with a creamy mustard caper sauce, an orzo pilaf, and roasted vegetables. Master Eduard prefers lunch to be served family style, so help yourselves.”

The butler gave a slight bow, then turned and left the room. Sawyer stared after him for a moment, as did Henry. After a moment, Henry turned to him with his eyes as wide as Sawyer’s felt.

“Whoa,” Henry said.

“It’s like we’re in some movie or something,” Sawyer replied. “There’s going to be a fashion montage soon, isn’t there? Clearly my clothes aren’t fancy enough so I’ll need to be dressed appropriately to be allowed to sit on the furniture.”

“Oh, maybe we’ll have to have manners training, too. Which fork is which?” They both laughed and ignored Eduard’s pinched expression.

“It’s a little weird, right?” Sawyer whispered.

“Totally weird.”

“At least it’s not just me.”

Eduard scoffed and lifted a salmon cake from the tray. “You two can keep it up, or you can eat. I, for one, am starving. And Cecil is renowned for his abilities to source the best of local talent.”

“Wait, so he didn’t actually cook all of this himself.”

Eduard raised a brow as he continued to fill his plate. “He arrived two hours ago after receiving my call. And although he is something of a miracle worker, he’s can’t just blink something into existence.”

“Well, it wouldn’t surprise me if he could, not with everything else I’ve learned about in the past day,” Sawyer said.

“Touché. But no, Cecil will be hiring staff to handle most of our needs. He manages all of the details so I can focus on my work. And you can focus on yours. Of course, the chosen one may arrive with their own staff, but at least then the house will be in order.”

Sawyer thought the whole thing was weird. He’d been taking care of his own house since he turned eighteen. His foster parents had left the house and its contents to him when they passed. It was really all they had and he was touched that they’d wanted to take care of him. His foster brothers told him later that they’d wanted to divide the assets between them, but they’d said no. They were out of the house and earning their own incomes at that point, and Sawyer was still in high school. Of course, none of them had known that within two years of making that decision, they’d both be gone.

He’d decided to attend the local university, then stayed on to get his graduate degree. All while living at home. It had made the most sense to him. Once he’d gotten Pearl, he had everything he needed. And speaking of, he’d need to take her

out to play for a few hours after lunch. She'd been cooped up in the house for too long and needed to get outside for a while.

"What?" Draco asked quietly.

"Nothing," Sawyer said. "Just planning my afternoon in my head."

"Want some company?"

Sawyer looked over and saw the worry on Draco's face. He thought he'd soothed that fear earlier with their talk in the kitchen, but they clearly still had some work to do to get back to the way they were before. "Always," Sawyer replied.

He'd never turn down time with Draco, and even though he should be more angry that he'd kept such a huge secret, Sawyer really did understand. All of the secrets, the world Sawyer wasn't part of, he didn't blame Draco for not sharing that part of his life. But what if nothing had ever changed? They could have spent their lives with the wall of secrets between them. Now, maybe, they'd be able to build something more, as long as his weird attraction to Eduard didn't get in the way.

DRACO



Quiet Sawyer was never a good sign. Something had put him in one of his contemplative moods, and those always drove Draco to distraction. He wanted to hear Sawyer's rambling banter, to have him tease and gripe and laugh. When Sawyer went into his head, Draco felt like the door to his own thoughts were closed as well.

Pearl leaned against Draco's leg as they walked in the backyard of the house. She normally would have used her walk time to run and play, but she seemed to realize Sawyer needed both of them close.

The other guardians were inside, leaving them alone to walk through the mostly unfinished landscaping of the house. There were still ruts in the ground from the building equipment but grass had reclaimed the land behind the house and it wasn't bad to walk through.

"You going to tell me what's on your mind?" Draco asked once he couldn't take the silence any more. They'd been outside for over twenty minutes without Sawyer saying a single word.

"I'm not sure what to say."

"Since when don't you know what to say to me?" Draco reached out and grabbed Sawyer's hand, pulling him to a stop

before turning to face him.

Sawyer sighed. “You know you mean the world to me, right? That I’d never do anything to hurt you?”

“Of course.”

Sawyer sighed again. “Man, this sucks.”

“Just spit it out, already. You’re gonna give me hives, and you know how cranky I get when I get hives.”

Sawyer huffed out a laugh then reached for Draco’s other hand. “So, I hope you don’t get mad at me, but I had a little moment this morning with Eduard.”

Draco leaned forward the smallest bit, eager to breathe in Sawyer’s familiar scent. “What kind of moment? Do I need to set him on fire?”

Sawyer smiled, but it seemed sad. He shook his head, then looked down at their clasped hands. “We almost kissed.”

Draco waited, but Sawyer continued to look down. He released one of Sawyer’s hands and lifted his chin. “Why is that making you sad? Did you not want to kiss him? Did he try to—”

“No! I mean, he didn’t force me. He actually... stopped me. I don’t know what happened. I mean, for years, it’s been *you*. Every thought and sexy time alone in my house, it’s always been you I imagined being with. And then boom! I meet some new guy and he turns my head? On the day I find out what’s probably been holding you back from me? And I don’t know what to do about either of those things. Because it’s always been me and you, and what if it isn’t anymore because of your duty or whatever? And why did I suddenly want to kiss someone else? Am I that flighty? One hot griffin comes along and I just—”

“Sawyer, breathe. Come on, breathe with me.” Draco waited for him to pull in a shaky breath. “Now out.”

Sawyer blew out his breath and looked up to meet Draco’s gaze. “I’m so sorry.”

“For what? For thinking Eduard is ridiculously sexy? I think he is, too.”

“You do?”

“Yep. Have you seen those fingers of his? Man, hot as hell.”

Sawyer looked confused again, but slightly relieved as well. “So does that mean I’ve been...that I’m not... that we’re not...”

It suddenly dawned on Draco what the problem was. He pulled Sawyer close and cupped his cheek gently in his hand. “You’re *everything* to me. But that doesn’t mean that I’m not attracted to others. That doesn’t mean that the thought of Eduard bending you over the kitchen counter while I watch doesn’t make my dick hard. I’m not— Dragon’s aren’t...this is hard to explain.”

“So you don’t do commitments? If we ever... you know... then it wouldn’t be just me and you? You’d always be looking for something else?”

“No! Not at all. It’s just, dragons don’t do that whole one man, one woman style of commitment. I have three dads and my mom. My sister has a wife and four husbands. I mean, they aren’t husband and wives like you might think of them. Mates. That’s what we call them. And you aren’t limited to one, although lately finding even one is considered a miracle by those outside of the dragon world.”

Sawyer blinked. Then blinked again. His cheeks turned red and his breathing picked up. They were so close to each other, closer than they'd ever been and his lips were right there. Just one breath away. "Sawyer," Draco said on a moan.

"That's... really hot," Sawyer said. "I mean, I never really... well, I mean I thought about it. And I've watched some really good porn where... but I didn't think that was something that... holy shit I'm going to come in my pants if I keep thinking about this. You. With, like, hands all over that chest of yours and me..."

Sawyer trembled. Draco pulled him close and pressed them together from thigh to chest. "You like that idea, huh? I wondered if you'd be open to the possibility. You've always been very possessive of me, and I like that. I like it a lot, but I worried it meant you wouldn't be open to other mates."

"*Other* mates? Does that mean I'm..."

Draco sighed and leaned his forehead against Sawyer's. "I want you to be, but I can't take a mate without the chosen one's permission. Dragons can't be separated from their mates so I can't make a commitment like that since I'm already committed. Please tell me you understand? I don't want to lose you."

"You aren't going to lose me," Sawyer promised.

"Good. I don't think I could bear it. I... I worry about what's going to happen. I can already feel my loyalties being split and I don't know what to do."

Sawyer pulled him closer and wrapped his arms around Draco's waist. "You'll do what's right, because this chosen one must need you for a reason. And who are we to mess with fate? I'm here for a reason, too. I have to believe that. We'll

figure this out. And hey, we may be worrying for nothing, you know? Let's not be gloom and doom. Your all powerful chosen savior person might think I'm delightful and charming and want to keep me around for a long time."

"I don't see how they couldn't think that about you."

Sawyer grinned. "Well, my brothers don't think that."

"Your brothers are idiots."

Sawyer laughed and leaned in so their lips were barely separated. "Can I kiss you now?"

"Not if I kiss you first." Draco closed the distance between them, almost desperate for this first taste of Sawyer. He'd been longing for years for this moment, to have Sawyer as his, to have his secrets laid bare, and to have him still eager to be in his arms. And he was. They fit together like pieces of a puzzle.

Sawyer gasped into his mouth and slipped his arms up and around Draco's neck. His tongue licked at Draco's lips, teasing, and he opened his mouth to allow it inside. They tangled together, their breaths mixing and becoming one, their bodies rubbing against each other creating much needed friction.

Draco's beast was extremely pleased as well. He could feel his body's reaction to finally having Sawyer in his arms. It was everything he wanted it to be. Sawyer responded to him so well, his body ready and willing. Draco slipped his hand down to Sawyer's ass, cupping him in his hand and squeezing.

Sawyer's head fell back and he groaned. "Oh fuck, do that again."

Draco grinned and complied. This time he pressed his hard cock against Sawyer's answering hardness and thrust as he grabbed a second handful of his muscled ass and squeezed.

It was all over from there. Sawyer thrust once, then again against Draco before he began to tremble. Draco held him through it, waited for him to stop coming, then pressed another kiss to his gasping lips. “Delicious,” he whispered. “Better than I imagined, and I imagined it a lot.”

“You’re telling me,” Sawyer said. “And you just made me come in my pants in the neighbor’s yard. That’s like... I can’t even believe we just did that.”

“I can. I’ve been wanting to touch you forever, and I love that you want me just as badly.”

“Yeah?”

“Yeah. Let’s get you home so you can shower and change. I know you need to finish some stuff up before you go meet your adviser.”

“Oh crap. You’re right. I totally need to do that. Will you throw a ball or something for Pearl? I haven’t played with her much and she’s been so good with all the changes going on. I want to be sure she’s getting enough exercise.”

“I will. We’ll play while you get cleaned up.” Draco grabbed Sawyer’s hand and threaded their fingers together. They walked down the hill to Sawyer’s house, with Pearl running alongside them, snapping her jaws at bugs before turning to them for approval.

It was exactly what Draco wanted. The careful walls he’d spent years building came crumbling down. All the little obsessions, the worry, the fear, it all faded away. He didn’t have to be afraid of Sawyer catching some disease and him not being there to help. He didn’t have to be afraid that Sawyer would be hurt and he wouldn’t be by his side as he healed. No, he may have other things to worry about now, but his dragon

had finally been allowed to court his mate. Whatever trouble came there way next, no one would be able to take that away from him.

He kissed Sawyer again before pushing him into the house. If he didn't, he'd follow him inside and they wouldn't come out again for a very long time. They'd have those moments soon enough, but this meeting was too important for Sawyer to miss. He'd just have to make it up to Draco when he got back from campus.

SAWYER



Sawyer practically skipped across the quad, his messenger bag over his shoulder and a steaming mug of tea in some sort of insulated-stay-hot-forever mug thoughtfully provided by Cecil in his hand. He'd finished his final meeting with his adviser so he could dot his I's and cross his T's. It was all downhill from here. Soon he'd be the proud holder of a master's degree in business in a few more days.

Students were bustling around the area, everyone tense and stressed out over finals. Sawyer gave another little hop, almost giving into the temptation to click his heels together in the air. He was done. Finished. Everything he'd worked so hard for was here. And he had Draco and their make-out session on top of it all. His couldn't imagine life getting any better.

"Excuse me!"

Instead of clicking his heels, Sawyer practically tripped over them. He spun around and found a man standing right behind him. "I'm so sorry. Did I bump you? My head is in the clouds today."

The warning tingle that appeared in Sawyer's spine shot a message through him stronger than any he'd felt before. He took a step back, nearly stumbled again, and finally looked at the person who was setting off his alarm bells. If he just

looked, the guy seemed normal. But he was almost flickering, as if he had... more than one form.

Sawyer tried not to panic and stepped back again. The other man stepped closer, his grin turning nearly feral. “You know Henry Jerrick?”

He knew better than to answer, but it didn’t seem to matter. The guy raised his hand and held his fist in front of his face. “Tell him I said hello.”

Then he opened his hand and blew a fine red powder into Sawyer’s face. It felt like flames engulfed him immediately. Sawyer’s breath caught, then he fell to his knees. His body trembled and he cried out with the pain.

The man chuckled before turning and walking away. A moment later, he disappeared. Students began to gather around Sawyer. “You okay, man?”

Sawyer couldn’t answer. He was holding on with the finest thread of control. He managed to get his phone out and call Draco. He answered on the first ring, ready to hear how Sawyer’s meeting with his adviser had gone.

“Hey! How’d—”

“Drake, help. Quad.” Sawyer managed to gasp out the words before his body seized. The phone clattered onto the sidewalk and one of the students around him managed to keep him from face-planting into the cement.

“Someone call 911. He’s having a seizure!”

Another student rolled him to the side, but it felt like more flames erupted in him at the touch. He cried out again, even as he lost control of his body. Blackness threatened to swallow him but he tried to hold on. He lost track of everything around

him and wasn't sure how much time had passed before he heard Draco's bellow of rage.

Students moved quickly out of his way and then Draco was kneeling in front of him. "You'll be okay. I'm here."

He touched Sawyer's head and even though it hurt, Sawyer turned into it. He whimpered even as his body seized again. Draco held him as his body trembled. He wasn't expecting to hear Eduard's voice, but he did a moment later.

"Out of my way. Excuse me."

"Sawyer!"

Henry. Henry was here, too. But it wasn't safe for him. He had to warn...

"Hen—" Sawyer's breath caught and he began to choke. Draco pulled him closer and the pain ratcheted up another notch. His throat felt like it was closing and he gasped desperately for a breath.

Then he felt a wash of coolness, like he'd stepped into a cool shower after a hot day. The pain began to fade and it became easier to breathe. He pulled in a breath, then another. His vision came back into focus and he saw Henry and Eduard kneeling beside him.

"Henry. Danger. Go," Sawyer gasped out the words but it was all he could manage. Blackness consumed him, and this time, he couldn't fight it.

DRACO



Draco paced the long length of the master bedroom, his attention never far from Sawyer's still form on the bed. Pearl lay against him, her head resting on his stomach. She'd not left his side either, not from the moment Draco carried him into the house and placed him on the bed.

Henry swore the effects of whatever was used against him would wear off, that his own magic had been able to clear it away. It had caused some damage, though, and Sawyer's too-human body needed time to heal and recover.

"Draco."

Henry spoke quietly from the doorway and Draco turned to see him. He'd not handled Sawyer's whispered message well. Whoever had hurt Sawyer had been after Henry. They'd been able to interpret at least that much from his words.

"Draco, my dad is here. He's a doctor. Can he come in?"

It took Draco a moment to realize that he was half-shifted and snarling every other breath. His beast was not happy and he needed to blow off some steam. Literally.

"Of course." He fought for control and stepped to the far side of the room. He couldn't take his eyes away from Sawyer,

though, not even when he sensed another alpha's presence in the room.

He fought back another growl when the man stepped over to the bed. Henry's dad gave Pearl a quick ear rub, then placed his medical bag on the side table.

"What happened?"

Henry climbed up onto the opposite side of the bed and settled beside Pearl. "We don't know. He called Draco and by the time we got there, he was having a seizure. He was in a lot of pain, too. And had trouble breathing."

"And what did you do?"

Henry shrugged. "I just... touched him, really. I remembered what it felt like when I had my vision and he touched me. How cool and refreshing it felt, and how much better it made me feel. And I don't know, Dad, it seemed to work."

"And you think he's null?"

"Yes, Alpha Jerrick," Draco managed to say. He walked closer and stood at the foot of the bed. "We believe that he is."

"Call me Vaughn, please. So, if he's null, how did something magical affect him?" He continued his careful examination as he spoke, looking into Sawyer's eyes, listening to his heart and lungs.

"We don't know."

"Okay, we've got a couple options here. We can bring him to the clinic and I can do more extensive tests, or I can have some oxygen delivered and we can give him another few hours to see if he wakes up. I'm a little concerned about his lungs. It's almost as if he has smoke inhalation issues. His

breathing is a bit strained, so I'd like to get him on some oxygen to help him breathe a bit easier."

"Whatever he needs," Draco said. "Whatever you think is best."

Vaughn glanced at Draco, then back at Sawyer's still form. "Let's not move him then. Henry's uncle has agreed to transport him to the clinic should his condition worsen. I can have oxygen brought through now which should make things a bit easier for him."

It took a second for Vaughn's words to settle but when he did, he looked up in alarm. "The hellhound is here?"

Henry looked up nervously. "He is. A human was attacked magically, Draco. I had to call him."

All of their kind followed certain rules, and the hellhounds existed to make sure they did. One of them was to not reveal themselves to humans outside of emergencies. Hopefully, the hellhound would understand Draco's reactions. When he received the call, realized Sawyer was hurt, he'd bellowed in rage. Eduard had heard his yell and he'd managed to tell the other guardian that Sawyer was hurt before he shifted and flew.

Dragons were known for their speed in the air, and it had been mere minutes for Draco to fly to the university, shift back to his human form, and be at Sawyer's side. Under normal circumstances, Draco managed to use his magic to shield himself from human eyes, but he honestly couldn't remember if he'd done it. The only thing in his mind had been getting to Sawyer.

He was lucky that his shift was magical in nature, unlike some of the other clans. He didn't have to worry about finding

clothes. His shift was more of a step between worlds. In one, he was human. In the other, a dragon. And he could move seamlessly back and forth between the two worlds. Not that it would have mattered. He would have shown up stark naked if it meant helping Sawyer.

“Draco?” Henry asked quietly.

“I understand. I’m sure he needs to speak to me.”

“He’d like to, yes. You were the first one of us on the scene. We need to find out who did this.”

Draco couldn’t agree more. And when he did, he’d roast them alive.

Vaughn closed his bag and placed a reassuring hand on Henry’s shoulder. “This isn’t your fault, Henry.”

“No, it isn’t,” Draco agreed. “Stay with him while I speak to your uncle. Don’t leave his side. Understood?”

Henry nodded. “Are you s—”

“Yes, I’m sure. Call me if anything changes.”

“I will.”

Draco led Henry’s father back downstairs and found the others waiting in the formal living room. A large man stood beside the fireplace, his long dark hair tied to the back of his head. Sawyer would have laughed. He loved man buns and had tried to convince Draco to grow his hair out.

The memory brought him little comfort. He nodded to the hellhound, recognizing him as another alpha. It made him curious how Henry had become part of a pack where he casually referred to the alpha of the hellhounds as “uncle.”

“You must be Draco.”

“I am. Uncle Meshaq, I presume?”

The hellhound grinned and covered his heart with his fist. “I see Henry has been telling tales.”

“When does he not?” Vaughn asked. “Meshaq, I need to get back to the clinic to get some oxygen for Sawyer. I’d like to get him started on it right away.”

“Of course. Solomon is standing guard outside. Have him open a portal for you.”

Vaughn turned and left, while Draco kept his attention on the other alpha. “I understand you have some questions for me.”

“I do. I would also like to see Sawyer for myself, if you don’t mind.”

“I don’t mind. Anything that will help.”

Draco led Meshaq upstairs. Henry still sat in the center of the bed and he stroked Pearl’s back slowly. “Hey. No change.”

Draco went to the other side of the bed and resumed his position at Sawyer’s head. He hated how helpless he felt. There was nothing or no one to rip apart to make this right.

“What happened?” Meshaq asked quietly.

“He called me. Said he needed help. I could tell... it was bad. I could hear it in his voice. Before I could ask what was wrong, I heard the phone fall and then someone around him said he was having a seizure. I ran outside and called for Eduard, then called my dragon and took to the sky. I was at his side within minutes.”

“Did you see anything?”

“No. He had a bunch of students around him, and he was shaking. It hurt him when I touched him, and he was having trouble breathing.”

Meshaq glanced to Henry. “Then you arrived?”

“Yes. Eduard flew me there. He was shaking and I just touched him. I told you how he helped me after my vision?”

Meshaq nodded.

“Well, my magic told me to touch him. So I did and the pain seemed to ease. Draco picked him up and we got him back here. Andvari had brought the car. He must have broken every speeding law in existence to get there so fast.”

Meshaq turned his attention back to Draco. “May I look closer?”

Although it chafed to allow it, Draco understood it was for the best. He stepped aside as the other alpha took his place. Both of their eyes flared with yellow-orange flames as they traded places.

Meshaq leaned in close to Sawyer then breathed in deeply. A moment later, he choked and pulled away. “What the hell?”

Draco bristled but fought the urge to pull Meshaq away. “What is it?”

“Lean in. Smell. There’s something...”

Draco did the same action, leaning in close and inhaling. His lungs immediately began to heat and his eyes watered. He pulled away with a growl.

“Is it still hurting him?” Draco asked. He couldn’t keep the anger and frustration from his tone, but it didn’t seem to offend the hellhound.

Meshaq bent back down, this time even closer to Sawyer's face. His body tightened and Draco could only imagine the pain. If he'd only gotten a small breath and felt the amount of pain he had, what would it be like to be that close and breathing deeply? More importantly, what was it doing to Sawyer?

"Henry, you should mo—" Draco began.

Henry shook his head. "No. It's not hurting me the way it is you. Let me see."

"Henry, stop," Draco said. He started to reach for him, but Henry wiggled away and put his face right next to Sawyer's.

"I'm okay, Draco. I swear. And I think whatever this is isn't hurting him now. I'm not sure *what* it is, though. I've never seen anything like it before. Uncle Meshaq, do you see that?"

Henry pointed to a spot on Sawyer's eyebrow, and only when Draco looked through his dragon eyes could he see the slightest glimmer of magical residue.

"It's familiar. But I don't remember why. I feel like I've seen something similar, but it's been many, many years."

Henry slid off the bed and ran into the bathroom. He came back a moment later carrying a small empty cannister with a lid. "Here. Nana gave this to me so in case we had to fly I could bring stuff on the plane. Honestly, she's the reason why I have three suitcases."

Draco took the container and unscrewed the lid. He handed it over to Meshaq, who was able to maneuver the small granule into the jar. He closed the lid and slipped it into the pocket of his jeans.

“I need to ask some questions, see what I can find out about this,” Meshaq said to Draco. Then he turned to Henry. “I don’t want to leave you here. You should—”

“Uncle Meshaq, I can’t leave. This is my duty. You know that.”

Meshaq growled, low and deep. “It goes against everything in me to leave you behind. I can send Sol—”

“*No*, Uncle Meshaq! The guardians will keep me safe. You know they will. You have to trust me, trust us. All this is happening for a reason.”

The hellhound growled again. “But the message was for *you* and the guardians are for the chosen one. Not you. My concern will always be you.”

Henry went to his uncle and wrapped his arms around his waist. Meshaq was so tall, Henry’s head hit him mid chest. He actually looked like a child standing next to the giant of a man. “I know you want to protect me, that you’ve always kept me safe, but you’ve gotta let me do this. And if I see Solomon or Viceroy around here hovering, I’m going to tell Ben.”

Meshaq groaned and squeezed Henry tighter. “Why would you threaten me with that? You know your big brother is my weakness.”

“Actually, my *little* brother is your true weakness. But Ben is my first line of defense. No one can handle his disappointed face. Believe me, you do not want me to sic Ollie on you, but I will pull out the big guns if you don’t listen to me.”

Meshaq grinned and pressed a kiss to the top of Henry’s head. “I really don’t. I’m still convinced you slip that kid something daily to give him that much energy.”

Henry squeezed his uncle one last time then pulled away. He moved to stand beside Draco, then took a deep breath. “Draco and the guardians will keep me safe. You need to help us figure out who hurt Sawyer. That’s the best thing you can do for me, okay?”

Draco wrapped an arm around Henry’s shoulders and pulled him close. “We will keep him safe. We’ll reinforce the wards today as well.”

Meshaq nodded. “I will let you know what I find out.”

The moment Meshaq left the room, Henry turned and pressed his forehead to Draco’s chest. Draco tentatively wrapped his arms around Henry and held him close. “We’ll keep you safe,” he promised. “I wasn’t just saying that for your uncle’s benefit.”

“I know you will,” Henry said. “But that doesn’t mean I’m not more scared than I’ve ever been in my life.”

His voice was a barely there whisper, so unlike Henry’s normal boisterous tone. Draco pulled him closer. “Don’t tell Sawyer, but I’m a little scared, too.”

Henry coughed out a watery laugh and hugged Draco. “I won’t tell him.”

“Thank you,” Draco said. He wiped a stray tear from Henry’s cheek. “You should head to the bathroom. Someone’s coming up the steps.”

Henry pulled away and took a moment to look into Draco’s eyes. “Okay,” he said. He smiled softly before hurrying into the other room. A moment later, Henry’s father appeared holding an oxygen tank along with another bag of supplies.

“Sorry it took me so long. We had a sick child at the clinic, so I went ahead and did the exam so they could head home. Then I had to clean up so I didn’t bring whatever that was to Sawyer. Better safe than sorry right now.”

“Thank you, Dr. Jerrick.”

“I told you to call me Vaughn. Where is Henry?”

“In the restroom,” Draco said. “His uncle just left.”

“I passed Meshaq going out. He said he’d found something. I hope he finds out who did this sooner rather than later.”

As he spoke, Vaughn sat the oxygen tank beside the bed, then attached a plastic tube. He unrolled it and placed the cannula in Sawyer’s nose. He adjusted the tubing and secured it before beginning the flow of the tank.

Once he was finished, he turned back to Draco. “Henry knows how to check the tank and adjust things if he needs to. This tank should get you through the day and I’m hoping that’s all we’ll need. Listen to his heart and breathing carefully. Have Henry call me if his condition changes. Otherwise, I’ll be back in the morning.”

Draco placed his fist over his heart and bowed to Vaughn. “Thank you. If there’s anything I can do for you or your pack, name it.”

“You can keep my son safe,” Vaughn said.

“I will,” Draco promised.

“Henry! I’m leaving. Get your butt out here and say goodbye!”

Henry opened the bathroom door and came rushing out. He tripped over his feet and landed against his dad’s chest with

an oomph.

“You take care of yourself,” Vaughn said. “And if you need anything—”

“I’ll call.”

“You better.”

“Bye, Dad. Hug Pappa for me.”

“I will. Call your Nana so she doesn’t yell at me.”

Henry grinned. “I’ll call her tonight.”

Vaughn left and Henry leaned against the bed with a quiet sigh.

Draco couldn’t resist moving closer, even though he should. He leaned in and wrapped his arm around Henry’s chest, pulling him in so Henry’s back was against Draco. “You okay?”

“It’s weird not being with my pack,” Henry said. “But I guess we’re kind of a pack now, huh?”

It wasn’t exactly the way Draco thought of them, but he could see that it would make sense to Henry to call them a pack. The more little tidbits were revealed from Henry’s past, the more curious Draco became about him. How, exactly, had a mage been raised by a pack of shifters? And he’d referred to multiple siblings in a time when most clans were struggling to have children.

Instead of disagreeing, Draco pulled Henry closer. He leaned in and pressed his cheek to Henry’s. “You’ll have two packs fussing over you now. Just imagine it.”

His teasing had the desired effect. Henry snorted out a laugh and gently elbowed him in the stomach.

“Jerk,” he said with another chuckle. “I can barely manage the one I’ve got.”

ANDVARI



Andvari tested the weight of the sword in his hand, feeling the heft of the metal through his arm. He tightened his grip and completed one of his most difficult maneuvers, spinning his body while slicing the blade through the air. He focused on his breathing, letting his muscles use the memory of the thousands of times he'd practiced this very move.

Normally, this type of workout served as a form of meditation for him. He could wield his blade and quiet his mind. Instead, his mind was inside the house, upstairs in a master bedroom where a young man lay quiet and still on the over-sized bed.

He'd gone up several times to check on Sawyer and Henry. Henry hadn't left Sawyer's side since they brought him home from campus. And the fact that whoever had hurt Sawyer had threatened Henry? It sent Andvari's blood to boiling. He sliced his weapon through the air again, the blade whistling with the force of his swing.

If anyone thought they were going to harm a hair on either young man's head again, they'd have a pissed off vampire to get through first. As much as Henry baffled and confused him, Andvari was not letting him get hurt. Part of it was because of

his duty. The other part... well, he didn't need to think about that.

And as to Sawyer, the young human had helped Henry through his vision and that was enough reason for Andvari to keep him safe. He returned his blade to its sheath and circled the house one last time. His enhanced senses hadn't picked up anything unusual, but he had this tingling sensation at the back of his neck that he didn't like at all. Perhaps Eduard could take to the air and use his eagle eyes to see if there was some sort of threat close by.

Back inside, the sounds of bustling dishes from the kitchen faded into a pleasant background hum. Andvari couldn't deny that he approved of Eduard's desire to add staff to the house. He'd grown up surrounded by them as well, and although he liked taking care of things himself for the most part, when he was as on guard as he presently felt, it helped knowing that someone else was there to take care of their basic needs.

None of them had eaten since Sawyer came back, which meant that Henry hadn't had anything to eat all day. Andvari went to the kitchen and found Cecil already one step ahead of him. He had a large tray half-filled with food and he was packing up another with plates, utensils, glasses, and a silver pitcher.

"I can take one up for you," Andvari said.

Cecil looked up from his task. "That's not necessary, sir."

"I know it's not, but I don't mind helping. Henry needs to eat."

"Yes, sir. He merely nibbled on breakfast and hasn't had so much as a sip of water since then."

Cecil was clearly put out by Henry's lack of nourishment, which brought a smirking grin to Andvari's face. He remembered being fussed over by his staff and knew Henry wouldn't be able to refuse Cecil the way he'd argued with Eduard and Andvari over what he ate.

"How is the hunt for other staff coming along?" Andvari asked.

"Slow, sir. I brought a few with me to finish setting up the house. Master Eduard told me nothing had really been set up or unpacked. I think I'll be bringing some other staff from Master Eduard's estate. There aren't any services locally that I can pull from and the amount of training hiring someone new would take...it's not practical under the circumstances."

Andvari nodded. "No strangers inside the wards. I have staff as well, much smaller, but at your service if you require them. It's safer to only bring in those familiar with our world who have been vetted by one of us. And we'll need to make sure they keep their traps shut over anything that happens here." He glanced upstairs, wondering what the rest of his clan would think of a human being watched over by them. Actually, he already knew. They would have left Sawyer to die there in the grass instead of allowing Henry to leave the wards to assist.

"Understood, sir. I will make sure to let any new staffers know that they will face your displeasure should they speak of any goings on here."

Andvari nodded his approval. "And let them know that once I'm done with them, they'll be facing the dragon."

Cecil shivered before placing a set of glasses on the tray. "That threat will hold many lips shut."

As it should, Andvari thought. The dragons had a certain reputation for a reason. Not that anyone wanted to cross any of their kind without good reason. All of the clans were fierce in their own ways.

Andvari lifted the now-full tray and carried it up to the master bedroom with Cecil following behind him. He took the tray into the round seating area beneath the turret and sat it down on a side table. Henry had laughed when he saw the tower room in his vision, but Eduard had outdone himself making it a comfortable space. He'd known the real reason for its existence, of course, as had Eduard. Those of them with the ability to fly could land on the upper ledge of the turret should the need arise. They would also be able to take off from there in an emergency. What Henry saw as a fantasy castle addition to the house actually had a very practical purpose. And as to practical...

Andvari turned to the other two guardians. Draco and Henry hadn't budged at his entrance to the room. They were standing at the foot of the bed, with Henry pressed back to front to Draco. Both of them were staring at Sawyer's still form.

"You need to eat," Andvari said. "Both of you."

Draco turned to face him but Henry didn't move.

"He hasn't eaten today," Andvari added. "And you won't do Sawyer any good by not keeping up your strength. I'll sit with him. Cecil brought up some food."

Draco nodded and tugged Henry with him. Henry protested until Cecil placed a filled plate into his hands, then he stopped griping and started eating.

Andvari lifted one of the dark leather chairs sitting on the other side of the room and carried it over to the bed. Those martyrs were standing there as if they didn't deserve a chair until Sawyer was on his feet again. The idiots. Andvari didn't know Sawyer well at all, but he could say for certain that he'd be very angry if they weren't taking care of themselves.

Sawyer was pale against the dark bedding, paler than he normally looked. He had a few freckles that stood out further against his skin and his honey brown lashes were dark marks against the blue slashes under his eyes. He looked worn out, much different from the vibrant, smiling man who'd left for university hours before.

Andvari slowed his breathing and listened to the sound of Sawyer's blood pumping through his veins. If he didn't know better, he'd think Sawyer was sleeping. His heart was slow but steady, his breathing deep and even. And he smelled... well, there was still an underlying hint of smoke and pain, but mostly he smelled amazing.

Pearl shifted her position and sent a pitiful look Andvari's way. He reached out to stroke her head, then left his arm stretched out across Sawyer's body so he could pet her. Most animals shied away from him, but Pearl didn't seem to mind his touch. It was as if once Sawyer said it was okay to like him, she did. It was as simple as that.

He wondered what she did to people Sawyer didn't like.

DRACO



Draco lifted his head from the back of the chair where he'd rested it after hours of holding vigil at Sawyer's bedside. The others had taken turns as well, but Draco hadn't been able to leave for long. He was even breathing with the same tempo as Sawyer. In...out...in...out. It was soothing in its own way. Henry had been falling asleep on his feet hours before so Draco had convinced him to lie down beside Sawyer. They didn't know if Henry's magic was still doing something to help, but if it was, he should be close. Besides the fact that Draco found himself not wanting to let Henry out of his sight either.

It hadn't taken long for Henry's sleeping body to curl up against Sawyer. He had his head on Sawyer's chest and a leg thrown possessively over Sawyer's. It was a pretty sight, and under other circumstances, Draco could imagine having both of them curled up beside him, their wicked and talented mouths teasing his skin as much as they did with words.

Sawyer's breathing changed and Draco turned his attention to his face. He had Sawyer's hand in his and Sawyer squeezed it instinctively as his eyes fluttered open. His gaze was unfocused for a moment, then he glanced to Draco.

“It’s about time,” Draco whispered. “You had me worried.”

Sawyer squeezed his hand, then looked down at his chest. “Henry?”

“Yep. Using you as a body pillow.”

He released his hold on Draco’s hand and then lifted his own to his face, tugging the oxygen tube from his nose and giving it a disgusted look. “What happened?”

“We don’t know. Someone attacked you and you called me. We got you back here and called Henry’s dad. He seemed to think you would wake up on your own, but thought you needed a little extra oxygen.”

“Yeah,” Sawyer said quietly. He dropped his hand back into Draco’s and held it tight. “It felt like he set me on fire.”

“Tell me what he looked like.” Draco would be sure he knew *exactly* what fire felt like once he found the attacker. And he knew how to make it last.

Sawyer frowned and his breath caught. “I...I’m not sure.”

“You don’t remember?”

He shook his head. “No. I mean. I remember, but... I...he wasn’t...he like blinked or something. Like, have you ever seen one of those projections where they fade in and out? I don’t know, maybe a hologram or something but not that because I’m pretty sure he was real.”

“Okay. What else?”

“He said...” Sawyer paused, his attention turning back to Henry. “He asked me if I knew Henry. Then he blew this powder in my face and told me to tell Henry he said hello. Then he just walked away.”

Draco leaned in and pressed a gentle kiss to Sawyer's lips. "You're safe now. We've got you and you aren't going anywhere without one of us by your side until we catch this asshole."

"Sawyer!" Henry jerked and came awake, raising his head from Sawyer's chest and smiling at him. Then he leaned in and kissed Sawyer, before pulling away with an embarrassed squawk. "Oh my goddess, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean... but you're awake... and I just... you're awake!"

Sawyer grinned and pulled Henry against him in a hug. "I'm awake. You helped me, didn't you?"

Henry nodded, untangling himself from the sheets and sitting up the rest of the way. "Yeah, it was like when you helped me. I just touched you and you calmed and... yeah. It was good."

"Thanks, Henry."

"Of course. Did you see—"

Draco cleared his throat. "Henry, why don't you go see if you can find Cecil? Sawyer hasn't eaten all day and I can guarantee he's hungry."

"Oh! Yeah, of course. And I'll tell Eduard and Andvari that he's awake, too."

He practically ran from the room and Draco couldn't help smiling as he watched him go. He reached over and turned off the oxygen tank, before returning his full attention to Sawyer.

"You liked that, didn't you?" Sawyer asked.

"What?"

"Seeing him wrapped up against me like that. I saw the way you were looking at him."

Draco grinned and leaned in again. “And?”

“And I like him, too.”

“Good. Now pet your dog before she dies.”

Pearl was wiggling around by Draco’s feet, desperate to have Sawyer’s attention. He’d made her get off the bed earlier when Henry kept moving around and bumping into her. Not that she minded laying on Draco’s feet while he kept watch.

Sawyer patted the bed and she jumped up on top of him, licking his face and chuffing happily as he rubbed her ears. She flopped down on his chest and rolled onto her back so he could pet her belly.

“She’s such a goofball,” Draco said. But he reached up to give her a good scratch as well.

Henry bounded back into the room and jumped onto the bed beside Sawyer, joining in Pearl’s belly rubs for good measure. “Cecil’s bringing food. Eduard is calling Uncle Meshaq and my dad for me and then he’ll be up. Andvari is outside on guard, but I’m guessing he’ll be in soon as well.”

Sawyer grinned at him and Draco could practically hear his inner dialogue. *Yay, food! Wait, Uncle Meshaq? Mmm, Andvari.*

“Help me sit up?” Sawyer asked.

Draco immediately stood and reached for Sawyer. There was still pain there and it made his dragon want to tear into something. He eased his arms beneath Sawyer and helped him sit up. “Henry, can you grab the...”

Henry stacked the pillows behind Sawyer’s back and Draco leaned Sawyer back against them. His face had gone pale, and Draco wished he could take the pain into himself.

That wasn't possible, but Henry seemed to be trying. He had Sawyer's hand in his again and since Draco's dragon was so close to the surface, he could just make out the blue swirl of magic.

"Oh that's good," Sawyer moaned. "What are you doing?"

Henry blushed. "Um, nothing?"

Draco snickered and resumed his seat. Pearl stretched out on Sawyer's legs, a sign to Draco that Sawyer was doing better. Her instincts where Sawyer was concerned were very on point. When he was sick, she never left his side and curled up against his ribs close to his heart. Once he started feeling better, she moved back to her usual spot against his legs or feet.

"He's working his magic on you," Draco teased. "I can see it."

That caught Sawyer's attention. "Wait... you can *actually* see it?"

"My dragon can. I get hints but if I let him through, he can see it."

"Really?" Henry asked.

"Yep. Which is why I didn't know this place was warded when we first got here. Normally I would be more on guard but I wasn't expecting it and I hadn't been my dragon in a long time."

"That's kinda sad," Sawyer said. "Was it because of me?"

Draco actually took a moment to think about his answer. He tried to never answer Sawyer's questions by rote. "No, not entirely. It was more that I didn't need him for anything, so I

didn't shift. He's very much part of me, but it's not like the shifters Henry grew up with."

"Oh yeah," Henry added. "My family has to shift at least once a month, more if they're kinda high strung. Longer than that and it isn't pleasant, believe me."

"So the rules aren't the same for everyone? Or like all magical creatures, um, beings? Magical humans? Humans who shift? What exactly are you all called?" Sawyer asked.

Before either of them could answer, Eduard entered the room. He hurried to the head of the bed and Draco moved back far enough to give him room. Eduard leaned over and looked into Sawyer's eyes. After a moment, he sighed in relief. "You're better?"

"Getting there," Sawyer said. "I'm really sore, though."

Eduard ran his fingers through Sawyer's hair and cupped the back of his neck gently. "You had a seizure. You'll be extremely sore for a few days. Dr. Jerrick said we'd need to be careful of any torn muscles or sprains so don't get up without one of us here to help, okay?"

Sawyer nodded and Draco leaned further back into the chair with a smile. The way those two were looking at each other sent sparks of desire through him. Sawyer glanced his way, asking the question, and Draco nodded, giving him the reassurance he needed. Sawyer reached up and ran his fingers along Eduard's jaw before kissing him gently. "I'll be careful. I promise."

Eduard stiffened for a moment, obviously realizing they weren't alone, but then reached an understanding. He pulled Sawyer close once more and pressed another kiss to his lips. "Thank you."

“Merlin’s beard, that’s hot,” Henry moaned.

Draco snickered and Sawyer pulled away from Eduard to shoot him a frown. “Did you just quote Harry Potter?”

“Oh come on,” Henry said. “I was a boy wizard. I mean my dads practically said *Yer a wizard, Henry* when they found me. Of course I was obsessed with Harry Potter.”

“When you put it that way, it makes perfect sense. Hey, do you think J.K. Rowling is one of you? Oh, she must be! That’s how she knows all that inside scoop on the creatures and—”

“No,” Draco said. “She isn’t. Well, maybe she is. But just... no.”

“Aww,” Sawyer said with a laugh. “You’re just mad because she used your name for the mean kid.”

Draco huffed and crossed his arm over his chest. “It was *my* name first.”

Sawyer laughed as Eduard maneuvered his way onto the bed, sitting with his back to the pillows next to Sawyer. Sawyer snuggled up against him while Henry moved to lean into his other side. Draco reached out and laid his hand on Pearl’s back, giving her a nice long pet while he and Sawyer shared a secret smile.

“Henry, with me,” Draco said after a moment.

“Where are we going?”

“To relieve Andvari on patrol so he can come in and spend some time with Sawyer.”

“Oh, yeah. Okay.”

Henry leaned in and nudged Sawyer with his forehead before sliding to the far side of the bed. He hurried into the

bathroom, then through to the master closet where he reemerged hopping his way into a beat up pair of chucks.

Draco sat his hand on Eduard's knee for a moment, then stood. He met the griffin's eyes, gave him a quick nod, then went to guide Henry from the room. They found Andvari outside, sitting in the gazebo at the front of the house. When Draco had first seen the structure going up, he passed a bit of judgment. A gazebo *and* a turret room? The house was a mash up of Victorian castle with a side of farmhouse. It made no sense. Except now it did. Both additions gave them cover while allowing them to keep guard. Henry's vision had known what they didn't. Draco wondered if other parts of the house that he hadn't explored yet would reveal more about the other guardians.

"You can go see Sawyer, if you want," Henry said to Andvari, pulling Draco from his thoughts. "We're going to patrol."

Andvari glanced at Draco, then back at Henry. "You're patrolling?"

Henry scowled at the doubtful tone. "Yes."

"Then I'll stay with you," Andvari said.

Draco sighed and reached out to pull Henry back against him before he lost his temper. "Do you doubt my ability to keep him safe, vampire?"

Andvari looked back at Draco, obviously torn. But he knew how to answer without raising Draco's ire. "No. I don't doubt you."

"Then go inside. It's our turn."

Andvari scowled, but stomped his way into the house. Henry pulled away from Draco and scowled at him in much

the same way Andvari just had.

“Why did you do that?”

Draco smiled and reached for Henry’s hand. “Because you don’t understand some things, and I want to explain them to you. I think, perhaps, you and Andvari have not gotten off on the right foot.”

“He’s a pain in the ass and thinks I’m helpless,” Henry said.

Draco guided them around back and let his dragon eyes come to the forefront. His dragon had been quiet for so many years, resting in the back of his mind, that he’d forgotten how heady the feeling was having that extra pull of power at his fingertips.

As he looked around now with his other eyes in focus, he could see the line of the wards Henry had laid around the property. They were in rings, concentric circles much like the mark he bore as a guardian of the chosen one. The wards were strong, but could be even more so if Henry knew more about his abilities.

“He thinks you’re important and wants to keep you safe. And, if I’m not mistaken, he thinks you’re incredibly handsome and wants to do other things to you as well.”

Henry tripped over his feet, but Draco was prepared after years of imparting shocking realities to Sawyer. He caught him before he hit the ground and helped Henry regain his footing. He could do nothing about the way his jaw had fallen open or how wide his eyes had gotten.

“Clearly, you missed the signs,” Draco continued. “Here, you need to strengthen the outer ward.”

Henry sputtered. “Wait. What?”

“The outer ward. Add another layer.”

“That’s not what I—”

“I know. Concentrate. See the magic and bind it tighter.”

“You’re confusing me on purpose,” Henry said with a scowl. “I don’t like it.”

“Yes, you do,” Draco said. He stepped behind Henry and pressed close. “You like being bossed around, but you also want to be independent. You’re used to having an alpha, but aren’t used to it being someone other than your father.”

“I don’t... no, that’s not...”

“Focus, Henry. Strengthen the ward.”

Henry sighed and his magic rose to the surface.

Draco could feel the cool wash of it roll over him and his dragon responded by lighting him up. A small shudder rolled through him and he pulled Henry even tighter against his body.

“Whoa,” Henry said with a sigh. “My magic *really* likes you.”

“And my dragon really likes you,” Draco replied. He gave a small push with his hips against Henry’s ass to prove just how much.

“Oh wow. That’s... wow.”

“Yes, it is. Now strengthen the ward.”

Henry growled at him but raised his hands and let his head fall back against Draco’s shoulder. His arms moved like a conductor as he directed the symphony of his magic with exquisite precision.

“That’s good,” Draco whispered into his ear. He wrapped his arms around Henry, letting one hand trace down his T-shirt

covered abs to the top of the track pants he'd been sleeping in. The other he placed over Henry's heart.

The blue lines of magic surged as Henry's body came alive. He continued moving his hands, but his breath caught as his body responded to Draco's touch. "That's it," Draco purred into his ear. "Use my heat to forge the bonds even tighter."

Henry whimpered and pushed his ass back into Draco's crotch. Draco let his hand dip lower, teasing beneath the band of Henry's pants and touching the trail of hair that disappeared lower still. Henry's magic surged, much as his cock did. It had hardened fully and the tip teased Draco's fingertips. He lowered his hand further, taking Henry into his hand and giving his cock a gentle squeeze.

"That's it," Draco said. "You're doing so well."

"Draco," Henry moaned. "I'm...I'm..."

"Come for me, Henry."

Henry cried out as his body spasmed and his magic soared. The wards brightened to an incredible degree, becoming a blue flame that burned hot enough Draco could feel it.

Draco removed his hand from Henry's pants, then raised it to his Henry's lips. "Clean me up," he urged.

Henry made another little noise before beginning to lick his spend from Draco's hand.

"Look at what you did, Henry. Your magic is almost as beautiful as you are, but you don't know that, do you? You don't know that Andvari wants to touch you as I am right now, that he wants to make you feel as good as I just did. He wants to touch you, to make you cry out his name."

Henry moved his mouth away from Draco's hand, the beginnings of a protest on his lips. Draco moved quickly and rolled his thumb over Henry's bottom lip, dipping it into his mouth. "You missed a spot."

He teased Henry's ear with his teeth, nibbling at the lobe and giving a quick thrust of his hips. "God, Henry, you're so powerful. It's not fair for one person to have this much beauty and power combined. I thought Sawyer was bad, but you... Henry, you're going to be just as addictive to me as he is, aren't you?"

Henry stiffened up again, another protest ready to form, but Draco was waiting for this one as well. "And Sawyer wants to taste you, too. He told me, earlier. He liked waking up with you sprawled all over him. I liked it, too. Two beautiful men, curled together. I wanted to touch you both, to crawl in between you and let you both touch me. What do you think about that, Henry? Would you tease me with Sawyer? Get me so riled up I couldn't think for wanting you?"

Henry gasped out a breath, then managed to spin himself around in Draco's arms. "What are you doing?"

Draco grinned and tugged them together. "Trying to make you see the way things are."

Henry frowned a bit, puzzling over his thoughts as his body still sang with magic and release. "You mean..."

"I mean that you're irresistible. Andvari thinks so, and so do I. Sawyer does, too. And although Eduard is a bit harder to read, I have a sneaking suspicion he's wanted to bend you over a time or two as well."

Henry grabbed Draco's biceps, groaned at the touch, then looked up. "Goddess, you're beautiful."

Draco grinned and leaned in to kiss Henry. He got his first taste of Henry's release, transferred from his fingers to Henry's lips. "As are you."

"Andi really wants to..."

"He really does. But he thinks you don't want him. You were just clueless, weren't you? Beautifully innocent."

Henry blushed and leaned his forehead against Draco's chest. "I've never...been with anyone. Except you. Just now."

Draco groaned. "Goddess, don't tell me that. It makes me want to touch you all over again."

Henry huffed and lifted his head. "I'd let you."

"I'm glad."

"And Sawyer won't be mad?"

"Nope. I promise."

"I kinda wanted to kiss him more, but then I thought... you and Sawyer, you know?"

"It is me and Sawyer. It will be forever. But Sawyer and I had a long talk and he knows that dragons take multiple mates. He liked that idea. How about you? You like that idea, too?"

Henry's lips quirked to the side and he had a puzzled frown. "I've never thought about it. I mean, my dads... it's just them, you know? The moment my dad saw Pappa again, he was done for. I always thought that's the way it would be for me."

"And it may be. I hope not," Draco said. "But I won't pressure you into anything more than you want. I wanted to open your eyes tonight, to let you see yourself the way we see

you. So bright and beautiful, full of energy and magic. You're stunning, Henry."

Henry grinned and he wrapped his arms around Draco and hugged him tight. "Thank you." He pushed up and captured Draco's lips in a tantalizing kiss. "Now let's do the other ward. I think I've got the hang of it now."

Draco snickered but followed Henry back up to the second ward that surrounded the house. He pulled Henry close again, but this time he kept his hands on the outside of Henry's clothes. He opened himself up and allowed the dragon magic in him to roam free, giving Henry access to combine their magic again. The ward again burned with a bright blue flame.

"I did it. That's... really cool. So I can borrow your magic?" Henry asked.

"Not borrow, exactly," Draco explained. "I can let my magic strengthen yours. Our elements are different, so they can help strengthen each other. You can do the same with Andvari, should you choose to do so. His magic is from the earth so it would add another layer onto the wards."

"That's... something for me to think about."

Draco couldn't agree more.

EDUARD



Eduard waited patiently for Cecil to settle the tray across Sawyer's lap then bustle back out the bedroom door. Finally, he had a moment alone with Sawyer. He picked the tray up again and sat it on the chair by the bed, then turned so they were face to face.

Sawyer grunted at him. "You were comfortable. Come back."

Eduard took his hand instead, then made sure he had Sawyer's attention. "You understand what you've started?"

Sawyer nodded. "I won't lie and say that I understand all the nitty gritty details, but I know I'm okay with something more between us. I talked to Draco about it. I hope you understand that I couldn't risk losing his friendship, even though I was... *am*... really attracted to you."

Eduard couldn't resist leaning closer, letting his hand cup Sawyer's cheek. "You're lighting a fire here, Sawyer. With both the dragon and I. The last thing I want is for you to get burned."

"I know," Sawyer said. His voice lowered and he leaned closer still. "But I can't change what I feel and if I only have a short time with all of you before... then I want to take

advantage of every moment. Don't waste time, Eduard. We may not have much."

Eduard closed the final distance between them and pulled Sawyer into a kiss. The temptation was too much to resist and Sawyer was right, he didn't want to waste another moment. If he wasn't risking the wrath of the dragon and putting a choke hold on the partnerships they were forming as guardians, then he wanted to take this chance.

Sawyer's lips were soft against his and he parted them with a sigh. Eduard took advantage, stealing his way deeper into the warm depths, tasting his very essence. Sawyer tugged him closer, then slid further down the mattress. Eduard stretched out beside him, his long, lean form covering Sawyer's body from head to toe. He wanted to shelter Sawyer, but he also wanted to soar with him, to let his eagle wings spring free and have Sawyer climb on his back like Henry had earlier. The sensation of a man resting against his back, so trusting of him to fly through the air and keep him safe... it was more intoxicating than Eduard had thought it would be.

He'd never done that before, flown with a human, but when Draco told him of Sawyer's trouble, he'd instinctively known that Henry could help Sawyer just as Sawyer had helped Henry after his vision. He'd called for Henry and had been surprised when Henry showed no fear when he shifted. He'd simply climbed astride Eduard's back and let him carry him through the air to Sawyer's side.

And now, Sawyer was here and in his arms. Safe if not one hundred percent whole. Eduard could see the twinges of pain as he moved, his muscles not yet recovered from the strain of the seizures.

Eduard pulled away with a quiet sigh. “I knew you’d taste amazing.”

Sawyer closed his eyes and smiled. “I kinda think I’m dreaming. I mean, you’re just... and Draco, too? And both of you are... Man. I really must be dreaming.”

Eduard stroked his thumb over Sawyer’s cheek again before pushing away. “You need to eat something and then I was thinking maybe a nice hot bath.”

Sawyer opened one eye and gave him a suspicious look.

Eduard grinned and offered him a strawberry from the dish of fruit on the tray. “Of course, I’d have to join you. I had a very large tub installed in the master bathroom. I’d hate for you to fall asleep and drown. No, it’s better if I assist.”

And there was the smile again.

“That sounds good,” Sawyer said.

Eduard held up a bite of cheese and Sawyer nipped it from between his fingers.

“I can feed myself, you know.”

“I’m well aware,” Eduard replied. He held up a nice plump blackberry and ran it across Sawyer’s bottom lip. “But would you deny me this simple pleasure?”

Sawyer huffed and closed his lips around the fruit. Eduard leaned in and teased his lips again, tasting the juices before pulling away and providing another bite for Sawyer to nibble.

“You’re going to spoil me,” Sawyer said. He took a bite of Eduard’s next offering, a slice of prosciutto wrapped in melon, without further complaint.

“You have no idea,” Eduard promised. “Now drink some water while I go start the bath.”

“Sir, yes sir.” Sawyer gave him a saucy grin that was spoiled when he popped another bite of cantaloupe in his mouth.

Eduard couldn’t hide his smile as he went into the master bath and started the water. Once he’d adjusted the water for temperature, he returned to the bedroom. Sawyer had the glass of water in his hand, half drained.

“You’re a bit dehydrated,” Eduard said. “I can have Cecil —”

“Nope. Not until after our bath. Cecil isn’t coming anywhere near here while I’m naked.”

Eduard snickered, but didn’t point out that Cecil was who helped Draco get Sawyer changed out of his soiled clothes earlier. He’d be mortified if he realized exactly what had happened during his seizure, or that Cecil had already seen all of him. He’d let that realization come another day.

The bedroom door opened and Andvari stood at the entrance. He looked back and forth between them, not saying anything. Eduard waited, having learned that Andvari often needed time to process things.

“We were just going to get in the bath,” Eduard said.

Andvari turned to Sawyer. “You’re okay?”

“I am,” Sawyer said. “Thank you for helping earlier.”

“I just drove the car.”

“Well, thank you for doing that.”

“I’ll leave you to your bath. Don’t fall asleep.”

Sawyer grinned as he closed the door behind him. “Man, he’s a worrywart, isn’t he?”

“You could say that,” Eduard replied. Of course, Andvari was actually unfamiliar with humans. He’d picked up on that from their early days together while they helped Henry through his visions. Andvari had spent most of his time with other vampires, who were known for being sturdy and hard to kill. Henry and Sawyer’s human fragility scared him more than he cared to admit, especially as the responsibility for keeping them safe weighed on him.

“Can we bring the tray into the bathroom?”

“We can. But it’ll take the tub a few minutes to fill. Go ahead and eat.” Eduard returned to the bath to add some salts and oils to the steaming water. Sawyer’s muscles would thank him for it later.

When he returned to the bedroom, Sawyer had moved the tray and had slid his legs off the bed. He’d paled considerably. Eduard rushed to his side. “What happened?”

“I moved,” Sawyer said. “I think the sexy bath time I’m imagining isn’t going to happen. At least not today. I feel like I got beat up.”

Eduard ran his hand over Sawyer’s head and pulled him close. “You’re okay.”

Sawyer grimaced but tried to stand. His legs wobbled.

Enough.

Eduard scooped him up and held him for the short walk into the bathroom.

“Ugh, this is really making me feel as far from sexy as possible. Isn’t it supposed to be sexy for some big strong man

to scoop you up and whisk you away?”

“I can do that later. For now, how about you think it’s sexy that I don’t let you fall and break something?”

“Yeah, that’s probably a good idea. Then again, I think you’re sexy all the time so it’s not exactly a hardship.”

Eduard grinned and sat Sawyer down on the edge of the tub. They’d dressed him in some of Henry’s clothes earlier, so he reached for the hem of the shirt and guided it up. Sawyer’s eyes locked onto his, and he helped him ease his arms out carefully before lifting it over his head.

Then he knelt and ran his hands slowly up Sawyer’s legs, teasing the shorts they’d used to cover him before hooking his hands beneath the waist and moving them down.

“Lift up,” he whispered.

Sawyer complied, wincing with the effort but pushing up far enough that Eduard was able to slide the fabric over his hips and down his legs.

Eduard leaned in and pressed a quick kiss to Sawyer’s chest, then teased his way upward to his neck. “You’re so beautiful. I can’t wait to touch you.”

Sawyer reached for the buttons on his shirt and gave them a tug. “Get this off,” he demanded.

Eduard pushed to his feet and quickly removed his own clothes. Sawyer watched his every move. He licked his lips and his breath quickened as every inch of skin was revealed. Eduard wasn’t a bashful man. His body was beautiful, his muscles lean and sculpted, his skin a pale gold that highlighted his form.

He paused when he finished undressing and let Sawyer look his fill. When he finally raised his eyes to meet Eduard's, they were filled with want. He quickly moved to Sawyer's side and scooped him up again. Once he stepped into the water, he lowered them together to one of the seating areas.

Bathing was one of Eduard's fondest luxuries, and he'd not skimped on the master bath in any way. Instead of a typical bathtub, he'd installed a large whirlpool bath that could easily fit four men. He'd seen hot tubs smaller than this bath, and although it was quite the indulgence, Eduard loved the added luxury. Once they were settled, he adjusted Sawyer's position, encouraging him to straddle Eduard's lap. He didn't have to encourage too much.

Even though his muscles obviously protested, Sawyer seemed eager to keep them pressed together. His face had already started to flush as the heated water warmed him through. Eduard reached behind him and flipped the switch to start the jets. The moment the bubbles began to form, Sawyer leaned his head back with a groan. He'd placed them in a little corner where the jets shot inward from each side. Sawyer was getting the benefit of multiple bursts of water massaging him from different angles. Eduard was enjoying others pounding into his back.

He added his touch to the jets work, massaging Sawyer's thigh muscles then sliding his hands around to his back. He dug his thumbs into the tense muscles in his lower back, enjoying a groan of pleasure from Sawyer for his trouble. Then he slipped lower still, cupping Sawyer's pert ass and giving it a squeeze.

"Your hands," Sawyer moaned. "Draco said they were wonderful."

“He did, did he?”

“Hmm,” Sawyer said. “Do that again.”

Eduard complied, giving him another squeeze and pulling his cheeks wider. Then he slipped his fingers down so they teased at Sawyer’s hole, earning him another of Sawyer’s sweet sounds.

The bathroom door opened, but Sawyer was too lost in sensation to realize. Eduard rubbed his finger against Sawyer’s entrance as Draco’s eyes locked on his from the doorway. Sawyer bit his lips and whimpered.

“You coming in?” Eduard asked.

Sawyer turned in alarm toward the door, but immediately relaxed when he saw Draco standing there.

“Depends on what Sawyer wants,” Draco replied.

“Uh, Sawyer wants you naked and in this tub right now,” Sawyer demanded.

Draco laughed and tugged his shirt over his head. His pants were next and then the dragon was gloriously naked. Where Eduard was long and lean, Draco was a muscled mass of man. He had the broad muscles and back of the dragons, and the rest of him was equally stunning from his rippled abs to his thick thighs.

Eduard spun Sawyer around, settling him with his back to Eduard’s chest. “Look at the pretty dragon,” he murmured into Sawyer’s ear. “Think he can help me loosen up these tense muscles of yours?”

Sawyer nodded, his hips already moving in an instinctual rhythm.

Draco stepped into the tub, then moved through the water to Sawyer. He ran his hands over Sawyer's arms, then down his side. His fingers brushed Eduard's stomach, drawing a heated groan from him and a second from Sawyer.

Draco grinned and leaned in closer, hooking his chin on Sawyer's shoulder. "He's pretty, isn't he?"

Eduard nodded.

One of Draco's hands came up and cupped the back of Eduard's head. He let himself be pulled in and tangled his lips with the dragon's.

Heat flared between them and Sawyer whimpered. The water sloshed as they moved, especially as Sawyer tried to wiggle his way around to a better view.

Eduard stilled him with a touch, sliding his arm around to take Sawyer's cock in his hand. It earned him another pretty sound, this one causing Draco to pull back and turn his attention to Sawyer.

"Oh, he's got you now, doesn't he?" Draco said. His grin was wicked as he took in Sawyer's flushed face. "He's good at it, isn't he? I knew he would be. Those hands of his are sinful. Is he wrapped around you real snug?"

Sawyer moaned and nodded, reaching out to steady himself on Draco's shoulders. Eduard couldn't tear his eyes away from them. Sawyer's lips parted, gasping in breaths with each stroke of Eduard's hand.

Draco never stopped his wicked talk. Eduard had no idea the man had such a dirty mouth, but he loved it.

"You think those pretty fingers would feel good inside you? Stretching you wide, getting you ready for me to fill you up? You want that? I want to see them disappear into that

greedy hole of yours. And I know it's gonna be greedy, Sawyer. You're gonna want cock all the time once you get it. Lucky there's enough of us here to keep you satisfied, huh? Then again, maybe it'll take the whole crew before you've had enough. What do you think?"

Sawyer nodded, his hips bucking into Eduard's hold. Draco's fist wrapped around Eduard's, each of them pulling pleasure from Sawyer's body as he writhed between them.

"You wanna see what else we can do to him?" Draco asked.

"I very much do," Eduard answered. "To the bedroom?"

"Yes, please," Sawyer said. He hooked his legs around Draco's waist and plastered himself to his front. Eduard turned off the jets before standing and pressing up against Sawyer from behind again.

"How are you feeling?" Eduard asked.

"Better, actually. Not as tense. Whatever that smell-good stuff was you put in the tub seemed to work."

"Excellent."

Draco used their distraction to nuzzle his face into Sawyer's neck. His scruffy beard left red marks on Sawyer's already pink skin, and Eduard couldn't wait to see what he looked like when they were done with him. He stepped up behind Sawyer and teased the other side of his neck, sucking up a quick mark and then nibbling it for good measure.

"Argh, you guys are going to be the death of me," Sawyer said. "Get me out of this tub so I can dry off and get into bed. Hurry up."

Draco laughed but stepped out of the tub with Sawyer still wrapped around him. Eduard followed, grabbing fluffy bath sheets from the cabinet. He wrapped one around Sawyer, who snagged it eagerly and wiggled his way out of Draco's grip.

Eduard waited for his muscles to tense up again, but the hot water and water jets really had eased the tension from his legs. He tossed another towel to Draco, then used the third to rub himself quickly dry.

"Tell me you have supplies here," Draco said.

"I... have some supplies." Generally, they didn't require the use of condoms and they weren't able to contract human diseases. Eduard wondered if Draco had taken the time to explain that to Sawyer, but his question was answered when Draco pulled Sawyer against him again.

"We're gonna fuck you now," Draco said. "We don't need protection, okay? We can't get STDs and we can't give 'em to you either. So only thing going in you is going to be us."

Sawyer hesitated only a second, then nodded. "I trust you."

Draco captured him in another kiss while Eduard retrieved another of his bottles of oil from the cabinet. He much preferred natural ingredients to the synthetic products offered to humans. He'd perfected a solution he very much enjoyed years before.

Eduard stepped behind Draco with the bottle in his hand and began to guide him into the bedroom. They'd not come up for air, and Sawyer was back to making his delicious noises. But this time they were being swallowed hungrily by Draco. He continued to move them forward, nipping at Draco's broad shoulders as they walked. When they were close enough to the bed, Draco pulled away and growled. The dragon was close to

the surface and ready to claim its mate. Draco had waited a long time for this moment, and yet he wanted Eduard here as well. The hand Draco had wrapped around Eduard's wrist proved that much to him.

"Get him ready for me," Draco demanded. He lowered Sawyer onto the bed, then stepped from between his legs. Eduard moved to replace him, eager to get his hands back on Sawyer again as well.

He urged Sawyer further up on the bed, then climbed on the mattress between Sawyer's spread legs. He forced them apart further still, spreading him wide open. After dribbling a small amount of the slippery oil into his hand, Eduard handed the bottle back to Draco and focused on laving the liquid over Sawyer's hole.

It clenched at his touch, then Sawyer groaned as he massaged the tight muscle with his fingers. "You gonna let me in?" Eduard asked. "Gonna let me get you ready for the big guy?"

Sawyer nodded eagerly, then grabbed behind his knees and held himself open wide. Draco purred and stepped up behind Eduard, wrapping his big arms around his chest and leaning over him for a closer look.

"He's hungry for it, isn't he?"

"He is," Eduard said. "He's so tight."

"Hmm, not for long. Isn't that right, Sawyer?"

Sawyer nodded and Draco grinned at him as he moved around to crawl up beside Sawyer, giving Eduard a spectacular view of his ass. The man was muscled everywhere, and the thick length that bobbed between his legs was impressively

sized. Even his balls were large, full and swaying between his legs as he moved.

Eduard's mouth watered and as Draco knelt down to kiss Sawyer again, he used the opportunity to slip a finger into Sawyer's tight hole. It earned him a whimper. Eduard wanted another, so he stroked gently in and out until he could slip his finger in far enough to reach the spot inside Sawyer that would light him up. He stroked over it gently and he got the reaction he wanted.

Draco raised up with a grin and let Sawyer cry out in wonder. He looked at Eduard in amazement, then his head fell back as Eduard stroked it again, then again. Draco grinned at him, then lowered his head to Sawyer's chest, pulling one of his nipples between his lips and then biting gently on the nub.

Sawyer began to roll his head back and forth as sensations overwhelmed him. Draco reached for his cock, giving it a quick stroke. Eduard slipped another finger inside, stretching him wider, then quickly added a third.

“Oh, God. What...I... More. Eduard. Again.”

He reached for more oil, finding it abandoned by Draco on the bedside table, then slicked his fingers up again. He slipped them inside and watched as Sawyer's body spasmed around him.

Draco practically purred his approval. “You first,” he huffed. “Get him nice and loose and ready for me.”

Eduard didn't need to be asked twice. He grabbed Sawyer's legs and pulled him back to the edge of the bed. Draco leaned up to watch as Eduard lined up with Sawyer's entrance and began to push inside.

Draco ran a soothing hand over Sawyer's abs as he began to pant.

"Oh, that's pretty, Sawyer. Look at you swallowing him up. He's being so gentle with you. I couldn't be. He'll get you nice and stretched out for me. You want that? Want me to get in there where he's got you nice and loose? One day maybe we'll both be inside you. What do you think about that?"

If the tightening of his hole was any indication, Sawyer liked that idea a lot. Eduard eased the rest of the way inside, holding Sawyer's hips tight in his grip as he adjusted to the intrusion.

"Breathe through it," Draco whispered. "Push out against him. There you go. Look at that. He's all the way in, Sawyer. Buried balls deep in that sweet ass of yours."

Eduard stared down at their joined bodies and slowly pulled out. He added a bit more oil to his cock before sliding back into Sawyer's hole. He moved slowly, watching Sawyer for any reaction that wasn't bliss, but between Draco's words and his fingers teasing over Sawyer's body and the sensations Eduard was providing, Sawyer seemed lost in pleasure.

Draco was clearly enjoying every minute of it as well. He'd put his lips back to Sawyer and given his cock a few strokes before pulling away and meeting Eduard's heated gaze.

"What next, Sawyer? Cause I'm thinking about fucking Eduard first while he's still balls deep inside you."

Eduard clenched, his body giving an unintended hard thrust. Sawyer groaned before nodding eagerly. Draco stared at him again and Eduard nodded his approval. He'd not been on the receiving end in quite some time, but he'd happily let Draco work his magic on his body as he enjoyed Sawyer's.

While Draco climbed off the bed and went for the bottle of oil, Eduard leaned in and covered Sawyer's body with his own. "How you doing?"

"Fantastic," Sawyer said. "It feels good. You feel good."

"Too tender?"

"No. I've... well, played a bit. So I'm not completely new at this." Sawyer bit his lip and blushed.

"Don't be embarrassed about that. I play myself. Often. Which I'm going to be thankful for once your dragon gets that thick dick of his into me."

Sawyer groaned and clenched his hole around Eduard's cock, drawing an answering moan from him. "Why does that turn me on so much? The thought of him in you while you're in me. And you just, I'm so full and..."

"I love the feel of you. I knew I would." Eduard pulled back and eased forward again before starting a slow and steady rhythm. He could feel Sawyer's desire ratcheting up again and enjoyed the tease as Draco settled between his legs.

"Brace yourself," Draco ordered.

Eduard grinned down at Sawyer, wiggling his eyebrows as he placed his arms on either side of Sawyer's head. Oil dribbled down his crease, then Draco's rough fingers went right for his hole.

"Fuck, even his fingers are thick, Sawyer. He's gonna stuff me full."

Sawyer bit his lip again then reached up to hold onto Eduard's arms. "He getting you ready?"

"Yeah. He's got me nice and slick and...oh, two fingers now. Damn, he's gonna have to get four in me to get me ready."

He's bigger than I am. He'll have to stretch you loose, too."

Sawyer trembled at the suggestion and Draco added another finger. He began to thrust into Eduard's hole and Eduard used the momentum to push forward into Sawyer. "Oh man, he's good. Feels good, Sawyer."

He continued to match Draco's rhythm until the fingers left his ass and were replaced by something much bigger.

"Hold on," Draco said. His voice had gone deep and husky, sending a shiver of want down Eduard's spine. He pushed out as Draco began pushing in and couldn't help the gasp of pleasure-pain that slipped out.

"Fuck, he's huge, Sawyer. Filling me up so fast. I don't even know if I can take the whole thing."

Sawyer trembled and clamped down on Eduard's cock. "You can. Take him in. For me."

Eduard gasped and opened his body further, eager to please both of the men giving him so much pleasure. Draco made another growling sound, pushing himself deeper yet. Eduard had never been so full, stretched to his limit and going further still.

"Almost there," Draco purred. "You're sucking me in, Eduard. You want more of this?"

He nodded, meeting Sawyer's eyes with a wicked grin even as he panted his way through the stretch. Draco gripped his hips and with one final push, he buried himself completely in Eduard's ass. He gasped at the sting for a moment, then Draco pulled out and did it again, hitting that sweet spot inside him like it had a target painted on it.

Eduard cried out, arching his ass up and back for more, then diving deep into Sawyer again. Sawyer echoed his

sentiment, making it clear he was enjoying every moment of Eduard's fucking. Another powerful thrust from Draco and Eduard's brain finally clicked off. He lost himself to the sensations, plunging into Sawyer as Draco drilled him hard and fast. His release snuck up on him and when Draco pegged his gland one last time with a powerful thrust, Eduard's entire body tightened up as his orgasm raced through his body.

Sawyer cried out beneath him as well, the force of their combined thrusts moving him up the bed. Eduard lowered himself shakily to Sawyer's chest, seeking a desperate kiss as Draco slid from his aching hole and helped him move to the side.

"I'm not done with you yet," Draco promised.

DRACO



It had been years since Draco enjoyed another's body, and his dragon wasn't letting him forget it. He hungered for more in a way he'd never wanted before. Eduard had primed him, eased the worst of the ache, but Draco had wanted Sawyer for a very long time.

Eduard lay panting for breath beside Sawyer, who lay with his legs spread and his hole leaking from Eduard's spend, Draco felt a surge of lust more vibrantly than he'd ever felt before. There was no doubt that Sawyer was *his*. His mate. His life.

He grabbed Sawyer's thighs, tugging him up and opening his ass wide. He plunged his tongue in Sawyer's hole, chasing the release that Eduard had so thoughtfully left behind. When the last of it was gone, Draco drew back and viewed Sawyer through the flames of his dragon eyes. He reached blindly for the oil, fumbling the bottle and pouring it over his dick. He added more to Sawyer's hole then lifted him up from the bed.

"You're gonna have to take the lead so I don't hurt you," Draco said.

His control was nearly shot as it was, his dick aching with the need to be inside Sawyer's body. He spun and sat down on the bed with Sawyer straddling his lap. Draco ran his hands up

and down Sawyer's sides, learning his skin, where is soft spots were, and the spots that lit him on fire.

Sawyer braced his hands on Draco's shoulders and pushed up onto his knees. Draco reached between them and held his cock steady as Sawyer began to lower himself. The first breach had Sawyer catching his breath in a surprised jolt. He squeezed his hands on Draco's shoulders, breathing through the stretch, then allowed himself to sink lower.

"Fuck, you're so tight."

Sawyer grinned before pushing out and lowering himself another inch. "You just think that cause you're so fucking huge. Jesus, Drake. Is that thing a dick or a baseball bat?"

"Well, it has been mistaken for—"

Sawyer burst out laughing, cause his body to clench up. He groaned and Draco went in another inch. "Don't make me laugh. You're gonna make me break something."

Draco held onto Sawyer's hips as he waited for the burn to ease. The light moment had helped Draco regain some control and he was suddenly aware of Eduard easing up behind him. Draco leaned back, letting some of his weight rest against Eduard's chest as Sawyer pushed down again, letting out a weak groan as his body stretched.

"He needs more oil," Eduard said. He reached around Draco's body and grabbed the bottle. Draco held out his hand, accepting the slick, then reached for his cock.

"Raise up a bit for me."

Sawyer did, biting his lip as he pulled up. Eduard slipped off the bed, taking the oil with him. He stepped behind Sawyer, adding more oil to his hole, then nodded at Draco.

“He’s ready.”

Draco urged Sawyer to him again, the way eased even more by the oil. Their eyes locked together, then Sawyer pushed down as Draco moved up. Sawyer grunted, then cried out, shuddering in Draco’s arms.

“I think you’re splitting me in two,” Sawyer whimpered. “But what a way to go.”

Draco ran his hands along Sawyer’s back, then down to his ass. “You were made for me.”

Sawyer smiled, his sweet one, and leaned in for another kiss. “I really think I was,” he whispered in reply.

“Don’t think. Know. You’re mine.” Draco pushed up, buried himself the last few inches and held Sawyer as he gasped through it.

“You’re carrying me everywhere tomorrow. Seriously everywhere. I’m not going to be able to walk.”

“I will,” Draco promised.

Eduard settled behind Sawyer, pressing up close and giving him extra support. “He’s stretched so wide around you, Dragon. I should have thought to add mirrors in here so you could enjoy the view.”

Draco grumbled deep in his chest then stretched his hands around to tease at Sawyer’s stretched hole. He dipped a finger close, then caught Sawyer’s surprised gasp with his lips. “One day you’ll take us both.”

Sawyer whimpered and writhed against him, his overstimulated body desperate for release. Draco decided to have mercy on him, moving his hands to Sawyer’s hips and guiding

them in a circular motion while grinding his cock even that much deeper into Sawyer's hole.

“That’s it, love. You’re gonna come so prettily on my cock, aren’t you? Give it to me, Sawyer. Mark me as yours. Paint my chest and claim me.”

Sawyer threw his head back with a cry and began to quiver as his release built. Eduard caught his shoulders as Sawyer arched back, writhing in Draco’s arms and moving wildly on his dick.

It didn’t take long before Sawyer did as he’d asked, his cock spurting thick stripes of come that dripped down Draco’s chest and pooled between them. Draco plunged himself deeper and filled Sawyer’s ass with his own release, pulling Sawyer tight as he shot load after load into his messy hole.

Sawyer collapsed against him, panting for breath and grumbling as Draco continued to swirl his thick cock into him.

“I think you broke him,” Eduard said with a smirk.

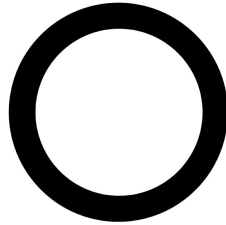
“Broke him in,” Draco replied.

Sawyer shoved at him weakly in protest, but Draco simply captured his hand and sucked one of his fingers into his mouth. He sucked on it for a moment before releasing it with a satisfied hum.

“I’m going to get some salve for him. Poor thing’s going to be hurting tomorrow.”

Draco knew he would be, but couldn’t deny that the thought of Sawyer thinking of him every time he moved made his dick twitch eagerly for more. He stroked his hand softly down Sawyer’s back, soothing him even as his breaths deepened and he drifted to sleep.

HENRY



Henry seriously considered going upstairs with Draco after they worked on the wards. He was pretty sure some serious sexy times were about to happen, but he really wanted to find Andvari and find out if what Draco said was true. Well, that wasn't entirely honest. He knew what Draco said was true. What he wanted to find out was Andvari's side of the story.

But first, he desperately needed to get cleaned up. He had some workout gear stored in the gym, and they had a shower down there, too. He'd get the wet and sticky come out of his shorts, change clothes, then face Andvari and demand some answers.

It was a fantastic plan. Which would have been even more fantastic if Andvari weren't in the gym doing some of his fancy maneuvers. The man moved like sin, his body sliding from one motion to the next. He'd said it was the vampire equivalent of a martial art. Henry had even learned a few of the movements before he became too annoyed with Andvari to spend any length of time with him.

Part of Henry wanted to back away, but he couldn't seem to look anywhere else. Andvari had removed his shirt, and his body glistened with sweat. Henry hadn't even known vampires

could sweat until he met Andvari. He hadn't known a lot of things actually. Still didn't, apparently.

Instead of taking the coward's way out, Henry stomped forward and placed himself right in the path of Andi's next move. He knew the amount of control he had, and didn't doubt for a second that he'd be able to stop. With millimeters to spare, Andi's fist settled in the air beside Henry's face.

"Yes?" His tone dripped, but Henry tried to see through it to the hurt beneath. If Draco was right...

"I want to talk to you. So prepare yourself and finish your routine. Meditate. Whatever you've gotta do to sit down and have a conversation without either of us storming away. I'm going to go shower. If you're not here when I get back, I'm calling my uncle."

It was the biggest threat he had, and one that usually worked.

Andvari simply frowned and as Henry backed away, he continued his practice as if Henry hadn't just broken his stride. Henry spun on his heel and stomped into the attached bathroom. It was the most utilitarian space in the house, without the bells and whistles Eduard had put into most of the other rooms. Andi was all over the space, because he'd been the one to explain what he most needed.

They'd probably had a thousand conversations about the house in the beginning, when Henry's visions were starting to take form. He'd already had basic sketches when Eduard and Andvari arrived, but he'd been making them casually, trying to dissect their meaning without realizing what exactly they were.

Henry snagged a pair of his old shorts and a tank top from the armoire in the corner and carried them into the bathroom. He took his time rinsing away his release, only slightly embarrassed that Draco had made him come in his pants. Learning that extra bit of magic? Well, that had made it worth it.

He cleaned up quickly, then dried off in record time. By the time he'd slipped his clean clothes on, Andvari was sitting on one of the mats against the wall with one leg pulled up and the other stretched out in front of him.

Henry sat down across from him, nudging Andi's foot aside so he could sit closer. He decided to just dive in and rip the band aid off the wound. "Why are you such a jerk to me?"

Andvari blinked then arched a brow. "I'm not."

"Oh, don't give me that bull crap. You've been hard on me since day one and you know it, acting like you're my boss or something. You aren't, you know."

Andvari scowled. "I never said I was."

"Well, you act like it."

He made a low growling sound but didn't deny it.

"Okay, now that we've got that established, I also know that you aren't my boss. But I'm willing to concede that you were just trying to help me the only way you knew how. And that I probably rushed to judgment because I really hate being treated like I'm some helpless victim. I haven't been helpless since I was eleven years old and I refuse to be treated that way now."

Andvari nudged his foot against Henry's leg, almost offering comfort, however awkwardly it was given.

“Why eleven?” Andvari asked.

Henry sighed. “That’s when my dads found me. Before that, I’d been kidnapped, my birth parents murdered, and I was held captive for we don’t know how long while some stranger tried to drain our magic. Good times.”

Andvari leaned forward, scooting away from the wall with a deeper scowl. “When you were so young?”

“Yep. But my dads found us and we’re fine now. They taught us how to be strong and take care of ourselves. So, see, I don’t like it when you act like I can’t.”

“Your brothers and sisters... they were with you.”

Henry nodded. “All of us. That’s how we all live with the pack, even though some of us aren’t wolves.”

“I didn’t know,” Andi said. He reached out and laid his hand across Henry’s knee, lowering his head briefly in the shifter way of apology.

“I know you didn’t. It’s something I need to work on. And when you add my overprotective dads, my overprotective uncle, my overprotective pack, my uncle’s overprotective pack, my overprotective siblings... you see where I’m going with this?”

Andvari nodded. “You aren’t weak, Henry. I never thought you were. Your magic is bright and crystal clear. You are a force to be reckoned with, and will be even more so once you learn more about your abilities.”

“Which is what you were trying to help me do by getting me to practice with you.”

He nodded. “But I also wanted you to be physically stronger. Humans are... different from vampires. More fragile.

Not weak. I don't think you're weak, but your body isn't like mine. I can heal most wounds by drawing from the power of the earth. Blood magic heals the rest. But when you're hurt... I mean, look at what just happened to Sawyer. What if that had been you? Yes, you have magic, but your body is human."

"I know. I've thought about that a lot, actually. Did you ever wonder why you were sent to me and not straight here? I mean, Draco got here years ago. But you were sent straight to me. Why?"

Andvari shook his head. "So I can protect you until your visions lead us to the chosen one."

"No," Henry said. "Because I'm a guardian just like you are. You were sent to me for a reason, though."

"What reason?"

Henry sighed and scooted closer. He grabbed Andvari's hand in his and linked their fingers together. "You think that maybe we both needed to learn to work together before we can really function as guardians? That the chosen one will need us to be a team before he or she arrives, and that until we're all able to work together to keep them safe, they won't show up?"

Andvari stared down at their joined hands before shrugging one muscled shoulder in reply. "Possibly."

"Probably," Henry said. "I mean, Eduard's been learning about the money thing forever. And Draco's all *I am Dragon hear me roar*. But you and me? Well, we've got a few issues I think."

"I won't let anything happen to you, Henry. I can't."

"You better not. But you also better remember that my job is to stand beside you not behind you. The chosen one is who we protect, okay?"

“Yes.”

“Good. Now what’s this I hear about you wanting to do really naughty things with me?”

Andvari sucked in a startled breath and tried to scramble away. But Henry was ready. He pounced up and draped himself over Andvari’s lap, wrapping his arms tight around his neck.

“Henry—”

“I’ve thought about it, you know? Imagined you and me. Doing some of those naughty things. I’ll tell you a little secret. Part of the reason I had to quit lessons with you was because I kept imagining you naked. I mean, the awkward boners were becoming a serious issue.”

Andvari made another surprised noise, but his hands had come to rest on Henry’s hips. He’d count it as progress.

“And then when we were on the bus and Eduard was being all weird about driving because goddess forbid one of us take a turn—”

“You don’t even know how to drive a bus.”

“And you do?”

Andvari’s hands drifted a bit lower.

“You were there in my space and I couldn’t get away. I’d go back to the bedroom and touch myself, hoping you’d walk in on me and maybe offer to help me out.”

Andvari’s eyes had begun to glow, a light green haze forming over them. “I... I could hear you back there,” he whispered. “I knew what you were doing. And... I could smell you. Like I smelled you when you walked in here a few minutes ago.”

Henry blushed and lowered his head to Andi's shoulder. "Goddess take me now."

"No," Andvari growled and pulled him closer. "You... just no."

"I'm so embarrassed," Henry said. His face was probably redder than the fiery sun.

"Hey, where'd that fierce warrior go who walked in here with no fear?"

Henry sucked in a shaky breath and lifted his head. "He's here. Just... not quite as fearless as you might think."

"I think he is," Andvari said. "I think you're brave and beautiful. The moment I met you I thought... I couldn't let anything happen to you. When you had your first vision and I saw what they did to you, I wanted to find a way to make it stop. To make it easier. My entire life I trained for this, from the moment the mark appeared I knew I was meant to be a warrior."

Henry smiled and leaned in to press a gentle kiss against Andvari's lips. "The moment the wind spoke to me through the leaves of the trees, I knew. I didn't have the training you did, but the promise was there. And I think... whatever the goddess has in store for me, she's given me all I need. I mean, she brought you to me, right? And the others?"

"She did."

"And Sawyer, I mean, I never even knew someone like him existed. She knew the pain was hard on me so she gave me a way to help. And Eduard, he has all that ability with money to keep us in all this luxury. Do you know what my brothers would say if they saw that marble bathroom upstairs

with the swimming pool Eduard calls a bath tub? I'd never hear the end of it. Ollie would move in!"

Andvari laughed. "He would. We'd never get him out of here. He'd want Cecil all to himself."

"And you. You, Andi. You're my warrior, too. You can teach me to fight with my hands as well as with my magic, but I know you'll always be there with that giant sword of yours, keeping us all as safe as we can be."

Andvari sighed and pulled him close. "I'd gut anyone else who called me that ridiculous name."

"I know."

The intimacy of the moment helped Henry find his bravery once again. He leaned his head in and nipped at Andvari's lips, teasing until he parted them and allowed Henry's tongue to dip inside. He breathed into it, then huffed out a laugh when Andvari flipped him onto his back onto the mat.

"You aren't starting something here you're afraid to finish, are you?"

Henry smiled and ran his hands down Andvari's arms. "I'm not afraid of you."

"And what if I want to make you smell as good as you did when you walked in here?"

"I'd say go for it."

Andvari took his words as a promise. He reached for Henry's tank top with a low growl, ripping it down the middle and baring Henry's chest.

Henry groaned. "That shouldn't be so sexy. It really shouldn't." His dick didn't seem to agree and he reached down

to push down on it with a frown. “Do not come. Do not come.”

Andvari grinned and leaned over him. “You liked that, huh?”

“So much. Too much. This is going to be over before it starts and talk about embarrassed. I won’t be able to look at you ever again.”

Andvari snagged the waist of Henry’s shorts and stripped them down his legs. He tossed them over his shoulder before grabbing Henry’s hips and tugging him forward.

“Oh fuck,” Henry squeaked. He blushed but let his legs fall open, revealing himself in such a vulnerable position. He bit his lip nervously, watching the vampire’s face for a reaction.

He didn’t have to wait long. Andvari growled and leaned down, pulling Henry’s cock deep into his throat in one swift movement.

Henry cried out, wet heat enveloping him as Andi’s wicked tongue traced over his tip and dipped into his slit. “Andi, please!”

Firm suction next, then Andi’s fist grabbed the base of his cock and began stroking him in time with his lips moving. His head bobbed up and down and Henry couldn’t tear his eyes away.

“I can’t. Andi. I’m going to come.”

Andi growled again, and the vibrations were coupled by a questing finger reaching for Henry’s hole. It was spit slick and Henry didn’t know when he’d done that but goddess his body opened right up for him, sucking him inside.

He'd never felt so vulnerable or turned on. His body ached, throbbed, hummed. "Andi!"

He tried to hold back, to make it last, but it was too much for him. He shouted as his climax hit, his release shooting through him. Andi swallowed him down, his throat working in a deep caress as he took Henry inside. When his trembling eased and he'd worked the last drop of come from Henry's dick, he pulled away and wiped his mouth.

"Sweet as honey," Andvari purred.

Henry made grabby hands at him, wanting his own chance to taste, but Andi was in complete control and he wasn't letting Henry have his way. He crawled over Henry's limp legs, moving up until he straddled his face. He took his cock in his hand, trapping Henry's arms with his thick thighs.

"Gonna put my come all over that pretty face of yours," Andi promised. "Want to see you covered in me. Want you to smell like me, taste like me."

He stroked his dick hard and fast, and Henry didn't know where to look. He wanted to watch that beautiful cock, but he was also lost in the heated desire in Andi's eyes. He couldn't make himself look away.

"I wanna taste," Henry said. He opened his mouth and Andi groaned. His rhythm faltered and a thick rope of come landed on Henry's cheek. The next spurt landed on his tongue, dripping down to the back of his throat. Andi kept coming, shooting another load onto Henry, into him, then he dipped the head of his dick into Henry's mouth.

Henry suckled the tip, chasing the last drops of come before swallowing him down. He felt it all the way to his toes, the burst of vampire energy merging with his own magic.

Andvari twitched in his mouth, another few drops falling, before he pulled out with a pleased hum.

“That mouth of yours,” Andi said before lowering himself to lay on top of Henry. “Wicked, wicked mouth.”

Henry wrapped his legs around Andvari’s hips, their spent cocks pressed together. “You’ve got one, too.”

“Hmm. We’re gonna do that again.”

Henry grinned. “Yes, yes we are. Many times.”

“Next time, maybe you’ll...”

“What?”

Andi raised his head, then traced a finger down the racing pulse in Henry’s neck. “Maybe you’ll let me taste you here.”

Henry moaned and moved his neck to the side, providing an even clearer view of his vein. “Yes.”

Andi nipped at the tender flesh, then pressed a gentle kiss there. “Next time,” he whispered.

They lay quietly together for a long time, with Andi exploring Henry’s neck with his lips and tongue. Henry’s cock tried valiantly to respond but he’d already come twice and although he could tell he was almost ready for another round, he found himself enjoying the simplicity of lying on the gym mats basking in Andvari’s undivided attention.

He’d heard a few muffled cries from upstairs and wondered what the other two were doing with Sawyer. From the sounds of things, they were enjoying themselves quite a bit. He moved his head to the other side at Andvari’s nudge and let out a quiet sigh.

“Want to go upstairs?” Andi said. “Sounds like they’re done.”

The curiosity was a bit more than he could resist. “Yeah.”

Andi climbed to his feet, then bent and scooped Henry up in his arms. Henry let out a surprised laugh, but clung to his neck. “What are you doing?”

“What’s it look like?”

“I can walk, you know.”

Andi looked at him like he’d lost all his brain cells. “Obviously.”

Henry sighed and dropped his head onto Andi’s shoulder. “You like getting your way too much.”

Andvari coughed out a laugh. “Obviously.”

He carried Henry upstairs to the master bedroom, then made a little happy sound when they entered the room. Henry looked over to the bed and made a little sound of his own. Sawyer was spread eagled in the center of the bed, his hole on proud display. It was red and wet and, holy hell they’d fucked him unconscious.

Draco crawled to the edge of the bed, his eyes predatory. He nudged at Henry’s cheek, at the spot where Andi’d left a bit of come. Draco licked at it, then tugged at Henry’s body until Andi released him into the dragon’s hold.

“You smell good,” Draco said. His voice was deep, deeper than Henry had ever heard it. His eyes glowed, flames dancing in them.

“Uh... thanks?” Henry’s voice cracked a bit when Draco looked him up and down.

He turned to Andi next, giving his nude form an appraising look. Draco licked his lips, then gestured with his head, urging Andvari toward the bed. Eduard appeared from the bathroom, his hair wet and a towel wrapped around his waist.

Draco scowled at him, clearly disapproving of his shower. He lowered Henry onto the bed, nudged him until he slid closer to the center where Sawyer lay snoring softly, then turned back to scowl at Eduard again.

The dragon was very close to the surface. Henry recognized it for what it was now. His animal side was at the forefront, controlling some of his thoughts and actions. His instincts were riding high. Henry glanced over at Sawyer's debauched form and smiled. Yeah, Draco's animal instincts had been in high gear and it looked like Sawyer had enjoyed every minute of it.

He turned back at the sound of a quiet huff of surprise and found Eduard bent over the end of the bed with Draco laying over his back. He'd tugged Eduard's head to the side with one hand fisted in Eduard's red hair and was thrusting wildly against his ass. It was one of the hottest things Henry had ever seen.

Henry's cock filled, excited by the sight of the men writhing against each other. He must have made some sort of noise because Draco froze and raised his head to stare at him. He grinned wickedly, pushing his hands against Eduard's back to hold him in place as he continued to thrust against his ass.

With the new position, Henry could see that Draco wasn't actually inside him. No, Draco's cock was sliding through Eduard's crease, pumping and growing larger with each movement.

Henry swallowed even as his cock twitched again.

Draco smacked Eduard's ass, then pulled him upright. He guided him to the opposite side of the bed, his eyes never leaving Henry's, then pushed Eduard toward Andvari, who'd sat down on the edge of the bed to watch the show as well.

Eduard climbed into Andvari's lap, not minding the change of scenery at all. Then again, Andvari was beautiful to look at, all budging muscles and rippling abs. Kinda like Draco, who'd stalked back around the edge of the bed while Henry was distracted and had one knee on the mattress beside him.

"Roll over," Draco demanded.

Henry meeped but began to slide over. Draco grabbed him and moved him onto his side so he was facing Sawyer and watching Andvari and Eduard as they kissed and touched each other on the other side of the bed.

Draco slipped in behind him, his thick cock poking at Henry's back. With a growling purr, he lifted Henry's leg and moved it back so he was stretched open. Draco slipped in closer, sliding one thick thigh between Henry's legs and propping Henry open.

Henry's breath caught nervously when he felt the stiff length brushing up against his hole. Eduard raised his head, caught Henry's gaze from across the bed even as he tilted his neck to the side. He let out a quiet hiss when Andvari struck, his eyes losing focus for a moment as the vampire fed.

When he opened them again, he returned his attention to Henry. Draco had stopped moving as well, and Henry caught him staring at Andvari's head as he sucked on Eduard's pale neck.

"Draco, oil," Eduard said.

Draco gave an annoyed huff, but moved around behind Henry. Moments later, slick fingers teased against his hole, then coated his balls. Draco raised his leg further by lifting his own and was able to reach Henry's cock. He gave it a firm stroke with his oil-slick fist, then it drifted back again.

Henry reached back and found Draco's head, pulling it forward until he met the dragon's fiery gaze. "I'm not ready," he whispered.

Draco nodded then pressed a teasing, tongue filled kiss to Henry's mouth. He lowered Henry's leg, but kept his cock pressed between Henry's thighs. He thrust, the passage slick with oil, and purred into Henry's ear. "Like that."

"Yeah," Henry said. "That works."

Draco's cock caught against his hole, teased against it, but then slipped off and slid forward until it brushed the back of Henry's balls. He did it again. Then again. Until Henry began to tighten up against him.

"You should taste him," Andvari murmured. "He's so sweet."

He'd removed his teeth from Eduard's neck but the fang marks were still visible. He had Eduard draped over him on the other side of the bed.

Eduard grinned then crawled over Sawyer's sleeping form. He put his knees at Henry's head and stretched out with his face in Henry's lap. Eduard licked a stripe down his cock as Draco began to thrust harder and faster between his legs. His thick cock kept catching on Henry's rim, pushing just the tip inside before slipping free and bucking up against Henry's full, tight sac.

Henry lost himself to the sensations. His body moved instinctively, pushing back against Draco, both scared when Draco's dick caught on his rim and stretched his hole ever so slightly, then disappointed when it slid free. His cock was once again enveloped in warm heat and he glanced down to see Eduard's red hair buried against his crotch. "Oh goddess," he cried. Just the sight alone had his balls drawing up further.

Andvari chuckled, then leaned over and held Eduard's cock out. "Suck it," he ordered.

Henry opened his mouth with a whimper, then the length slid over his tongue. Eduard groaned against his dick, sending a heavy quiver through Henry's body. Draco's cock caught again and he pushed forward oh so slightly. The stretch burned and Henry wiggled, trying to get away but longing to push back. Draco grabbed his hips and held him steady as he stretched him wider, then wider another bit before pulling back.

His hole quivered, aching and wanting. His cock did the same. Eduard laved the tip of his dick with his tongue, dipping into the slit as Draco dipped inside him once again. "Just a bit more," Draco purred into his ear. "You can take it."

Henry cried out as the stretch came again. Further this time, his rim pulled wide. Eduard sucked harder and Draco moved a hand down. He heard the sliding sounds of a hand on flesh and realized Draco was jacking himself off with the tip of his cock in Henry's ass.

He gave another muffled whine, then Eduard pushed his dick forward, pulsing thick ropes of come into Henry's mouth.

"Swallow it," Andvari commanded. Henry complied, his throat working around the spasming cock in his mouth.

Draco tensed behind him, his cock dipping a fraction deeper as warmth filled Henry's channel. He wrapped one of his thick arms around Henry's chest, his hand caressing Henry's throat as he continued to swallow around Eduard's length.

"Come," Draco growled into his ear, and Henry couldn't do anything else. His body jolted, pushing back further on Draco and he cried out against the pleasure-pain that filled him.

Eduard sucked on the tip of his dick, taking everything he offered into his mouth. When Henry finally went lax, Eduard raised his head. Draco leaned over and sucked the remaining drops of come from Eduard's tongue. He made a happy sound, rotating his hips against Henry's ass as he tasted his release.

"Good boy," Draco praised. He curled back up against Henry's back, moving his head to the side so he could tease at Henry's lips. He could taste himself on Draco's lips and his body twitched again.

Draco's pulled his cock out of Henry's hole and he felt the rush of fluids dripping from him. Draco slipped a finger back into him, keeping his spend inside and spreading it around. Henry wiggled into the touch, his ass sore but still aching to be filled. Draco hadn't even been all the way inside him, but damn had it been good.

SAWYER



Sawyer had claimed the overstuffed chair in what he was calling the library of the house. The room had one wall of bookcases, several big leather club chairs with ottomans, and a large dark wood table where Sawyer had planned on finishing his final project.

His ass wasn't having any of it, though. The mere thought of his hole had it twitching and Sawyer groaned. His head fell back against the arm rest and he cursed his mind for reminding him of the pounding he'd taken the night before.

He ached. There was no other way to describe it. And his ass was so tender he couldn't bear sitting down. Needless to say the wooden chairs that surrounded the work table were out. No way could he handle sitting on one of them. He'd tried and jumped back up again with a yelp of pain.

Sawyer ended up finding a comfortable position sitting sideways in one of the club chairs. He'd stuffed a pillow behind his back and draped his knees over the opposite arm. Henry was sitting the same way in a chair beside him with one of the books on magic Eduard had brought on his lap.

"Stop thinking about it," Henry said with a laugh.

"I can't!"

Henry snickered again and raised his eyes. Draco came rambling into the room again, still mostly dragon. He'd brought them both little bits of food all morning, offering Sawyer a strawberry and Henry a bite of cheese. Then he brought little bits of egg, or meat, or other fruit. And then warm croissants.

Sawyer had a little stack of gifts beside his chair. A pretty flower obviously plucked from outside somewhere. A brand new laptop in a box. He'd given Henry a shiny new tablet that wasn't even on the market yet. And a pretty rock that was smoothed by years of water and glistened whenever the light hit it.

He'd brought Sawyer his favorite T-shirt, so soft and worn it was nearly see-through in a few places. Henry had on another of his shirts. They were both swimming in them, but Draco had given them both heated glares when he'd pulled the material over their heads.

"It's totally not fair that Eduard and Andvari aren't going through this. Just because we're human doesn't mean he has to go all cave man and protective. Do any of your books say how long he's going to be like this?" Sawyer asked.

Henry shook his head. "Probably a while. I mean, how long has he been waiting for a chance to have sex with his mate? Not to mention what he did to Eduard. And me. Oh, goddess, I'll be having happy dreams about that for the rest of my life."

Sawyer scowled and shoved at the book he'd been pretending to read. "I can't believe you let me sleep through it all."

"Ha!" Henry burst out laughing for several minutes, earning another glare from Sawyer. "Sleep through it. You

were unconscious, dude. He literally fucked all your brain cells out. I couldn't have revived you if I tried.”

Sawyer grumbled again. “It’s not fair.”

“Yeah, yeah. You’ll get to see it all again. I’m surprised he hasn’t made you drop your pants again so he can check on your ass.”

If Sawyer had something available to throw, he would have tossed it at Henry’s head. “Don’t say that out loud! If he hears you, he’ll remember.”

“Oh, please. Like you mind having his fingers up your ass. I can see your face, remember?”

Sawyer grumped again. “I’m going to tell him to check on you next time.”

“Please do. I remember what those magic fingers feel like. I would not mind feeling them again.”

“Yeah, well, wait until you get his monster dick up your ass. You won’t be able to walk straight either.”

Henry sighed and wiggled his eyebrows. “Can’t wait.”

“Perv.”

As if conjured, Draco appeared with the little pot of salve Eduard must have provided in his hand. He made a bee line for Sawyer. Sawyer held up his hands and pouted his bottom lip out. He made sure to give Draco his best puppy eyes as a bonus. “Drake, Henry said his ass is hurting. You should check him. I think he needs you to help him, too.”

“Hey!” Henry started to protest, but Draco’s head had pivoted to him. Sawyer bit back his snicker as Draco changed direction. Before Henry could so much as squawk in protest, Draco had him bent over the arm of the chair with his shorts

around his ankles. He rubbed the cooling salve across Henry's hole, rumbling comfortingly in his ear the entire time.

Of course, watching made Sawyer's dick twitch, which made him clench his ass. He let out a quiet groan and Draco's neck pivoted. He locked a flame-eyed stare on him, then reached out his hand. Sawyer almost refused, but then Draco frowned and looked so damn sad he couldn't deny him.

"Oh hell," Sawyer sighed. He rolled to the side and stood and before he could so much as blink, he was bent over the same chair arm as Henry with his bare ass on display.

Draco rumbled again and Sawyer felt his fingers dip into his hole. He gasped as the salve tingled and Draco pushed his finger deeper. Henry made a similar sound. Sawyer looked back and watched and Draco pushed into them at the same time.

He wrapped an arm over Henry's shoulders, then tugged his head close for a kiss. Draco made a happy sound, then added a second finger. Sawyer whimpered, his cock full and leaking after just a few strokes. He pushed back, letting Draco's fingers go deeper. Henry licked at his lips, both of them moving in time.

"Well isn't that a pretty sight," Eduard said from the door. He walked slowly over to them, pausing only to kiss Draco, then sat down in the same chair they were using for support. "Don't pause on my account."

Draco grumbled and thrust into them again. His fingers weren't anywhere near as thick as his cock but they were wide enough to cause Sawyer's hole to clench. "Dammit, Eduard. You're supposed to save my ass, not get him to use it some more."

“Oh, you’re going to have to get used to this. I have a feeling you’re going to be more sore than not for a while. Don’t worry, though. The salve should fix you up. You’re already so much better than last night.”

Yeah, Sawyer knew he wasn’t anywhere near as sore as he had been and wondered what kind of griffin magic he’d infused into the salve. Then again, magic wasn’t supposed to work on him so maybe it was just some sort of secret ancient formula. He’d heard those pharaohs were a kinky bunch, so surely they’d had some sort of lube they’d perfected.

Henry cried out beside him, and his eyes rolled back in his head.

Sawyer grinned. “He found your happy spot.”

Draco grumbled, then twisted his fingers inside Sawyer until he made the same noise. “Oh fuck. Right there.”

Sawyer braced himself with one hand and reached for Henry’s cock with the other. He gave it a firm stroke, then matched Draco’s rhythm. Henry began to gasp, then he cried out as he shot his load over the side of the chair. Draco kept thrusting, not stopping even as Sawyer felt his own release begin to crest. Henry cried out again, his cock spurting another load as Sawyer hit the mark and came with his cock untouched. He’d never admit that Draco had given him a third finger, the added stretch being what he needed to put him over the edge.

Draco pulled his fingers out with a happy hum, then pulled Henry up from his slouch. He cradled him gently in his arms and carried him from the room. Sawyer pushed himself over the arm of the chair and landed in Eduard’s lap with a huff.

“You did that on purpose.”

Eduard ran his hand through Sawyer's hair with a smile.
"Maybe."

He traced his other hand over Sawyer's stomach and down to his sticky cock. "You've created a monster."

"With him, or you?"

"Hmm. With both of us. I wonder how you'd handle my lion side."

Sawyer groaned and rolled his head to the side. "I don't even want to think about it right now."

Eduard laughed and dipped his fingers between Sawyer's legs. His hole was still twitching from Draco's fingers so it was easy for Eduard to slide one of his slimmer ones inside.

"Such a sweet hole," Eduard said. "But I'll let you rest now."

"What a gentleman," Sawyer griped and Eduard moved his hand away.

"Do you need anything?" Eduard asked with a smile.

"Something to read while I lay here and don't move. Which means you can't move either so you can't get me anything."

"Cecil!"

"Eduard! I'm naked!"

With a huff, Eduard reached for the pillow in the chair Sawyer had abandoned earlier and shoved it over his crotch as the butler entered the room.

"Yes, Master Eduard?"

"Will you bring Sawyer one of those sports drinks please? He needs to replace some fluids. And something light for

lunch today, I think. The dragon seems to want to hand feed the boys as part of his mating ritual.”

“Not a problem, sir.”

“And will you hand me that book, please? Sawyer has finally gotten comfortable and I’d hate to make him move.”

Sawyer thought he was going to die from embarrassment. He was sitting in Eduard’s lap, stark naked, while the man talked about him like it was an everyday occurrence. Cecil handed Eduard the book, then walked quietly from the room.

“I do hope you’ll outgrow this embarrassment soon. Trust me when I say Cecil has seen much worse. You should have seen me during my early years. My hormones were all over the place. I think I even fucked a chair at one point. Oh, those were the days.”

“Shut up and read to me,” Sawyer complained. He pulled the pillow from over his crotch and tucked it behind his head before closing his eyes and letting out a slow, relaxed breath.

Eduard opened the book before glancing down to Sawyer. “Would you like to hear the prophesy of the chosen one?”

Sawyer peeled open one eye and looked up at Eduard. “Yeah. I would.”

Eduard smiled down at him and opened the small, leather bound volume. The pages were old and slightly yellowed, but it was obvious that it had been taken care of for a long time. Eduard’s voice was so soothing, his elegant tone adding to the heft of the words that had brought them all together.

When the children cease their cries

And true love’s light goes dark

When the sisters interests divide

*and the hidden ones emerge.
Nothing will stand in their way.
The guardians will rise
Two by fire, earth, air, water
The chosen one brings strength and balance
For peace and love to survive.*

Sawyer frowned up at him. “That’s it? It doesn’t even rhyme.”

Eduard pinched his stomach, then rubbed the sting away. “It sounds better in ancient Greek.”

“Read it to me that way then.”

Eduard sighed but complied. The old language was definitely prettier, even if Sawyer didn’t understand a word of it.

“In English again.”

Eduard laughed, but repeated the verse again. “Anything else, your highness?”

“Stop laughing at me. And it’s weird. How did you guys make sense of it at all?”

“I think the first ones called must have understood more of the nuances of the language. You know this from your undergraduate history studies.”

“Yeah, I know. Back in the day, Shakespeare was slapstick funny and now we struggle to understand the words.”

“Exactly. So we follow the traditions they first laid out and wait.”

“Have you ever wondered why now?”

“Every day since the mark appeared.”

“Where is your mark anyway? I don’t remember seeing it.”

“On my arm.” He sat the book on Sawyer’s stomach, then unbuttoned his cuff before rolling up his sleeve. The mark was on his inner arm, just below his elbow. It looked like a tattoo, dark ink against the golden tan of Eduard’s arm.

“Are everyone’s different?” Sawyer asked.

“I would imagine so.”

“That’s kinda cool. But how do you know it’s a guardian symbol and not just a tattoo?”

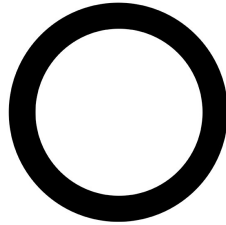
Eduard grinned and ran his thumb over Sawyer’s bottom lip. He’d been chewing on it again and between that and all the stubble, his lips were a bit chapped. “I just know.”

The words held a heavier meaning between them and Sawyer couldn’t help his smile. “Yeah,” he said quietly. “Sometimes you just know.”

Draco came rumbling back into the room and made his huffing noises. He scooped Sawyer up out of Eduard’s lap and carried him out of the room. “Any clue how long he’s going to be like this?” Sawyer called out over Draco’s broad shoulder. “Because seriously.”

“Enjoy it while it lasts, Sawyer.”

HENRY



“Is he still out there?” Henry asked.

Sawyer was sitting in the window seat of the master bedroom with his laptop on his lap. His fingers were flying over the keys. His final project was due that night and he was almost finished.

“Probably,” Sawyer said. He shook his head and turned back to his notes. He made a couple other adjustments, then closed the file. “Done. I think. Probably.”

“Just send it already,” Henry said. His voice might have had a tiny whine but he didn’t care. Sawyer had locked them in the master bedroom after Draco had gone all cave man and started carrying them everywhere. Henry’d thought it was kind of cute, except that Draco had kept making him eat stuff and his stomach had actually pooched out from all the food. Then Draco had laid his head on the bump like it was precious. It had been a *bit* over the top.

He’d done the same thing to Sawyer, but instead of just taking it, Sawyer had put his foot down. He’d pushed Draco out of the door, then shut it in his face. He’d then informed Eduard and Andvari that he had two days of work to do and that it was their job to keep Draco distracted until he was finished.

Luckily, Henry had some work to do as well. He'd been reading as many books as he could get his hands on, trying to get a better understanding of his magic and how he was supposed to use it to keep the chosen one safe. Now that he understood he could take some of the magic from the other guys to add layers of protection to the wards, he wanted to do it. But he figured there must be other abilities he'd yet to figure out, especially ones involving the other elements. His magic was related to air, and he had a solid familiarity with earth magic, as shifters were all connected to that element. Both Draco and Eduard were fire elements, which he was somewhat familiar with because of his Uncle Meshaq. He'd never someone whose magic was from the water element. Needless to say, he had a lot to learn. He wouldn't be a guardian who just did wards and had visions. Right?

“And sent.” Sawyer closed the laptop and gulped. “Oh, God. It's really done.”

“Yeah. Now can we *please* leave the room?”

Sawyer laughed and jumped onto the bed where Henry had sprawled after he finished the last chapter in one of his books. He straddled Henry's hips and gave him a wicked grin. “You sure you want to?”

Henry ran his hands up Sawyer's thighs with a grin of his own. “*Now* you get frisky.”

“*Now* I'm horny. Should I release the kraken?”

“If that's code for let Draco in here to fuck us stupid, then yes, release away!”

Sawyer laughed and jumped to the side before rolling off the bed. Draco was sitting on the floor in the hallway, his face a huge scowling pout.

“Want to punish me for being a bad, bad boy?” Sawyer teased.

Henry cackled.

Draco’s scowl deepened. “Maybe,” he said.

“My project has been submitted. Come celebrate with us.”

Draco climbed to his feet, his scowl steady on his face. “You shouldn’t have locked me out.”

“You were going to keep me sitting on your dick for *days* at the rate we were headed, and as much fun as that sounds, I really didn’t want to miss my final. You know how important it is to me.”

“I know.”

“So, admit that you were being a little over the top so I had to do it to get my work done. And the moment I finished, I came to find you.”

“That helps.”

“Good.” Sawyer smiled up at him, then wrapped his arms around Draco.

“You really thought I was going to keep my dick in you for days?”

Sawyer arched a brow and Henry choked back a laugh. “Look me in the eye and tell me that wasn’t what you were planning.”

Draco looked away.

“Exactly. But now my project is done and Henry’s finished his magic book so we’re both free and clear for you to stick your dick back where you want it.”

“You’re delightful today,” Draco snarked.

“Of course I am. Are you really not going to fuck me? Do I need to call—”

Draco shut him up by plastering his lips to Sawyer’s. It worked. Henry propped himself up on the pillows and enjoyed the ravishing as it commenced. He’d just started to slip his hand into his pants when Draco pulled back and shot a frown his way.

“Don’t even think about it,” he growled.

Henry scowled and dipped his fingers lower. “What, you gonna stop me?”

Sawyer cackled and pulled away from Draco. He jumped onto the bed and flipped onto his back. He had his pants shucked down to his knees and his cock in his hand before Henry had stopped bouncing.

“Yeah, big boy. What are you going to do?”

Draco’s grin turned feral and he climbed slowly up onto the bed. He knee walked toward them, a panther on the prowl, licking his lips. His eyes glowed, burned with a brightness that sent shivers down Henry’s spine.

He remembered that big body braced behind him, pushing inside. He whimpered, gaining Draco’s undivided attention. Draco licked his lips as he reached out his hands and grabbed Henry’s ankles. With one tug, Henry was half way down the bed, his thighs spread wide. Draco pulled his shorts off leaving him completely bare to Draco’s heavy stare.

“He’s pretty, isn’t he?” Draco was staring at Henry, but his words were meant for Sawyer. “Don’t you want to touch him?”

Sawyer made a little needy sound and moved closer to Henry’s side. The moment he reached out his hand, Draco

snagged it by the wrist.

“Do you think you deserve it? Weren’t you a bad boy?” Draco’s smile turned wicked and Sawyer groaned.

“I wasn’t *that* bad,” Sawyer protested.

“Oh, I think you were. And I think as punishment, you don’t get to touch until I say you can.”

Sawyer pouted but Henry could see that he was considering his options carefully. “Okay,” he agreed.

Draco purred and leaned over Sawyer. He kissed him hard and deep, leaving Sawyer panting for breath when he pulled away.

“Now, as for you...” Draco’s attention was back on Henry.

He gulped.

Draco grinned. “I want to get you all stretched out and ready, and then, if Sawyer is a really good boy, I want to watch him fuck you.”

Henry’s cock leapt and bounced against his belly. “I’m good with that.”

“Baby wants his tight little hole filled, doesn’t he?”

Henry couldn’t say he was wrong. He bit his lip instead. Fuck, Draco was the hottest thing he’d ever seen when he got like this. Well, he was hot all the time, but when he dialed the sexy up to an eleven, Henry’s brain melted. “I really do.”

Draco ran his hands over Henry’s thighs, kneading his muscles and creeping closer and closer to his groin. His knuckles brushed against Henry’s balls and they pulled up against him. “So sensitive,” Draco purred. “Gonna shave you

clean and see how sensitive you are then. What do you think Sawyer? Should we keep him bare?"

Sawyer practically drooled over the suggestion. Henry reached for his cock, desperate for some sort of relief, but Draco grabbed his hands and pushed them down onto the bed. "Don't move them or we stop," he ordered.

Henry whimpered, but didn't argue. He really didn't want Draco to stop. He raised his hands over his head and gripped the edge of the mattress. It was too bad Eduard hadn't ordered a bed with posts or something else for him to hold onto. It would have come in handy.

"Good boy. Such a pretty little thing you are, Henry."

Draco's thumbs started moving again, creeping down his thighs and rubbing over his taint. Henry cried out, his body so hungry he could barely stop himself from coming.

"Sawyer, get me the oil. And Henry, if you come, I'm going to be very disappointed."

"I won't," Henry said. He only hoped he could keep his word.

Sawyer dribbled oil over Draco's hands and down Henry's crease. He leaned his head against Draco's shoulder and stared at his hands as they worked Henry's flesh, teasing him over and over.

Draco pressed a quick kiss to Sawyer's head, then pushed Henry's legs further apart. "Sawyer, hold onto his ankle for me. Keep him nice and wide."

Sawyer shot a wicked grin his way, then held on as Draco instructed. Henry was wide open, bared to their looks, their touch, their everything. He panted for breath, bit his lip to try to distract himself as Draco dipped one oil slick finger

against his hole. “Look at you, Henry. Such a hungry little hole. You sucked that finger right in, didn’t you? Missed my cock, huh? Sweet, sweet boy. I wanted to fuck you so badly before but didn’t want to hurt this little hole of yours. I wouldn’t have though, would I? You’re so greedy for it, Henry. Two fingers right in like you’ve been taking cock your whole life. You haven’t had one though, have you Henry? Only my cock has touched this sweet little hole. So tight I couldn’t get in there. But you’ll let me in now, won’t you? Only mine.”

Henry whimpered, his mind a whirlwind of thoughts and needs and everything. He’d seen some really good porn like this and had been curious about it. He wondered what Draco would do if he played along, said what he was thinking, acted out a fantasy he never thought he would be able to. He took a breath, another. “Only your cock, Daddy. I’ve been a good boy.”

Draco’s eyes shot to his, gleaming with a bright fire. He grinned, wicked and bright. “Oh, I like that, baby boy. I like it a lot.”

“Good god,” Sawyer said. “You almost made me come, Henry. Fuck, that’s hot.”

Henry grinned and lowered his lashes, looking up at Draco in a way he’d seen in one of the many videos he’d watched. “Please, Daddy. Make me feel good.”

Draco growled and tugged Henry’s body up, before he buried his face in Henry’s ass. His tongue licked at Henry’s hole, then stabbed its way in, loosening the tight muscle. When Draco pushed him back down and pulled Sawyer between his legs, he panted and gasped for breath.

“You be a good boy for Daddy, okay? We’re gonna let Sawyer fuck that pretty ass of yours and get you ready for me. Don’t want to hurt you.”

Henry nodded his approval.

Draco reached for one of the many pillows on the bed and stuffed one beneath Henry’s back. It lifted him up just enough, eased some of the pressure on his back. Henry bit his lip again as Draco knelt behind Sawyer and reached around to massage Henry’s thighs again.

“Open yourself up for me.”

Henry nodded, pulling his legs back and apart so his hole was on display. “Such a pretty baby,” Draco said.

He reached for Sawyer’s cock next, stroking and getting it slick with the oil from his hands. “You ready, Sawyer?”

Sawyer’s pupils were blown and he nodded. “I’m ready. So fucking ready.”

Draco held Sawyer’s cock in his fist, aiming it for Henry’s entrance. Sawyer leaned forward, the tip brushing Henry’s hole. “Stop,” Draco demanded.

Sawyer froze, his expression growing desperate. Draco still held Sawyer’s cock in his hand. He gave it another stroke, then dragged the head over Henry’s hole.

Henry wanted it in him so bad, he tried to clench against it, pull it inside, but Draco stole it away again.

“Forward,” Draco ordered.

Sawyer slipped forward again and Draco again aimed his cock for Henry’s hole. This time he allowed the breach, Sawyer’s cock slipping inside, not more than an inch. “That’s

it. Look at it Sawyer, your cock in that pretty little hole. Hot, isn't it?"

Sawyer nodded. He looked up at Henry. "So fucking hot."

"Okay, you can move now, but Henry, you are not allowed to come, understand me?"

"Yes, Daddy." Henry bit his lip, grinning wickedly as Draco's eyes flared with passion again.

Sawyer thrust into him and Henry cried out, his body filled with cock for the first time. Sawyer's head was thrown back, his neck arched as he began to move in slow deep thrusts. Draco moved from behind him, giving Sawyer's ass a stroke as he left, then he crawled up to Henry, straddling his face and blocking his view. He started to pout, but then Draco had his cock dangling right there in front of his face.

"Go ahead and suck it, baby. Gentle. Like a good boy."

Henry opened his mouth and Draco guided his cock inside, teasing it over his tongue before pushing it a little deeper. He'd never had anything this big in his mouth before. He stretched his lips around the head and whimpered at the little dribble of precome it earned him.

"Fuck, baby. Your mouth is just as sweet as your hole. Now squeeze Sawyer nice and tight for me, okay? Show him what that nice tight hole can do."

Henry squeezed his hole as Draco began to slowly thrust into his mouth. He didn't go far, he couldn't without smothering Henry or choking him with his dick, but he let him suck on the tip chasing a little more of that delicious flavor.

Sawyer's hips began to stutter and he hammered into Henry twice more before he felt the burst of fluid inside him. Sawyer trembled, continuing to thrust through his orgasm. He

held onto Draco's shoulders, only his fingers visible to Henry but it was enough for him to see the white knuckled grip he had on them to know he'd enjoyed what he'd done.

Sawyer pulled out of Henry with a groan then fell over to the side, his head on a pillow next to Henry. "Fuck, Henry. That was *awesome*."

He leaned in and nuzzled Henry's neck, then teased at his cock-stretched lips. "You gonna let Daddy have a turn now?" Sawyer whispered as he licked Henry's lips and the side of Draco's cock. "Gonna try and take that big dick of his now that I've warmed you up?"

Henry nodded and made a desperate sound of agreement.

Draco slipped out of his mouth, then leaned in to give him a filthy kiss full of teeth and tongue. He held Henry's head, not letting him move at all, just took what he wanted. It hit every kink button Henry possessed. Draco released his mouth, looking deep into his eyes as he moved his body back down and settled between Henry's thighs.

Henry had to pull his legs wider apart as Draco was bigger than Sawyer. His hips twinged a bit in protest and Draco caught his little wince of pain. He eased down, hooking Henry's legs around his hips in a more comfortable position, letting him brace some of his weight against Draco's broad back.

"Better?" Draco asked.

"Yes, Daddy."

Draco made the rumbling purr sound again, so pleased with himself. He reached between them and guided his cock to Henry's come-slick hole. "Dripping wet for me, aren't you?" Draco leaned in and whispered into his ear. "Gonna keep you

so pumped full that sweet little tummy's gonna bulge out. So full of come you'll feel it when you walk. You'd like that, wouldn't you baby? Want me to fill you up?"

Henry nodded, wanting nothing more than to feel another of Draco's loads deep inside him. Draco pushed against his hole and his rim stretched impossibly wide to accommodate him. Henry couldn't help the little whimper he made. Draco was so big, Henry really didn't think he would fit.

"Sweet boy. So sweet for me." Draco rubbed his thumb against Henry's lips, parting them before pushing it deep into his mouth. Henry sucked instinctively and Draco pushed his cock deeper. He whimpered again, this time muffled around Draco's thumb. "That's it baby. Suck it for me, nice and wet for Daddy."

Draco teased his hole open some more, pushing in another inch, then sliding out again. "Sawyer, I need more oil," he demanded.

Sawyer crawled over to him, pouring the slick onto Draco's cock, then glancing back to Henry. "You're so stretched. He might not fit." He crawled his way up beside Henry, putting the lid on the jar and sitting it down. "You're gonna need more of that. I'll keep it handy."

Draco slid forward again and Henry sucked on his thumb as the pain swelled. Sawyer reached down and massaged his stomach, rubbing him gently but careful not to touch his cock. Draco wouldn't like it if he did and they both knew it.

Sawyer leaned down and whispered as Draco pushed forward even more. "I can feel him in you, so big he's poking your belly, Henry."

Henry knew it wasn't possible, but the *idea* of it, that Sawyer could feel Draco moving inside him sent a ripple of pleasure through him. Hell, even his kinks had kinks. He clenched his ass and it sucked Draco deeper yet. He whimpered in pain, his body stretched so wide. But Draco was staring down at him looking so pleased and proud.

“Such a good boy. Took my whole cock. So proud of you baby.”

Henry couldn't believe it but Draco's hips were pressed against his ass. He nipped at Draco's thumb before letting it slip from his lips.

“So full,” he rumbled. He'd never heard his voice sound that way, sex hungry and desperate.

Draco leaned forward onto his elbows and rolled his hips. Henry gasped and bit his bottom lip between his teeth, tugging the flesh in a desperate attempt not to come. The little bite of pain didn't help. It merely sent his nerve endings soaring. “Draco... Daddy, please.”

“It's okay, sweet boy. I'll give you what you need.” He moved his hips, slowly easing out before pushing back in. It took a bit of work as Henry's channel was still tight, but he was able to thrust with the aid of the oil Sawyer had coated him in.

“So good, Henry. Fuck, you feel so damn good.”

Henry hiked his ankles up higher, opened himself wider. He wanted to feel it when Draco hit bottom, feel him pounding his way deep. Draco rotated his hips again, pegging a spot deep inside Henry's body that sent fireworks flying through his brain. His entire body spasmed and he cried out.

Draco grinned down at him, pulling back only to nail the same spot again and again. Henry lost his mind, his thoughts scattered as the most pure pleasure he ever felt flew through him. He only *thought* he was desperate to come before. Now. Now he needed to come. He whimpered, the sound almost natural coming from his lips after Draco had taken him apart. “Daddy, *please*.”

He didn’t know what else to beg. He just needed and Draco was the only one who could provide. Draco growled and bent over him again, the rough hair on his chest scraping against Henry’s chest as he fucked him raw and open. “Come for me, baby.”

Henry did as he was told, a good boy. His cock spurted his release even as Draco roared and shot a thick load into him. His cock twitched, wanting to give Draco even more to show how good he was, but he’d spent everything he had. Come dripped over his neck, had even landed on his cheek. Draco was covered, his chest hairs gleaming as he continued to thrust into Henry’s body.

With one final push, Draco gave him another load and he was so full he couldn’t imagine being empty again. He wrapped his arms around Draco’s back, holding him snug between his arms even as his thighs fell open. Draco kept his cock buried deep, plugging Henry up so nothing was able to escape.

Draco sighed, then nuzzled his face into Henry’s neck. “So good,” he murmured.

“Yeah. Really, really good.”

“Kinky boy.” Draco nipped Henry’s ear lobe between his teeth. “I liked it.”

“It was okay?” Henry glanced across the bed, wondering what Sawyer had thought, but Sawyer was sprawled across the pillow with a soft snore coming from his mouth. He also had a big smile on his face.

“More than okay. I didn’t know I liked that until you said it. That one’s for you alone though. Only your Daddy. Everyone else can find their own.”

Henry grinned and nuzzled his face against Draco’s cheek. “I like that. Something special for us.”

Draco grinned then pushed into him again. “Say it again,” he demanded.

“Daddy,” Henry whispered with a grin.

Draco’s cock thickened and he thrust gently forward again. “You aren’t going to be able to walk tomorrow.”

“That’s okay. I have a big strong daddy to carry me.”

Draco groaned and thickened even more. “Yeah, baby. Yeah, you do.”

SAWYER



The grass was cold and damp against Sawyer's bare feet. He huffed and tried to tuck his toes back beneath the blanket, but... grass. With a sleepy grumble, he opened his eyes and found himself standing in the front yard with Pearl by his side.

“Did I sleep walk you again?” Sawyer asked with a sleepy yawn.

She looked at him like he was an idiot. She'd been looking at him like that a lot lately.

Sawyer reached down and gave her head a fond scratch before noticing that her attention had become focused somewhere else. He looked, expecting to see a rabbit or something, but instead saw an old woman walking slowly up the driveway.

“What the hell?” Sawyer darted forward, but froze just inside the first ward line. If Andvari's sermons since his injury had taught him anything, it was to never, ever leave the ward lines without one of the guardians. He'd promised, and even though it went against everything his foster mother had ever taught him to let an old woman struggle alone, he waited inside the wards and watched her make her way up the hill.

“Ma'am? Do you need help?”

She looked up at him and smiled. Her teeth were slightly crooked and she had deep groove lines in her face. The cane she used was old and crooked, too, like she'd just picked up a rickety old branch from the ground in the woods to support her while she walked.

“Well, now, that depends.”

Even her voice was old. Sawyer had always found grandma voices comforting and he had no idea why. Hers was the epitome of that, a bit croaky but smoky sweet. He couldn't stop smiling at her.

“Depends on what?”

“On whether or not you're gonna be upset with me when I cross this first ward line.”

Sawyer paled and took a step back. Pearl leaned against his side. He opened his mouth to scream for the guys and she chuckled. It wasn't a scary chuckle. No evil laugh here. More like he amused her to no end.

“Well, I'm not going to lie. I'm kinda upset,” Sawyer said.

“As you should be. These wards are impressive,” she said. “Excellent work. They'll only get stronger you know. Once more of the guardians arrive, your seer will need to add more layers. There can be more than two ward lines. Should be more than two, spread further out from the house. It'll take a good bit of energy, but he can do it.”

Sawyer found himself nodding his agreement, even as she passed through the first ward without any trouble. He should probably be scared, terrified even. He really should yell for help. Definitely should. He was going to be in so much trouble.

The old woman grinned again. “You’ll be denied sex for sure, young Sawyer. And you’ve become quite addicted to your men, haven’t you?”

“Okay now, that’s just creepy. Who are you?”

She grinned and stopped just inside the second ward line. “I’ve been called a lot of things. But you can call me Mother.”

Sawyer scowled at her. “I don’t call anyone that.”

“Yes, dear. I know. Now come help an old woman.” She moved the final steps and crossed the inner ward.

Sawyer hesitated, but Pearl ran forward and sat quickly by the woman’s feet. She received a nice pat on the head and ear scratch for her trouble.

“Your baby girl is delightful. Such a wonderful friend, Sawyer.”

“She is.” Anyone who thought Pearl was great couldn’t be all bad. Could she?

“Come along, Sawyer. You’re dawdling. I can’t abide dawdling.”

“Yes, ma’am.” Sawyer walked slowly forward until he reached her side. His heart was pounding in his chest and his palms were a bit sweaty. Was this it? Had he just walked to his doom?

“So dramatic,” she huffed before reaching out to hook her hand into the crook of his elbow. “Walk with me.”

They walked along the inner ward with Pearl racing ahead, sniffing the ground for any possible problems in their path. Of course, there weren’t any but she made an excellent scout.

“I’m pleased you figured out your truth so quickly, young Sawyer. I’d expected it to take longer. Then again, I hadn’t expected the dark ones to make a move on you directly, either. I don’t like it when the way is blurred.”

Sawyer nearly stumbled, but was able to retain his footing without tripping them both up. “So... it really is me.”

She grinned at him and gave his arm a squeeze. “Of course it is.”

“Oh, wow. Just... wow. Really?”

“Sweet boy, who else could it be?”

Sawyer could think of about a thousand guys more qualified, and he didn’t even know a thousand guys. Pretty much anyone would be more able than him, right? He didn’t even have super powers or lots of money or experience or... “Ow!”

She’d pinched the inside of his arm, right on the tender spot. “Stop that. You’re exactly what you need to be.”

“You’re sure?”

“I don’t make mistakes.” Her eyes twinkled and she grinned that crooked smile at him.

Sawyer sputtered. “You... wait... you? You? You!”

“And he’s got it. You’re a bit slow sometimes, aren’t you? Well, in your defense it is the middle of the night. I do love this time though, young Sawyer. It’s so peaceful when the world around me is taking its rest. Leaves me time to just listen and learn.”

Sawyer thought he might be hyperventilating. If she was... then that meant... “Goddess?”

“I told you I prefer Mother.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“And you still don’t like that word.”

Sawyer laid his hand over hers where it rested on his arm. “No, I like that word a lot. It’s special. And... so are you.” He gulped. “Mother.”

“Oh, sweet boy. You are just the heart this world needs. So full of love. That’s the key. You’ll need that love to do what must be done. You’ll find your loves and it’ll make you so strong. Trust in it, Sawyer. Trust in them. With your whole heart.”

Sawyer glanced toward the house and the upstairs window where the men in his life were sleeping. “I do.”

She gave his hand a gentle pat. “It won’t be easy, what you must do. Nothing easy is every worthwhile. But you can fix the tears, Sawyer, mend the things that have gone unaided for too long.”

“How? I can’t work magic so how can I fix it? I don’t understand.”

She huffed and gave the ground a whack with her cane. “I’m not allowed to say more. Why do we impose these silly rules on ourselves? But all of the old ones agreed that free will was important. We can encourage and guide, but not direct. And this, this requires an even more delicate hand. I’ve moved the pieces around on the board for you, sent you the most powerful guardians. The rest are coming. Open your heart to them and you’ll find the way is easier.”

“I think the rules are silly, too. It’s so annoying when you can’t just say.”

“Isn’t it, though? But then, where’s the adventure, Sawyer? You have so much to learn and explore. Even a few mistakes to make along the way. But they’ll be yours to make and own, not mine. Love is the key, Sawyer. Trust in it.”

Sawyer groaned. “It’s so cheesy.”

She cackled and tapped the ground again with her cane. “Oh, you are so precious, Sawyer. I’m so glad it’s you. I—” She paused, turning toward the woods that ran behind the back of the house. “Sawyer, run. Inside. Now.”

“What? But what about—” Before he could finish, she’d dropped her cane and transformed into a huge white stag. The rack of horns on her head stretched wider than he could reach and were deadly sharp. “And you can take care of yourself. Got it. Pearl, come!”

Sawyer turned and bolted for the house, circling for the front door even as he heard her crash through the trees at the back. He flung himself inside, shutting the door once Pearl was safe in as well, then bolted for the stairs.

“Draco!”

Draco was out of the bed in a flash of movement, his naked body fierce even in its vulnerability. “Sawyer?”

“Dragon form. Outside. Go. Protect the stag.”

He didn’t hesitate, but ran for the turret stairs and moments later Sawyer heard his answering roar. Andvari appeared at his side next. “What is happening?”

“Outside. Don’t hurt the stag.”

Andvari ran for the stairs as Eduard burst into the room.

“I’m fine,” Sawyer said. “Stay with Henry.”

He ran for the turret stairs, going up to the tower. The sky was just bright enough for him to make out the shadow of Draco's form flying high above the trees. Andvari had his sword out and paced just outside the outermost ward.

"Anything?" Sawyer called down to him.

"Something was here," Andvari answered. "But not now. Do you want me to follow?"

"No." Sawyer glanced up at the sky again. Draco shot a burst of fire through the air, but not down at anything. It was more a frustrated snarl than anything else. Sawyer understood completely. He returned his attention to Andvari. "Come back inside. We'll be down in a few minutes."

Andvari nodded, then disappeared around the side of the house. Sawyer watched Draco soaring through the night sky, his dark wings spread out wide around him. Sawyer couldn't imagine anything more beautiful. "Draco, come on back!"

The dragon twirled through the air and shot like a bullet toward the turret. Sawyer couldn't hold back his grin. What a showoff. Draco landed against the ledge with a thump of clawed feet, then pranced further into the open area. His eyes were huge, the flames he'd seen several times now in Draco's eyes as a man repeated in his dragon form on a larger scale.

His body was larger than one of the Clydesdale horses Sawyer had seen at a parade a few years ago. Part of him had been expecting Draco's dragon to be huge, and he was... but not on a giant scale. No, he was about seven feet tall and maybe double that from his nose to the tip of his tale. His wings, which he'd folded against him as he landed, were larger still. Sawyer certainly wouldn't want to mess with him, especially considering the size of the claws on his feet.

“You’re gorgeous,” Sawyer whispered. He reached out to touch Draco’s side, slowly, in case he didn’t want to be touched. But no, this was his Draco, so he pushed up against Sawyer and huffed a burst of smoke through his nose. “Okay, okay. I’ll pet you.”

His skin was rough and felt like hardened armor. He had just enough light to make out a jumble of colors and wondered if his skin would glow in the sun. Sawyer ran his hand all the way down Draco’s side, then stepped over his big tail, only to continue his path back up to Draco’s long neck. “Stunning,” he whispered.

Draco lowered his neck and pushed his head against Sawyer’s chest.

“I need you to switch back for me, okay? Got something I need to tell everyone, and I want to tell you first.”

Draco leaned back and from one breath to the next he was human again. He pulled Sawyer into his arms and held him close. “What happened?”

Sawyer sighed. “I’ll tell everyone the whole story at once but... I have some good news?”

Draco frowned. “Why don’t you sound happy then?”

“Because I’m scared.”

“Of what?”

Sawyer tugged Draco closer and nuzzled his face into Draco’s neck. “Just am.”

“I won’t let anything happen to you.”

“I know you won’t. And now you even have a better reason.”

Draco scowled and pushed him away. “I need no reason to take care of you. I love you, Sawyer. That’s the only reason I’ll ever need.”

Sawyer would love to say that the first confession of love he received was met with joy and happiness. And it was, but he handled it by tearing up and throwing himself back into Draco’s arms. “I love you, too.”

“Well good. Now tell me what’s wrong. You’re making my dragon crazy.”

Sawyer sighed and leaned back once again. “I’m the chosen one.”

Draco frowned and looked at him like he had spouted horns on top of his head. “What?”

“Chosen one comma the. That’d be me.”

He didn’t think Draco’s frown could get any deeper, but Draco had always had the ability to scowl like a champ. “Sawyer—”

“It’s me. I’m him. Destiny has spoken or whatever.”

Draco clearly thought he’d lost his mind. It was okay. Sawyer kind of wondered if he’d lost it, too.

“Come inside. I want to tell everyone else, but I wanted you to know first.”

Draco linked their fingers together and they walked down the flight of stairs and into the master bedroom. The rest of the guys were sitting on the bed, waiting for their return. Sawyer gave Draco a gentle push toward the bed. His dragon wasn’t impressed, but went and curled up around Henry.

“Sawyer?” Henry asked. He glanced down at Draco and then back. “What’s wrong?”

“Well... okay, where to start.”

“The beginning normally works,” Eduard said with a small smile. He looked worried, too.

Sawyer sighed. “So I guess that would be the other day when you read me the prophesy. By the way, it was really sexy when you read it in Greek, too. I don’t think I told you that.”

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome. Anyway, so Eduard’s sexy voice aside, I couldn’t stop running the words through my head and I started thinking... maybe you guys had possibly missed something in translation. Eduard reminded me of it, that we hear stuff now that was written a long time ago and we don’t understand it. And then I remembered one of my English professors, he wrote this sentence on the board and it had a bunch of different meanings depending on which word you gave emphasis to. It’s one reason English is such a difficult language.”

“Get to the point,” Draco said.

“Oh, stop being such an ass. I want you to hear my train of thought so you can decide whether or not I’m crazy, except after tonight, I’m either actually really crazy or...”

“Sawyer. Enough.” Andvari stood and crossed the room to him. “Tell me.”

Sawyer stopped his worried pacing and met Andvari’s zen master gaze. “There was one part that really stood out to me. *Nothing will stand in their way.*”

“Okay. What jumped out at you?”

Andvari was so calm about everything. Sawyer reached out and touched him, just to ground himself in the moment. “Nothing. I mean, the actual word. *Nothing*. It can mean

multiple things, right? Nothing. Zero...” Sawyer paused and drew in a breath, but Andvari had followed his line of thought. It showed in the way his eyes widened just a bit and he took another step toward Sawyer.

“Null.”

“Yeah.”

Andvari turned to Eduard. “Do you have the original translation?”

“Downstairs.”

“Go get it.”

Eduard rose from the bed and hurried downstairs. He’d developed a puzzled frown as well. Henry was the only one who still looked completely confused. Then again he also looked half-asleep so Sawyer couldn’t blame him. He’d been thinking on this for a while and still thought it sounded crazy. Draco was staring at Sawyer with a mix of hope and fear, like he couldn’t bear for Sawyer to be wrong. Eduard ran back in with the leather book in his hand. He opened it to the pages with the prophesy and held it out to Andvari.

Andvari read it, then scowled. “Henry, where is your laptop?”

“Downstairs, but I have the new tablet Draco gave me in the drawer.”

“Grab it for me, would you? I need to look something up.”

“Sure.” Henry rolled to the side and took the tablet out of the bedside table. He got it opened up, then held it out. Sawyer went and got it for him, ready to use the keypad as Andvari pointed to a specific word in the translation.

“Look this up.” Andvari traced his finger over the world τίποτα.

“I have no idea how to do Greek letters.”

Andvari took the tablet and typed while Sawyer looked on. *Define Greek tipota.*

The results took less than a second to load. Andvari checked a couple links, his scowl deepening by the second until he finally found a Greek dictionary. It defined tipota as nothing. And also nil, naught, and zero.

Sawyer caught the tablet when it slipped from Andvari’s fingers.

“Yeah, that’s what I thought. But then I thought it was just wishful thinking on my part because *really*.”

“But it’s not, is it?” Andvari asked.

“Nope.”

Eduard took the tablet and read the page as well. He gave a startled gasp and turned wide-eyed to Sawyer.

“Surprise!”

“What’s going on?” Henry asked.

Sawyer turned to him and sighed. “I’m the chosen one,” he explained.

“You are not!”

“Am, too.”

Henry was the only one who seemed excited. He shoved Draco’s head out of his lap and leapt off the end of the bed. He plastered himself to Sawyer’s front and let out a whoop of laughter. “That is so cool!”

“Yeah.” He couldn’t help but smile at Henry’s excitement. He pulled him in for another hug, then decided he’d better share the rest of the story. The guys looked like they wanted to believe him, but were still not entirely convinced. “There’s more, if you want to hear it.”

“Please,” Eduard said. He looked like he was about to fall over.

“So, um, I woke up earlier and I was outside in the front yard. Pearl was with me, and there was an old woman walking up the hill.”

Draco sat up, his attention full caught.

“She confirmed for me that I’m the chosen one.”

Eduard looked skeptical, especially considering that Sawyer had come inside and sent the others out due to danger.

“It was the Goddess. She told me to call her Mother. Isn’t that weird? But... it was her. And I’m him.”

“Holy shit,” Andvari said.

“I need a drink,” Eduard added.

“The Mother visited you?” Draco asked.

“Yep. Said it hadn’t taken me very long to figure it out and she was impressed. She told me some other stuff, too, but that’s... I don’t know. It’s for me, you know?”

“You actually met the goddess,” Henry said with his voice full of awe. “Cool.”

“At least one of you thinks so,” Sawyer said. He’d hoped for a better reaction, maybe even a touch of excitement. He’d wanted them to be happy we wouldn’t be forced to leave after the chosen one arrived and that what they’d been building

wouldn't be torn apart. He wasn't expecting Draco to turn pale, for Eduard to pour himself a glass of scotch, or for Andvari to slow his breathing so completely he might as well not be moving.

Not surprisingly, it was Draco who recovered first. He climbed off the bed and came to stand in front of Sawyer. "This doesn't change the way I feel about you," Draco said.

"I'm glad," Sawyer replied.

Draco knelt and placed his fist over his heart. "I am Draco of the Volsunga clan, proud guardian to you, the chosen one. I pledge my life to keep you safe."

Sawyer ran his hand over Draco's hair, his breath hitching in his chest. Henry knelt next, meeting Sawyer's eyes with a bright smile before he lowered his head as well. "I am Henry of the Jerrick pack. I am guardian to you, Sawyer, the chosen one. I pledge my life and my magic to keep you safe."

He touched Henry's head, giving it a gentle caress even as Andvari knelt beside Henry. "I am Andvari, vampire of the Passarowitz clan. I am guardian to Sawyer, the chosen one. I pledge my life and my blood to keep you safe."

Besides Sawyer, only one man remained standing in the room. Eduard had his head lowered, staring into the swirling amber liquid in his glass. He tossed it back, swallowing the drink in one go, then turned to face Sawyer. "This isn't what I wanted for you. This life, the danger. But as scared as I am for you, I am more scared to do this without you." He moved to Draco's side and knelt. "I am Eduard of Arimaspia clan, guardian to the chosen one. I swear I will give my life to keep you safe, Sawyer."

EDUARD



Most people, whether human or supernatural, managed their wealth in one of two ways. They either played the long game, slow and steady wins the race. It was a lower risk game with good returns when investing for the course of a lifetime. Or there were the quick and nimble market players, buy low and sell high. Move fast and strike while it's hot. It was a more dangerous way with high risk, but the rewards could be impressive.

Eduard had done both dances over the course of his career. His father had trained him from his earliest days to watch the markets, read the news, pay attention to details that others missed. The moment he'd been called as a guardian, the responsibility of the tithes paid over centuries to the chosen one became his.

Sawyer had no idea how much money he'd come into with one simple twist of fate. Eduard knew that the zeros on the end of his account statements were impressive when he'd begun managing the funds, and he'd managed to add another couple of zeros to the end with a few shrewd investments.

Cecil knocked quietly on Eduard's office door before carrying in a tray. It had his favorite coffee and fresh scones. Cecil poured him a cup, placing it at his elbow, before giving

him a significant look, chastising him for not being in bed with the others, then leaving the office.

He'd been working since before dawn. He should still be passed out with the others. Their declarations of loyalty had turned Sawyer on big time, and he'd taken them all to bed for hours of touching and teasing and coming. It should have been enough to slow down his brain, but not even Sawyer's touch had been enough to keep the fear at bay.

He'd not hidden his initial reaction from Sawyer as well as he'd hoped, but then again, pure abject terror was a hard emotion to hide. He didn't have Andvari's ability to shut down, but if the vampire thought Eduard didn't know exactly what had gone through his mind when they realized the chosen one was a young human with exactly zero magical power, well, he was wrong. The world had shifted on its axis for all of them, whether Sawyer understood it or not.

Draco was prepared to fight any naysayers with tooth, claw, and well placed fire breathing. Andvari and Eduard knew that the bigger threats were ones they couldn't fight the old fashioned way.

They were about to enter a deadly game of politics, and they didn't even know who the other guardians were. Eduard was torn. Wait or move? If the others arrived soon, they could begin making their rounds with a fully loaded set of guardians. Then again, if the other guardians didn't react well to their new human leader, well, things were bound to get ugly with Sawyer at the center of the struggle.

And that didn't take into account the leaders of the clans. Eduard was pretty sure he could bring his father around, play to his fears of having some powerful overlord from another clan. Sawyer wouldn't be that. The griffins wouldn't have to

bow to the dragons, or anyone else. His father would appreciate that.

Andvari walked into the office with a stack of papers in his hand. “Shopping list,” he barked, slapping the pages onto Eduard’s desk.

“One, watch your tone. Two, what are we shopping for?”

“Security. We’re sitting ducks. The moment word gets out... well, we need better security.”

Sadly, he wasn’t wrong. “I’ll make it happen.”

Sawyer shuffled in next, sleepily leaning against Andvari’s side. “You got up too early,” he complained. “Come back to bed.”

“You take care of the list while I take care of him,” Andvari said.

Sawyer straightened with a scowl. “What list?”

Andvari grinned and pulled Sawyer against him. “I told Eduard he needed to get supplies to make up a fifty gallon drum of that special oil of his. The salve, too. We’re gonna need that stuff in bulk.”

Sawyer arched a brow, then pushed Andvari away. “I’m not an idiot.”

“I never said you were.”

“Then tell me what’s on the list.”

Eduard cleared his throat and Sawyer spun to face him. “It’s what we need to increase security around the property. I need to get the supplies ordered immediately.”

Sawyer sighed. “Can’t we just have one day? No one knows yet, and until then, we’re fine here. Is it wrong that I

just want *one* day to bask in this with you guys? To not worry about all the stuff I don't know? To not have to question why the two of you completely freaked out last night when I told you? One day to wallow in bed and fuck and have fun?"

"It's not too much to ask, Sawyer, but it can't happen."

"Why not?"

Eduard glanced at Andvari, who scowled and led Sawyer to the leather chairs across the room. Eduard pushed away from his desk and sat down in another. "You clearly read from our reaction that you're in danger, Sawyer. But you knew that already, because you've already been attacked once."

"And to be honest with you," Andvari added, "I don't think whoever attacked you at school knew you were the chosen one. I think they were trying to mess with Henry, scare him into not interpreting his visions correctly. They were playing a mind game with him."

"Well, it worked," Sawyer said. "The only way they knew I knew Henry was if they saw us here at the house or when Henry was down at mine. So they were close."

Andvari reached out and grabbed his hand. "I wondered if you'd realized that."

"Again, I'm not an idiot."

"And again, I know that. But you are new to this world and its possibilities."

Sawyer's glare softened, ever so slightly. "I'll concede that point."

Eduard reached for his hand. "Then know that we take our pledge seriously. We *will* keep you safe."

“Okay, I get that this world is full of dangerous creatures but... I guess I don’t understand why I’m in so much danger. Haven’t you guys been waiting for the chosen one for centuries? I mean, you said the prophesy in ancient Greek. And didn’t Henry tell me that the prophesy was several hundred years ago? That’s a long time, you know? And how come no one but me ever thought to question the language? Why didn’t the original people involved realize that nothing could have different meanings?”

Eduard sighed. This was the part he’d been wanting to avoid. “Sawyer, there are certain expectations for the chosen one. Expectations that have been building for an extremely long time, as you’ve pointed out. Hundreds of years of waiting.”

“Do you know who the sisters in the prophesy refer to?” Andvari asked.

Sawyer shook his head.

“They’re the daughters of the Mother goddess you met. They’re the ones running the show. So if you met the Mother, and she’s intervening on your behalf, that means her goddess daughters are being overruled.”

Sawyer’s eyes widened and his mouth fell open. “But... but...”

“The chosen one was expected to have powers impressive enough to combat several angry goddesses, Sawyer.”

“And instead you got me. A big pile of *nothing*.”

Andvari moved from his chair and knelt at Sawyer’s feet. “And yet, as frightened as I am for you, I trust in the Mother. Don’t you? She must have given you something, Sawyer, some clue that gave you the confidence to tell us. And when

you came in that room last night, I jumped at your command. Draco didn't take a breath before he did as you asked. You were born for this. Please believe it."

"He's right," Eduard added. "My entire way of thinking of myself as a guardian changed last night. I grew up thinking that my powers of money management would be the only use for the chosen one, that his or her powers would make my own seem negligible. I provided the cash, as griffins do, and that would be my contribution. But you're going to need my physical strength as well, and my griffin is eager to step up to the challenge."

Andvari grinned. "And I think that my vampire side is as eager for the upcoming battle as I am to taste the blood pumping through your veins. Can you guess how eager that makes me?" As he spoke, Andvari had pulled Sawyer forward and out of the chair. He ended with him straddled across Andvari's lap, proof of his desire separating them only by thin layers of fabric.

Sawyer's pupils widened as desire filled him. His breath quickened, that sweet gasp that Eduard was beginning to cherish. This hadn't been in his plan either. Insatiable desire to just touch Sawyer, be inside him. The prophesy definitely hadn't mentioned how hungry he would be for the chosen one's touch. He wondered what else the words he'd been living by for so many years had neglected to mention.

"That's a whole lot of eager there, Andi," Sawyer teased.

He got a flash of fang in reply but it just made Sawyer groan and tilt his head back to expose his throat. The young man toed the line of danger and seemed to come away unscathed. Each of their beasts wanted to devour him, but only in the most pleasurable ways.

“My name is—”

“Andi,” Sawyer said again. “So speaketh the chosen one. From here to forever more, Andvari the vicious vampire will be known as Andi.”

“And Andi will bite you if you tell anyone else to call me anything but my name.”

Sawyer grinned and licked and Andvari’s lips. “Do you really hate it?”

Andvari hummed as Sawyer’s tongue teased oh so carefully over one of his fangs.

“Mostly,” Andvari groaned.

Sawyer moved to the other side, his tongue continuing its dance with danger. “So you’ll let me call you Andi?”

He groaned and pulled Sawyer more tightly against him, his fingers gripping Sawyer’s hips as he began to rotate his own hips beneath him.

Eduard couldn’t hide his grin. He watched Sawyer taking the warrior vampire apart with mere strokes of his tongue. Sawyer had his own kind of magic, even if it wasn’t the kind they’d been expecting.

“Only you and Henry. I’ll gut anyone else.”

“Deal,” Sawyer said. He nipped his tongue on the end of Andvari’s fang, then shoved it into the vampire’s mouth. Andvari made the most desperate sound Eduard had ever heard and began to undulate desperately beneath Sawyer’s legs.

Eduard slipped over to his desk and snagged the ancient dagger he used as a letter opener. “Andvari, hold.”

The vampire froze, holding Sawyer tightly in his grasp. With one deft swipe, Eduard split the seam of the sleep shorts Sawyer had pulled on before he came downstairs. He was still so worried about Cecil catching a glimpse of his naked body.

Andvari opened his eyes, even as he still nursed at Sawyer's tongue. He had a desperation in them and Eduard grinned wickedly as he pushed the chair at Sawyer's back away and knelt behind him.

He ran his fingers over Sawyer's chest, then down his abs, earning him a whimper from Sawyer. Down further, to where their stomachs pressed together, then further still to the edge of the loose fitting pants Andvari wore for his morning workouts.

He pushed the waist down, tucking the band beneath Andvari's full balls. He couldn't move them further, not from the position they were sitting, but he'd accomplished his mission.

Andvari leaned back, impossibly far, his flexible body and incredible strength on full display. His cock slipped from between them and Eduard pulled it down, giving it a nice hard stroke before Andvari slowly lifted himself up again.

Eduard guided Andvari's cock to Sawyer's hole, still slick with the salve Eduard had sneakily applied before he came downstairs earlier. Knowing he could touch Sawyer while he slept had given Eduard a hard on it had taken his hand and a hot shower to relieve. He'd be discussing his desires later, because although Sawyer had readily agreed to all of their attentions, taking him in his sleep required clear consent beforehand so Eduard didn't feel like a complete creeper. But oh, how he'd wanted to just ease Sawyer's cheeks apart and tease his way inside his hole. It hadn't quite recovered from

their last round of fucking, the oil and come still thick on his thighs, and it would have been so easy to just slip inside him.

Now that he thought of it, Sawyer must have cleaned up a bit from the night before but he'd reapplied the salve himself. That thought sent another shot of lust through Eduard. Sawyer's sweet fingers teasing at his own hole, trembling as he felt how loose and sensitive he was.

Eduard hitched a breath and leaned forward to brush his aching cock against Sawyer's back. Andvari was moving him up and down, powerful thrusts rocking Sawyer's body as he moved. Andvari proved his incredible strength once again, lifting and lowering Sawyer with the same precision he used to wield his giant sword.

He fucked Sawyer with brutal efficiency, slamming forward with force that should have hurt, but Sawyer writhed and begged for more. When Andvari approached his release moments later, he pounded up as he came, his strokes barely faltering. He slowed down, then caught Eduard's eye as he removed one hand from Sawyer's hip and placed it on the ground behind him.

His back arched beautifully, his perfect abs providing an angled bench for Sawyer to drape himself over. As Andvari's softening cock slipped from Sawyer's gleaming hole, Eduard was eager to replace it with his own. It only took a moment for him to unfasten his pants and push them down to his knees. He gave himself a stroke, enjoying the view immensely.

Sawyer hadn't found his own release and was still humping himself against Andvari's muscled abdomen. Andvari urged him up enough for him to have access to Sawyer's mouth, where a small trickle of blood escaped from

the little cut on his tongue. Tongues were always such bleeders, a fact that Sawyer had clearly known.

As Andvari suckled at his mouth, Eduard slid his aching cock into Sawyer's hole. It clamped down around him, earning another delicious whine from Sawyer's throat. Andvari supported them all, his arm muscles bulging as Eduard began to pound into Sawyer, unable to hold back any longer.

His lion side reared to the forefront, eager to stake its claim, a proud warrior whose heritage led itself to fucking all of his mates. Eduard let part of his shift overtake him, his cock thickening and forming the tiny nubbed spines that sensitized the walls of his chosen mate's passage, easing the way for cubs. Sawyer may not be able to provide him a litter, but Eduard would do his best to try and give him one anyway.

Sawyer cried out, the nubs doing their job and teasing his insides with every stroke. Andvari moved his other hand away, arching his back more fully as Sawyer lay across him and took everything Eduard had to give.

The lion in him roared, eager to please his mates, the men beneath him both worthy of bearing his cubs. The instincts grew stronger, his cock pulsing even as it grew larger still, locking him into Sawyer's body with one last powerful thrust. When Sawyer cried out and his hole clamped down as he shot his release over Andari's stomach, Eduard came and came, his balls emptying themselves. Come leaked out of Sawyer, dripping between them in perfect proof that his mate had been well and truly filled.

Once he settled, Andvari beamed, also pleased with his performance. Eduard supported Sawyer's weight so Andvari could untwist his legs and stretch out, then he lowered Sawyer onto his waiting chest. Andvari rolled them to the side, the

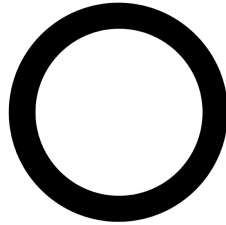
padded rug all the support he needed. Sawyer curled up against him, still panting, as Andvari licked at his lips again.

Sawyer opened his mouth, his tongue dancing against Andvari's once again, scraping his fang and providing much needed nourishment. Andvari moaned, the hunger never fully sated as he sucked at Sawyer's tongue.

Eduard stood and stretched, his lion so sated he wanted to find a warm spot to curl up and sleep. Cecil entered the room, giving a pleased look at Eduard's debauchery and handed over a tray of warm towels and a new jar of the salve.

He'd also included a sports drink for Sawyer, which he would definitely need after feeding his hungry vampire. Eduard scratched his belly, then used the warm towel to wipe himself clean. He adjusted his trousers, then tucked his shirt back into them. He had security supplies to order, and Andvari may have thought ordering fifty gallons of lube was a joke but they were clearly going to need it.

HENRY



Henry woke up with a knowing that ached its way deep into his mind. He winced, deep in the vision, and allowed it to swallow him. It was better to just disappear into it and open himself to what he was being told.

He was outside the house, in the backyard. He could see the sliding doors leading into the kitchen, but it looked like... wait, the backyard wasn't a yard at all. It had been transformed into... Goddess, Henry had never seen anything like it. A giant pool glimmered in the moonlight. Sawyer was there, standing beside it while something big swam. Henry only saw a flash of silver, but it was a really big flash.

But Sawyer... Henry whimpered and tried to reach out to him, but he was held firmly in the arms of his vision. Sawyer had been beaten. He was bruised and bloody, one eye swollen nearly shut. He had scratch marks down his side that reached to his upper hip. They disappeared beneath the loose shorts he wore.

He looked so sad, so scared, so *alone*. Henry wanted to cry out "I'm here" but he couldn't speak the words. Instead, the vision pulled him back, Sawyer disappearing in a gray mist as the pool and its surrounding features faded back into the yard Henry would see if he looked out the window now.

Pulses of light called to him, circles spread far into the distance. More wards, the circles told him. Bigger wards.

The trees swarmed with something dark and menacing, crows calling, their inky wings flapping as they warned of danger in the trees. Something hovered there, watching and waiting. The wards would help but they needed...

Lights in the distance, one burning so brightly Henry needed to shield his eyes from its glow. Others, further way, but moving toward them. The guardians. They were coming. But they had to get ready first. He knew it deep in his bones. They had needs they'd yet to meet, like the water in the back. It would be salty. One of the guardians required it.

Another spot grew in the distance, this one shimmered a coal black. He couldn't see it, but Henry knew it was there. Watching. Waiting.

The vision faded, leaving Henry with the pounding remains of a body in revolt. His stomach swirled and he grabbed the arm held tightly against him.

"Draco." He croaked out the words but they were enough.

Draco pushed up against him.

"Draco, I'm going to be sick."

Draco grumbled a noise of concern but had Henry out of bed and huddled over the toilet seconds later. He threw up nothing but bile, even as Draco roared out a complaint. It brought the others running though, while Draco supported Henry's weight and held him through the spasms.

The cool rush of Sawyer's energy landed next to him and Draco eased him into Sawyer's arms. The nausea passed, his body still spasming through the last of the angry retches.

“I’ve got you,” Sawyer whispered into his hair. “You’re okay.”

The pain continued to fade. Henry took a breath, then another, before opening his eyes. Andvari held out a bottle of juice and he sipped it thankfully. He felt like he’d been screaming but knew Draco would have woken up.

“We’ve got more work to do,” he said once the juice soothed his aching throat. “One of the guardians... he’s... I don’t know what he is. He needs a pool, a big one. Salt water. Deep. It’s... I’ll find a picture somewhere online. And Sawyer, you were hurt, but... I don’t know. And we have to set more wards. A lot of them. Something’s watching from the trees. Black and inky and creepy as fuck. We’ve gotta push it back further. It’s too close. So close. The others are coming but... Goddess, it’s not clear.”

Sawyer held him close. “Thank you, Henry.”

“I wish I could have held on longer.”

“You did plenty. And hey, we get a pool. Nice, huh?”

Andvari scowled. “That means more workmen on the property, within the wards.”

Eduard looked a bit sheepish. “I did want to get the landscaping finished.”

“Griffins,” Andvari scoffed. He’d been willing to pitch a tent on the yard in Henry’s vision. Eduard’s need for luxury was a constant teasing point between them. Andvari ran his hand over Eduard’s hair, soothing any sting from his words, before pushing to his feet. Henry snuggled closer to Sawyer, unable to forget the sight of his injuries. He had no clue when it happened, only that it was sometime *after* they put the pool

in. But then why couldn't they just not do it. If the pool wasn't there, then Sawyer couldn't...

"Stop it," Sawyer said. "You *never* keep the truth of your visions from me."

Henry looked up at him, confused. "How did you know?"

"Because I know you. You can't stop me from getting hurt by not telling me. So I'm going to get hurt. I'll live, right?"

Henry nodded.

"Then we let it serve its purpose. The Mother wouldn't allow it if it didn't have to happen. But that doesn't mean I won't fight, okay?"

"Okay."

"Good, now lets get you back to bed. You can use your fancy tablet to look at pools. Eduard, will you stay with him and figure out what we need to do? It sounds like we have to have it in place before one of the guardians can arrive, and I'd like to have everyone together sooner rather than later. This might be the time to throw around that big pile of cash we're sitting on."

Eduard nodded, pushing to his feet while Draco lifted Henry from Sawyer's arms.

"I can walk," Henry protested weakly.

"I know you can," Draco said. "But I need to see for myself you're okay."

"You don't see by carrying me. You see with your fiery dragon eyes."

"Yep. Now find us a pool. And if it happens to have a hot tub that's big enough for all of us, well, I wouldn't mind that at

all. Maybe with one of those corner seats with the jets like the tub.”

Henry snickered as Draco lowered him onto the pillows. “I’ll keep that in mind.”

“You do that.”

Draco kissed him gently before backing away. Sawyer ran his hand over his head and gave him another sweet kiss. “Get some rest and let me know if you remember anything else.”

“I will.”

Eduard climbed onto the bed beside him with Henry’s tablet in his hand. They curled against the pillows as Eduard flipped through images of luxury pools. Henry tried to focus on what he’d seen and not the bloody claw marks down Sawyer’s side.

SAWYER



Sawyer walked out into the backyard with Draco and Andvari by his side. He stared out across the empty expanse of half-grown grass until the wall of trees stopped his view. Something was out there, was it? Then he wanted to know what it was.

“Draco, how strong are you when you’re a dragon?”

Draco scowled at him. “What kind of question is that?”

“The kind that I need an answer to. What can you carry? Can you fly with me on your back?”

“Of course. And I can carry quite a bit, but not for very far. You, I could carry for a long time, but anything really heavy like... I don’t know a car or something. I couldn’t move that for miles or anything.”

“Hmm.”

“What are you thinking?”

“I’m not sure. I’m just asking questions. Andvari, have you fed from Draco yet?”

“No,” Andvari answered.

“What happens if you do?”

Andvari glanced at Draco, then back at him. “I’m not entirely sure.”

“Okay, so you fed from Eduard and that seemed to be really good for you. Or was I just imagining that he had fang marks in his neck and you looked really... strong. Was that not connected?”

“It was. Certain blood packs more of a punch. Creatures such as griffin and dragon are quite powerful. Blood freely given by them is a delicacy.”

Sawyer nodded. “I figured. Draco, do you care if Andvari feeds from you sometime? I mean, I imagine he and Eduard had something worked out in the months they spent with Henry while the house was being built.”

“We did,” Andvari said.

Draco shrugged. “I don’t mind. Not if it helps you.”

Sawyer pulled him in for a quick kiss. “Thank you.”

He pulled away and looked around again. Their view was spectacular from the top of the hill. His and Draco’s houses nestled in the valley down below. He’d not been home in days and hadn’t even realized it. Pearl had claimed a spot in the kitchen as her own. A giant dog pillow had mysteriously appeared in a nice sunny spot. It had Cecil’s name all over it. As did the bag of organic dog treats and the specialty dog food Sawyer had seen in the fridge. She was getting well spoiled.

“What are you thinking?”

Sawyer grinned. “About Pearl and how she’s gonna be Cecil’s dog if he keeps spoiling her as much as he is. Hey, could you fly with me *and* Andvari?”

Andvari made a face, not thrilled with the idea, but Draco simply shrugged. “Shouldn’t be a problem.”

“Okay, I want to see the woods. Henry thinks something’s out there, and the Goddess went after something back there, too. I want a view from above.”

Draco shifted, his dragon form appearing seconds after Sawyer requested it.

“Are you sure about this?” Andvari asked. “It will put you beyond the safety of the wards.”

“I’m not going to hide behind the wards forever. We’ve got to figure this out, and I know it’s important for me to be safe, but I’m going to have to take some risks too. That’s why I have guardians, I think. Maybe?”

Andvari ceded the point, then cupped his hands in front of him. “Let me give you a leg up.”

Sawyer glanced at his hands, unsure of what exactly Andvari wanted him to do.

“Use my hands like they are a stirrup on a saddle.”

“Um, I’ve never exactly ridden a horse before.”

Andvari sighed. “Left foot in my hands.”

Sawyer stepped closer to him and put his foot where he was told.

“I’m going to give you a boost. So step in my hand, then I’ll push you up so you can reach Draco’s back.”

Draco huffed, laughing at Sawyer even in his dragon form, then lowered one leg so it would be easier for Sawyer to reach. He kept his wings folded against his sides, so Sawyer put his left foot into Andvari’s hand and pushed up. Andvari was

strong enough to lift Sawyer most of the way up and he swung his right leg over Draco's back. He settled in with a nervous laugh.

Andvari jumped up, catching his balance on the wide expanse of Draco's back, before pulling himself up further and flipping his leg over. He moved forward so his front was pressed tightly to Sawyer's back and wrapped his arms around Sawyer's waist.

"You sure about this?"

"Yes. I don't know why, but I feel like there's something out there I need to see. The Goddess chased after something, then Henry said he saw something too. It's like... if something is out there watching us, I want it to know we know. Does that make sense?"

"It does. You can't fight what you can't see."

"Exactly. I need for this to be a safe place for me. For us. If we have to make it safe, then we will."

Andvari hugged Sawyer close hooking his chin over his shoulder. "Then let your dragon fly."

Draco huffed, then unfurled his wings. Sawyer couldn't believe how beautiful they were. His dragon skin was mostly dark, a sooty black that showed some hints of color beneath it. But his wings, they were the color of flames, reds, oranges, yellows, and even hints of blue. The sun bounced off of them, and the scales shimmered as Draco moved them up, down, and they lifted into the air.

Sawyer clung onto Andvari's arms, his thighs squeezing Draco's back tightly. He laughed nervously. "Don't let me fall."

"I won't," Andvari promised. "Just hold onto me."

Draco took them higher until the house was below them and the land all around was clear to his view. Sawyer couldn't believe it. He was flying on a dragon's back with a vampire holding him in his arms. What even was his life?

"Circle the property," Andvari suggested.

Draco made a slight turn, easing his way further away from the house. They passed the first ward and seconds later they crossed the second. Sawyer couldn't see anything. He'd hoped something would be obvious. Some neon orange sign saying Bad Guy Here. With a couple big arrows pointing at him for good measure.

No such luck, though. It was simply the area where he'd grown up. A few houses, but only his house, Draco's and the new house were on their road. A couple fields were nearby but absolutely nothing looked out of place.

They flew in a circle around the entire area, the cool wind flowing over them. Sawyer flung out his arms, knowing he was safely held by Andvari, then dropped his head back onto Andvari's shoulder.

"Faster, Draco!"

Sawyer laughed as Draco coughed out a flame, but complied, his wings flapping, then folding in as he shot downward in a dive. Andvari held him tight and Sawyer couldn't hold back his joy. He called it out for everyone far and wide to hear. He was *flying*.

He heard an answering call and turned to see a crow circling behind them. It landed on one of the electric lines, screeching out its caw. "One for sadness," Sawyer muttered. But he wasn't feeling sad at all. He was *alive*.

Draco pulled them out of the dive and pushed up again. Sawyer began to get the hang of it, feeling Draco's muscles bunching and releasing between his legs as his wings worked to keep them in the air. He understood why people loved riding horses so much. There was something so amazing about this power, knowing he could be thrown into the air in a moment, but that Draco would never let him fall. That a creature as powerful as Draco would even allow him on his back. Sawyer shivered, then reached down to pet one of the hardened scales that covered Draco's back.

He heard another caw, then another. Several crows made noise as they circled and landed beside their buddy on the phone lines. Draco continued his circle, but the crows now had Sawyer's attention. Another landed. Another. Their caws become louder, a cry that beat at Sawyer's ears even louder than the whistling of the wind around him.

He counted them as they landed in a line. Five, six, seven.... Eight.

Eight for dying.

"Andvari," Sawyer said nervously.

But before he could finish his thought another rush of noise sounded behind them. A flock of black birds, no ravens, flew at them. Bigger than any he'd ever seen. Easily three times the size of the row of crows. They flew through the air, heading for them like dark missiles against the bright summer sky. Hundreds of them appearing from the depths of the trees.

"Draco!"

Draco circled as Andvari pulled Sawyer even tighter against him.

"Fly, Dragon. I've got him."

Andvari's arm became a vice around Sawyer's chest. The muscles in his legs bunched as he held tightly onto Draco's back. Sawyer heard the swish of Andvari's sword being pulled from its scabbard.

The ravens were close now, too close. So many of them the sky grew dark. Draco jolted as one struck him in the side. Then another and another. Draco tried to steer them back toward the house and the safety of the wards, but the ravens were nipping his wings and knocking him off course.

The once smooth cadence of flying was now rocky and terrifying. His wings weren't meant to fend off attacks. Draco sucked in a breath that filled his lungs and spread Sawyer's thighs, then he blew out a huge column of fire that scorched several of the ravens in their path.

More came. Diving at them, hitting Andvari in the back. Draco breathed deep again, shooting a second wall of flame.

Andvari was limited with his swing since he had to hold Sawyer. He was able to knock a few away but he was taking as many hits as Draco was.

"Andi, I'm going to lean forward and hold on. You need to help Draco."

"Dammit, Sawyer. Stay still."

"There's too many of them. He needs help or we're never going to make it. I can do it. Protect his wings."

Andvari gave him a quick squeeze then leaned forward with Sawyer until he was able to wrap his arms around Draco's thick neck. His hide was scaled and gave Sawyer a handhold. Sawyer tucked his fingers in, praying he wasn't going to hurt Draco, then held on.

“Steady for a minute, Draco!” Andvari waited for Draco to stop moving his wings, then spun around so he was sitting backward. It gave him a better angle and a broader swing. “Fly!”

Draco flapped his wings again and took another breath. The crows were pounding his wings, trying to stop him from making it to safety, but Draco was stubborn and Sawyer knew he wouldn't let him down.

“You got this,” Sawyer whispered. “Cook ‘em.”

Draco took a breath, spewing fire in a huge arc, clearing a space in front of him for a moment. He dove through it as Andvari gave a battle cry. His sword whistled through the air, slicing through the ravens easily.

A swath of the ravens had gathered to the side and it looked like they were going to hit Draco's left wing all at once. He wouldn't be able to keep them in the air without one of his wings working. And they knew it.

“Drake,” Sawyer whispered. “Get ready to fire to the left okay. On my count.”

Draco sucked in a breath, his deepest yet, and Sawyer held on. The ravens formed a column, a solid mass of black shooting like a deadly arrow toward Draco's vulnerable wing. Sawyer held waiting.

“Three...two... one. Now!”

Draco pulled his wings back, then spun, shooting a huge ball of flame left. He hit the ravens dead on, then spun in a circle, flipping Sawyer upside down for a quick second until he righted them and shot forward with a huge burst of his wings.

He could see the house now and the first ward. Henry and Eduard were outside, and Eduard shifted into his griffin form, bursting into the air with a giant flap of his wings. Henry knelt inside the first ward, his hands thrown wide as he pulled magic toward him.

Sawyer kept his eyes locked on them even as Draco pulled in another breath. He turned his head and a wall of flame shot by Sawyer's head. Then Eduard joined in the fray. God, he was beautiful. His eagle head covered in golden feathers that matched the gold of his lion's body. His wings looked like they were spun with actual gold and they glittered in the sunlight. His claws and beak were deadly sharp and he clamped a raven in each, snapping them in two with a sickening crunch.

The wind picked up, pulling at Sawyer's hair. The ravens not right beside them began to have trouble, spinning as undercurrents pushed them up and away from Draco. Andvari kept his sword swinging to the right while Eduard flew up and to the left, breaking any raven who came close to Draco's wings.

Sawyer's panic eased. One second too soon. Andvari thumped back against Sawyer's back, pushing into him painfully. A huge raven had slipped through and hit him right in the chest. Splatters of blood flew through the air behind them and Andvari wasn't moving.

"Eduard!"

There was no way Sawyer was strong enough to hold onto Andvari, not even if he could find a way to grab him. He was pressed flat against Draco's back, Andvari limp on top of him.

"Hold on, Andi," Sawyer shouted. "Squeeze your fucking legs and hold on. Draco get us down. Now!"

Draco gave one more giant thrust of his wings then folding them in close to his body. They dive bombed for the ground, angled to reach the safety of the wards.

“Eduard, watch our backs!

Henry had been able to keep a lot of the ravens at bay. He was directing the air, swirling his arms as the ravens tried to find a way through. Sawyer held on, praying that Andvari could stay conscious long enough for them to safely land.

Finally, they shot over the first ward and the ravens smacked against the barrier with crack after crack of breaking necks. They were birds against windows, flying into the invisible barrier that refused to let anything magical cross, hurling themselves to their death in a desperate attempt to keep fighting.

Draco unfurled his wings and began to slow their approach, bringing them in to land near Henry. Eduard landed beside them, back to his human form a second later, the momentum of his flight keeping his legs running as he reached for Andvari.

Andvari managed a groan, then rolled to the side into Eduard’s waiting arms. Draco dropped to his haunches and Sawyer unclenched his fingers and slid off his back. Moments later Draco was back to his human form, bruised and obviously shaken, but whole.

The same couldn’t be said for Andvari.

DRACO



Draco fell to his knees beside Andvari's still form. The vampire had lost too much blood, the gaping hole in his chest still pulsing. "Fuck!"

Eduard clawed at his own neck, then pushed it against Andvari's mouth. "Drink. Dammit, Andvari. Drink!"

The blood pooled in his mouth, the last vestiges of consciousness having left him when he hit the ground. Draco massaged his throat, forcing the blood to comply.

Sawyer knelt by Andvari's side, holding onto his limp hand, tears streaming down his face.

Draco kept rubbing, forcing Andvari's throat to take the blood. Eduard grew pale, his blood still pouring from the wound in his neck. Draco pulled him away, then tugged off his shirt and pressed it against the wound. "Don't drain yourself, idiot. Sawyer, get up here."

Sawyer scrambled to move, his limbs clumsy. "Rub his throat. Watch me."

He showed Sawyer how he was moving, sliding his fingers up and down and helping the muscles contract. "Keep doing it, okay?"

Sawyer nodded. "Draco, is he..."

“He’s going to be fine. He’s getting dragon and griffin blood. Best vintage on the planet.”

He shifted enough for his fingers to change to claws, then sliced his own neck. He lowered his throat to Andvari’s neck, listening to Sawyer desperately beg him to swallow even as he continued to work Andvari’s throat.

“His chest... it doesn’t look as bad,” Sawyer said.

Draco’s head was spinning. He had no idea how long he’d been giving but he had to stop. But the hole was still there and that wasn’t good.

“Move, Draco.”

Henry ran from the house with one of Eduard’s daggers clenched in his hand. His knees hit the ground by Andvari’s head and he dragged the blade down his wrist several inches.

“Henry, no!”

“Move it.”

Henry’s eyes were glowing blue and he lowered his wrist to Andvari’s mouth. Sawyer was still massaging his throat. Draco moved away, collapsing next to Eduard on the ground.

“Come on, Andi. Come back to us.” Henry ran his hand over Andvari’s head and Sawyer leaned against his ear.

“We need you. Come on.”

“It’s closing,” Henry said.

Sawyer kept talking even as Draco found it harder and harder to focus. He’d given up a lot of blood and even though the wound had already closed, he was weaker than he wanted to be.

“That’s it. Come on. You can do it.”

Henry gasped and Draco opened his eyes again to see that Andvari had latched onto Henry's wrist and was pulling desperately at the wound.

"Fuck, he's going to take too much," Draco said sharply. He pushed himself up, but Sawyer had already intervened.

"Andi, let him go."

Andvari opened his mouth at Sawyer's whispered command and Henry lifted his bloody wrist away. Sawyer offered his own in return. "Here. Go on. You need more and I'm the only one left to give it."

Andvari made a desperate noise and bit down. Sawyer hissed, but rubbed his free hand gently over Andvari's head.

Draco forced himself to move, just in case, but he knew Andvari would never hurt Sawyer. He'd never take too much. He looked down at the once gaping hole and saw the patching of new skin. Vampire's healing abilities were extraordinary, at least if they had a supply of blood nearby. Draco doubted he would have survived the injury if he hadn't had the powerful blood of a dragon and a griffin on tap.

"That's it," Sawyer whispered. "Okay, enough now."

Andvari opened his mouth and released Sawyer's wrist. He looked weak, and extremely pale, but he wasn't dead. Sawyer turned to Draco and he finally saw the fear in Sawyer's eyes.

"Can you help me get them inside?"

Draco nodded and forced himself to his feet.

"Cecil!" Sawyer called for the butler, which Draco had never heard him do before, and Cecil opened the door immediately, obviously waiting for orders. "Help us get them inside, please. I can't... I can't pick them up on my own."

Draco knelt beside Andvari and helped him to a sitting position. Sawyer got under his other arm and together they guided him to his feet. Henry was able to stand, but he was swaying as he made his way over to Eduard, who was barely conscious. Cecil helped them get Eduard up and moving toward the house.

They stumbled through the front door, and Draco stared at the stairs with a grimace. Andvari was heavy, but Sawyer would want them all together and their bed in the master was the only place big enough. Draco knew he'd collapse for a while once he made it. He pulled on his reserves and lifted Andvari into his arms.

“Draco!”

“Move, Sawyer. I need to get him upstairs. Help with Eduard.”

Sawyer grunted his disapproval but listened. Cecil was barely managing under Eduard's weight so Sawyer took his place and they guided him to the stairs. Draco managed to get Andvari onto the bed without incident, then he face-planted beside him with a groan.

Sawyer guided Eduard to the bed as well, but he'd at least recovered enough to maintain his gracefulness. Eduard laid down with a quiet sigh, his eyes drifting closed the moment his head landed on a pillow. Henry crawled in beside him, sandwiching himself between Eduard and Draco.

Draco looked at Sawyer who stood beside the bed with tears in his eyes. “I've got to get Cecil to bandage my arm. I'll be right back, okay?”

Draco nodded and let his eyes slip closed. He hated leaving Sawyer unprotected, but knew he'd never leave the

house now. Hell, he might never leave it again.

SAWYER



Sawyer finally understood why Draco hadn't been able to leave his side after the mysterious attack on campus. He had barely moved from the spot by the bed, had only sat when Cecil dragged over a chair and forced him into it.

He drank when Cecil told him to, as well. Some protein vitamin shake thing that tasted like ass but Cecil swore it would help rebuild his strength. His guys were all out cold, had been for hours. Eduard and Draco had almost drained themselves dry. Henry had given more than a human probably should.

Sawyer had almost called Henry's dad for help, but he couldn't bear the thought of anyone else in the house. Cecil and Pearl were it. No one else was getting anywhere near them. He'd prayed to the goddess for the first time, too and had asked the Mother for guidance. She hadn't answered, but then he hadn't expected her to. But Henry had started breathing a little easier after that, so Sawyer knew she'd listened to his prayer.

Cecil bustled back and forth from the kitchen to the bedroom, insisting that they would all need huge amounts of food when they woke. Sawyer trusted his word, because he had no idea. He didn't know so much.

Pearl whimpered at his feet, then bumped her nose against his hand. She moved a few steps to the door, then circled back to him.

“Okay, I’m coming.”

She needed to go outside and even though he knew Cecil would let her out, she clearly didn’t want to leave him. She never did when he wasn’t feeling well, even if it was just a bad mood. When his foster parents had died, Sawyer hadn’t moved for days. That was before he had Pearl, and one of the reasons Draco had thought he should get a dog. He’d scoffed at the time, not willing to risk loving and losing anyone else.

His breath caught and he opened the back door quickly. She scooted out, then looked back at him and waited. “Okay, I’m coming.”

She wouldn’t go far without him, so he’d at least have to get out to the grass with her. She didn’t stop there though, although she did squat and water the grass. Then she turned back to him and barked playfully, dancing back and forth.

“Come on, girl. Let’s get back inside.”

She darted away though, further out, and Sawyer’s anxiety tripped.

“Pearl, please. Don’t.”

She whined, then darted back another few steps, then another. He followed her slowly, ready to reach out and snag her collar when he got close enough but suddenly she stopped. He glanced down and saw a large stick laying in the backyard.

No, not a stick. A cane.

Sawyer bent down and picked it up. Pearl danced happily around him like she was proud he was so smart. He held the

wood in his fist, clenched it tightly, then breathed more easily for the first time in hours.

“Thanks, girl.”

The goddess had warned him that it wouldn't be easy, that he would make mistakes. He'd just witnessed his very human foibles first hand and it had nearly gotten all of his guardians killed.

He turned and walked back to the house with Pearl by his side. No, it wouldn't be easy, but whatever had attacked them today was about to learn a very harsh lesson. His guardians may be tasked with protecting him, but he would revenge their wounds. He wasn't letting anyone get away with hurting them.

He marched back upstairs, the cane still clasped in his hand. He sank back into the chair, making sure everyone was still sleeping peacefully, then lifted one of Henry's magical books off the stack he'd left on the bedside table. It drove Eduard crazy that he left books everywhere, but Sawyer knew Henry really did it just to get a rise out of Eduard.

He opened the book and turned to the first chapter. He needed to get a better idea of what he was up against so what happened today never happened again.

EDUARD



A familiar hand gripped Eduard's wrist, giving it a gentle squeeze. He opened his eyes to see Cecil leaning over him with a concerned expression on his face. "What time is it?"

"Early, sir." Cecil glanced worriedly to the side, so Eduard followed his gaze.

Sawyer was sitting at a small desk beside the bed. He was sleeping on a stack of books, paler than Eduard had ever seen him, even after he'd been attacked on campus.

"How long have we been out?"

"Almost a day," Cecil answered. "I tried to convince the young master that it was normal for magical creatures such as yourself to go into a healing sleep, but it brought him little comfort."

Eduard sat up, his head spinning slightly.

"I've brought you something to help restore your strength." Cecil handed him a small glass filled with one of his smellier concoctions. Eduard had learned over the years to never question the contents. They always worked, and that was what mattered.

He tossed back the fluid, gulping it down while pretending it didn't taste like death itself.

“The young master has refused to eat. He did have one of my restorative shakes, but hasn’t accepted anything since.” Cecil rubbed his hands together worriedly.

“The others?” Eduard asked. He could see Draco and Andvari curled around Henry in the bed beside him. They were pale, but breathing easily.

“Healing, sir. Andvari’s wounds were the most serious, as you know, but Master Henry was extremely weak after his display of magic followed by his gift of blood.”

Henry’s wrist was wrapped in a white bandage which stood out starkly against Draco’s chest. Andvari’s chest was healed, his skin re-knitted and as good as new. It would have taken a lot out of him though, even with the aid of his and Draco’s blood. If they hadn’t been there...

Eduard slid his legs over the side of the bed and managed to stand without toppling over. Cecil’s potion worked its magic as he walked slowly over to Sawyer, with Cecil hovering beside him.

“It’s okay, Cecil. Thank you for looking after him.”

“Of course, Master Eduard.”

“I presume you’ve prepared quite the feast?”

Cecil’s mouth twitched in an almost smile. “Yes, Master Eduard.”

“We’ll be ready for it in a few hours. I’m going to get this stubborn fool into bed and make him take a nap. The others should be awake before long and we’ll want to have a nice meal.”

“I’ll be ready.”

“Thank you.” Pearl was curled against Sawyer’s feet and she looked up at him pitifully. “Take Pearl with you. She needs a break as well, I’m sure. Go on girl. Let Cecil take you outside.”

Her ears perked up at the word. She looked nervously up at Sawyer for a minute, then lumbered to her feet with a big stretch. Cecil followed her from the room, closing the door softly behind him.

“Silly man,” Eduard said. He ran his hand over Sawyer’s head, chuckling over the state of his hair. It looked like he’d been running his fingers through it over and over, the strands sticking up at all angles. He had a stack of papers in front of him, scribbled notes that weren’t in any semblance of order. Arrows pointed to words, which circled around to other points on the page. “Sawyer.”

Sawyer opened his eyes and bolted to his feet in one jerking motion. “Eduard!”

He flung himself into Eduard’s arms and Eduard closed them around him in a tight hug. Sawyer trembled against him, nearly overcome with emotion. “I’m fine, sweetheart. We’re all fine.”

Sawyer raised his head and looked over to the bed.

“They’re fine. Sleeping is what we need to heal. I should have explained that to you.”

“Cecil told me.”

“But you didn’t hear it from us, so it was hard to believe.”

Sawyer shrugged, then buried his face against Eduard’s chest again. “I was so scared.”

“I bet you were. Come to bed. Lie with me.”

“I’m fine,” Sawyer protested. “Go back to bed. Sleep.”

Eduard grumbled and pulled Sawyer with him. “I want you in bed with me.”

“You need to rest.”

“I know I do. And I’ll rest more easily with you beside me.”

Sawyer wanted to protest again, but he was really so tired he couldn’t find the words. Instead he let Eduard guide him back over to the side of the bed. He stripped off Sawyer’s T-shirt and shorts with barely a protest.

“What are you doing?”

“I want to be skin to skin with you. It’ll help me.”

Sawyer arched a brow and made a face at him. “You’re making that up.”

“Maybe.” He stripped off his own clothes, then pulled Sawyer against him. “But you’ve heard of sexual healing, right? They even made a song about it.”

Sawyer poked him in the ribs. “Don’t be ridiculous. We can’t have sex. We’ll disturb the others.”

“Hmm. I guess that means you’ll have to be really, really quiet then. You think you can do that for me, Sawyer? Let me get inside you, but stay so quiet.”

Sawyer trembled. “I don’t know.”

“You can do it. Come on.”

He helped Sawyer lay down on the bed. When he slid into bed beside Sawyer, he saw that he had his full attention. He reached for the bottle of salve and sat it carefully on Sawyer’s stomach.

He dipped his fingers into it, then traced them over Sawyer's soft cock. "So perfect," he whispered. "Beautiful."

"You're the beautiful ones. All of you."

"Shh," Eduard said. "You're supposed to be quiet."

Sawyer scowled at him.

Eduard responded by giving his cock a squeeze and a stroke. It thickened in his hand.

"Can I confess something to you?" Eduard whispered. He continued working Sawyer's cock as he spoke, leaning down to whisper in his ear.

Sawyer opened his mouth to reply so Eduard lifted his hand from Sawyer's cock. Sawyer snapped his mouth closed again and nodded.

Eduard began his ministrations again. "I was so jealous seeing you up there on Draco's back. Riding him. Soaring through the sky with him between your legs and Andvari at your back."

Sawyer scowled again. Eduard traced his hand lower, rolling Sawyer's balls between his fingers.

"What? You don't think it was a beautiful sight? It was. You were all stunning, but Sawyer, how you looked with your arms flung out into the sky... I wanted you in that moment. I wondered if it was me behind you up there if I could have found a way to lean you forward and bury myself in your sweet hole. Let the dragon feel us on his back."

Sawyer trembled. Eduard dipped his hand lower and Sawyer spread his legs to allow him easier access. He traced his slick fingers over Sawyer's entrance and sighed. "I have so

many fantasies where you're concerned. I should start writing them all down."

Sawyer grinned, then nodded. Eduard rewarding him by dipping a finger into his hole.

"Hmm, can I confess one of them to you now?"

Sawyer nodded again.

"I want to take you while you're sleeping. I want you to wake up with my cock deep in your ass. I'd have to wait for a night when Draco had used you good and hard, stretched you loose and open for me. Then, once you were passed out and all loose and ready, I'd come in behind you."

Sawyer bit his lip, then reached for Eduard's hand. He met Eduard's stare, then tugged his hand from between his legs. Sawyer rolled to the side, pushing his ass back toward Eduard's body.

"Oh, you like that idea, do you? I'll do it if you say it's okay. Let you wake up dripping with me and not even having to do a thing to get me off. I'd even let my lion side come out. You liked that didn't you? He liked it. He wanted me to breed you, fill you up with a litter. He's proud, my lion. Proud to be yours."

Sawyer bit back a whimpering moan.

Eduard coated his cock in the slick salve, then pushed against Sawyer's hole. He slid in easily even though he'd not taken time to really stretch Sawyer out. Sawyer needed to be filled, and Eduard would have to make sure they never left him isolated and alone like they just had. He clearly hadn't managed being alone with them well. It was their job to take care of him and they'd failed.

Eduard laid his hand against Sawyer's flat stomach and rubbed it gently. "I love being inside you, feeling your body hugging mine close. Do you know what you do to me, Sawyer? Do you have any idea how much I adore you?"

Sawyer laid his hand on top of Eduard's and threaded their fingers together. "I want to mate with you, too, you know. I... this probably isn't the best time to keep confessing my secrets, but Sawyer, you have to know. I love you. I'd do anything for you."

Sawyer rolled his head back and he angled his neck for a kiss. Eduard complied, moving his hips in a slow rhythm that matched the teasing of teeth and tongues. Eduard pulled away and their eyes locked together for a long moment. "I love you, too," Sawyer mouthed. He'd kept his promise to be quiet, but the words, and the look in his eyes said all Eduard needed to hear.

"Oh sweet boy." Eduard tucked his other arm beneath Sawyer's head, letting him rest it against his muscled bicep. The other hand he kept on Sawyer's stomach, stroking in a gentle soothing rhythm. Sawyer relaxed against him, his eyes drifting closed. Eduard kept moving, thrusting inside him carefully, rocking him to sleep with his body.

His cock thickened even as Sawyer's breathing slowed. He spurted his release, but his cock remained, holding Sawyer next to him, keeping him as close as he could. Eduard's heart pounded in his chest, more happy and fulfilled than he'd ever been. He closed his eyes and thanked the Goddess for sending him to Sawyer. He felt a tingle down his spine and smiled, knowing she'd acknowledged his thanks in her own way.

DRACO



Draco woke up hungry for food and fucking. Flames danced in his eyes as he looked around the room and found his men curled up beside him. He'd managed to be in the center of them all. Henry was against one side, curled against his chest. Andvari was behind Henry, tucked in close and with his hand resting on Draco's stomach. Sawyer was on the other side with Eduard wrapped around him from behind.

Draco rumbled, managing to raise his arms with a bone popping stretch. The bedroom door whispered open and Cecil stuck his head inside. The guy must have some sort of super power. He'd have to ask Eduard.

"Master Draco, can I do anything for you?"

"Food," he said. "Lots of it."

"Would you like me to bring it up here for you?"

"Yes." It would take entirely too much effort to get them all downstairs. And then they'd have to come all the way back up here. He planned on fucking them all, making them his again. They'd come too close to messing up.

Fingers twitched against his belly. Draco looked over to see Andvari's eyes open and staring at him.

"Dragon," Andvari said quietly.

Draco rumbled again, reaching over to stroke Andvari's face softly.

Henry made a muffled protest against his chest at the movement, then nuzzled closer. His mouth brushed against Draco's nipple and it hardened against his mouth. "Yeah, baby boy."

Draco would need to feed him, then fuck him back to sleep again. He moved his hand from Andvari's cheek to Henry's, encouraging him to suckle as he slept. "Sweet, sweet boy."

Sawyer grumbled at him from the other side, pulling Draco's attention his way. Eduard's hips were moving gently, a slow rocking that brought a smile to Draco's face. He glanced up at Eduard, finding his eyes open, pupils blown as he fucked easily into Sawyer.

The flames in Draco's eyes grew brighter and Eduard gasped in an excited breath. "Excellent idea," Draco said. "We'll need to remember it."

Sawyer had settled back down again, his body held in Eduard's tender embrace.

Draco moved again, rolling Henry away from him and into Andvari's waiting arms. Henry made a sweet little noise of protest but drifted back to sleep once Andvari closed his thick arms around him.

With a mighty yawn, Draco stretched again, then crawled down the bed and off the end. He stared back at his mates and rumbled his approval. They were all beautiful and happy and whole. But Andvari and Henry were overdressed. It wasn't acceptable.

Luckily, Andvari wasn't wearing anything but pants, his torn open shirt removed after his injury. He only wore the

loose fitting trousers he preferred which were easy enough to rip apart in the back, then pull from his legs. Andvari scowled at him, but Draco flared his eyes in warning. Andvari sighed, then helped maneuver Henry so Draco could get his clothes off as well.

Once they were all naked, Draco smiled and growled his approval. He was a very, very lucky man. The goddess had blessed him. His stomach rumbled and he smelled Cecil growing closer with their feast before he heard him. The butler entered the room pushing a cart loaded with food.

“Where should I put this, Master Draco?”

“In the sitting room.” Words were difficult for him at the moment. He preferred communicating with grunts and groans when his dragon took the lead. It was easier. His mind ran on instinct alone, and he’d forgotten how much he enjoyed sinking into it.

Cecil smiled and pushed the cart into the round area beneath the turret. It was cozy enough for them, with pillows and a nice view out the windows. His mates would be comfortable.

“Let me know if you require anything else.”

Draco nodded then turned back to the bed. He lifted Andvari, who made a growl of protest. Draco shushed him with a kiss then carried him into the sitting room. He placed him on one of the pillows, kissing him soundly once more, before returning to the bed. He scooped Henry up, rousing him in the process.

Henry thumped his shoulder in annoyance. “I want to sleep, Draco.”

“Eat,” Draco said. He sat him down on Andvari’s lap, not willing to hear any other protest.

Henry scowled and started to argue, but his stomach growled it’s agreement with Draco’s decision.

Andvari wrapped his arms around Henry and held him tight. “His dragon is in control, Henry. Look at him. His mates were injured and now he needs to take care of us. Let him do it, okay?”

Henry sighed and nodded. Draco leaned down to give him a tender kiss, his eyes flaring at Henry’s easy submission. Such a good mate.

He went to Eduard next and found the griffin waiting for him. He rolled to the side, his hard cock slipping from Sawyer’s hole. He grinned, wicked and strong, and Draco purred in approval. Yes, they’d all be fucked open soon, his griffin one of them. So strong and powerful. Beautiful.

Draco lifted Eduard and carried him into the other room, sitting him tenderly next to Henry and Andvari. Sawyer was next, his brow furrowed as he moved his hips back, seeking the cock he’d been pulled away from. Draco scooped him up and kissed him sweetly before carrying him to Eduard. The griffin had arranged himself appropriately, his cock held out so Draco could lower Sawyer back onto it.

Sawyer sighed and leaned his chest back against Eduard’s, his eyes opening in confusion a moment later. “What...”

“Shh,” Eduard whispered. “Just sit there and enjoy, okay?”

Draco filled a plate with food and carried it around to Andvari. He held some meat between his fingers and offered it to him. Andvari accepted it and smiled happily at him. Draco rumbled and handed him the rest of the plate. Henry reached

for a bite but before Draco could complain, Andvari moved it out of his reach.

“Hold on, love.”

Draco made a second plate then took it to Henry. He offered him a bite of fruit. His youngest mate had a bit of a sweet tooth and especially liked to mix his savory and sweet. Henry met his eyes as he opened his mouth, letting Draco place the plump berry between his lips. He closed them around Draco’s finger, giving them a little nip before he pulled back, taking the fruit with him. Draco leaned in and gave him a sweet kiss before handing him his plate.

Next, Eduard. He made sure to give him extra protein, as he’d need it rebuild his strength from the blood loss. He carried the plate over and held out a bite of roasted pork for Eduard, who accepted it with a pleased smile. Draco leaned in and kissed him as well, just for the hell of it. He handed Eduard his plate, then ran his hand over Eduard’s glorious sun-kissed red hair.

Then he went back to the cart for this last mate. What treats to give Sawyer? He was paler than Draco would have liked, clearly stressed out and exhausted. He piled his plate with treats and little sweets that would please Sawyer’s tendency to nibble his way through a meal. He carried it over to him, holding out a plump strawberry.

Sawyer looked up at him with a beautiful smile. “You know, a week ago, you’d have been freaking out over the germs.”

Draco managed not to pout that Sawyer hadn’t accepted his offering but only because Sawyer was smiling so prettily.

“I love your dragon,” Sawyer said. “You’re perfect and strong and so beautiful.” He sighed and leaned his head to the side. “I’m glad you’re mine.”

Draco grinned and held the berry closer. Sawyer took a bite, then reached out and grabbed Draco’s hand. He pulled him forward, wrapped his arms around Draco’s waist, and hugged him tight.

He couldn’t hide his purr of pleasure, his dragon rumbling at his mate being so proud of him.

When Sawyer pulled back and accepted his plate, Draco went one last time to make one for himself. He piled it high with roasted meats and cheeses and added a hunk of crusty bread to sop up any juices that escaped the meat. His belly grumbled, ready for him to feed it, so he moved around and sat beside Eduard.

Sawyer lifted himself up, spun around, and sat back down on Draco’s lap.

“Gonna feed me, big guy?”

Draco rumbled and held out a small chunk of meat from his plate. Sawyer accepted it, sucking Draco’s fingers clean after he plucked the meat away. “Mmm.”

Draco checked on the others finding them all with their faces buried in their plates. He grinned again, well pleased that he’d chosen the best foods for them. He offered Sawyer another bite of fruit grinning ridiculously when Sawyer accepted it. He’d never been so happy.

Sawyer reached down to the plate and picked up a slice of roasted chicken. He held it out to Draco. He couldn’t help his shiver and pulled Sawyer close as he took the bite of food into his mouth.

Sawyer squirmed around on his lap, wiggling his way so he could cuddle against Draco's chest. He let out a little sigh and relaxed completely. "I like you like this. I mean, not all the time," Sawyer said. "But caveman mate is kinda cool sometimes. You're really cute when you're all growly and non vocal. Lucky for me, I've had years of practice reading your face and know you're a happy dragon in there."

Draco stroked his hand down Sawyer's back, letting Sawyer's words wash over him, soothe his other half. He continued eating, building his strength. The others did as well. He and Sawyer continued to feed each other, his dragon growing full and content as Sawyer continued whispering his words of praise.

SAWYER



Sawyer couldn't keep his hands off of Draco. He couldn't look away, needing reassurance that he was really fine. Whole and healthy again, no longer pale and still and lying in the bed with the rest of his guardians. Sawyer traced his fingers down Draco's stubbled jaw, over his lips, then down his neck. The wound along his vein was already healed, not even a mark remaining to indicate he'd been bleeding so heavily while saving Andvari's life.

"I'm fine," Draco murmured. He turned his head and their eyes locked together. "I promise."

"I know," Sawyer answered. "You're amazing. You finished eating?"

"Yeah. You?"

Sawyer nodded.

The others were watching them as well, Henry cuddled sleepily between Andvari and Eduard.

"Can we go to bed now?" He needed to be reminded that they were alive, that they were real and here with him. He curled his fingers into Draco's hair and stared into his eyes. "Please."

“Anything you need,” Draco said quietly. He stood pulling Sawyer up with him. As they walked to the bed, the others followed, Sawyer making sure to look them each in the eye for a moment as well. He needed them all, needed more than anything to know everything was going to be okay.

He’d packed so much knowledge into his brain over the past hours, read book after book. He’d only scratched the surface. He wasn’t ready to defend them yet. He’d have to let them keep him safe until he knew more, understood more. He’d begun to see patterns though, to understand more about the things that were broken. He had no clue how to fix those things, but he’d find a way. He’d see the path once he had all the pieces of the puzzle.

“Stop thinking,” Draco demanded. He lowered Sawyer onto the bed and climbed on after him.

Henry was next, stretching out beside Sawyer and wrapping his arms around his chest. Eduard slipped in behind Henry, curling up behind him and propping his head on his hand.

Then Andvari, who’d stopped at the foot of the bed and was staring down at them with a hungry look in his eyes. Not one of bloodlust. No, Sawyer was well aware of what Andvari looked like when he needed to feed. This was a hunger for something else, something similar to what Sawyer was feeling himself. Life. He needed proof of life.

Andvari crawled up the mattress toward him, then laid down on top of him. He cupped Sawyer’s face in his hands, softly, as if he were the finest china. His hands were rough and calloused, years of sword practice making him strong.

“I’m okay,” Andvari said quietly.

“I know,” Sawyer answered. And he was. He could see that he was. The wounds on his chest had healed like there hadn’t been a gaping hole in his chest a day before. A hole that wouldn’t have been there if—

“Stop it. It’s not your fault.”

Sawyer scoffed and shook his head.

Andvari squeezed his hands slightly, forcing Sawyer to meet his gaze. “If you hadn’t suggested it, I was going anyway. I’d felt something out there before and was tired of waiting and wondering. Imagine what would have happened if we weren’t in the air, if you hadn’t suggested we go up with Draco.”

Sawyer didn’t want to think about it, that inky blackness covering Andvari without them there to help. He couldn’t bear it.

“Exactly,” Andvari whispered. “You saved me in more ways than one. We messed up, but we also got clues. I glanced at your notes. You did good work. We’re going to figure out who sent them and then—”

“They’re going to burn,” Draco said. His voice was a rough grumble, heated with the anger of the dragon inside.

Draco leaned closer and nuzzled his face into Andvari’s neck.

Henry wiggled closer, turning Sawyer’s face to him. “I made the air move. Did you see me?”

Sawyer nodded.

“I didn’t know I could do that. I mean, I’ve done it a little before, just to annoy my sisters and mess up their hair, but never... I didn’t know I was that strong. Sawyer... I helped

save you and the magic... I didn't know I could do that. But you... I'll keep learning, right beside you. We'll study and learn and figure this out, okay? We both have a lot to figure out, but just you being here... I can do this. I know I can now. You helped me see."

Henry leaned in and pressed his lips to Sawyer's, a sweet kiss that quickly grew heated. Henry backed off and grinned wickedly down at Sawyer. "Besides, I'd never have these mountains of man meat to devour if you hadn't come. Heh. Come. See what I did there?"

Sawyer laughed and pulled Henry down again. They kissed deeply, their tongues tangling. Andvari moved to the side and Henry slipped into his place on top of Sawyer, straddling his hips and thrusting their hardened cocks together.

"Oh, now that's a very pretty sight," Draco purred.

Henry pulled back from Sawyer and sat up, his hands pressed against Sawyer's chest. He bit his lip, staring down at Sawyer in a way he'd never been looked at before. "I want you in me," Henry said. "Please, Sawyer."

He really didn't need to beg. Sawyer turned to Eduard, who'd already rolled over to reach for the oil that had taken up permanent residence on the bedside table. He sat up, then pulled Henry in for a quick kiss. "I'll get him ready. You distract him."

"I'd love to." Sawyer grinned and reached for Henry, guiding him back down. Henry braced his arms on either side of Sawyer's head, gazing down at him with such... love. Hope. Happiness. It filled an empty space in Sawyer he hadn't known existed. He found himself returning the expression, hoping Henry understood. Henry's answering smile, beaming and bright, told him that he did.

Henry's focus shifted and his mouth fell open on a gasp. Sawyer moved his attention to Eduard, who met Sawyer's gaze with an arched brow and a grin. Yeah, Sawyer knew exactly what those wicked fingers were capable of and exactly what they were currently doing to Henry.

He heard another sexy noise from beside him and turned to see Andvari gasping, his head rolled back against Draco's shoulder. Draco's hand was busy behind him, his fingers just as magical as Eduard's. Sawyer could imagine exactly what was causing that face and knew it only got better from there.

Henry rose up and gave Eduard quick access to Sawyer's cock. He slicked it up, then held it in place as Henry began to lower himself onto Sawyer. Their eyes met, each of them unable to look away as Henry pushed down and Sawyer slipped inside his hole. "Fuck," Henry groaned. "You feel so damn good, Sawyer."

Sawyer lost the ability to speak. Eduard's fingers massaged his hole as Henry rode him hard and fast. Andvari had leaned down to tease at his nipple, biting and sucking even as Draco plowed into him from behind. The sensations were overwhelming. His body crested reaching for release, almost there when Draco grabbed his chin and turned his head.

"Not yet," he growled.

Sawyer shivered.

Henry moved from his position on top of Sawyer, pulled into Eduard's waiting arms. Draco crawled between Sawyer's legs, lifting them to his shoulders. He sought Sawyer's gaze, waiting for his approval even as his cock nudged at Sawyer's entrance.

"Yeah," Sawyer gasped. "Please, Draco."

Henry cried out beside him, his hand clenching at Sawyer's. Eduard had slipped inside Henry after spreading him out on top of Andvari. It was so incredibly hot, the three of them writhing together, Henry held securely between them as they took him apart. They'd caught both Draco and Sawyer's attention and Draco had stilled inside him, both of them watching the amazing scene taking place beside them.

"So fucking hot," Draco purred. He turned his attention back to Sawyer and leaned down close. "I wouldn't have this if it weren't for you. My Sawyer. Mine. Forever."

"Yeah," Sawyer promised. "I am."

Draco began to thrust inside him, even as their other three mates began to cry out as they came. Draco fucked him through it, his eyes boring into Sawyer's soul, locking them together with their bodies, but in every other way as well. Sawyer had never known sex would be like this, so much more than just physical pleasure. He squeezed Henry's hand tighter, the other gripping Draco's arm and holding on. He'd never felt so connected to anyone else, had never imagined his life would be spent with these glorious creatures beside him.

"Drake!" He couldn't hold back any more. His release soared through him and Draco held him safely as he shuddered and came. The ache of fear inside him eased. Draco eased out of his body and curled around him. Henry joined him on the other side, cuddling into his favorite position with Sawyer as his body pillow. Eduard and Andvari laid close as well with Eduard's hand on his stomach and Andvari reaching over them to rest his hand in Sawyer's hair.

He sighed, finally letting the last of the exhaustion he'd been holding at bay leave.

ANDVARI



Andvari poured his focus into his movements, his form gliding in time with his breaths. Breathe in, prepare. Breathe out, move. Repeat. The mid-air battle played in his mind until the final strike of the bullet-like beak slammed into his chest. If he'd not adjusted at the last possible second, had not had such utter control of his body, he would be dead. The bird has missed his heart by mere millimeters. There were some wounds even vampires as old and strong as he was that could not be healed. As it was, the powerful blood he'd had access to was the only reason he'd survived such a close call.

Breathe in.

He'd never trained for a battle like the one he'd just completed. Swordplay was an art, the practice going back millennia, to the first one forged. Simply put, vampires had taken to the blade from that first moment, realizing quickly the easy access to fountains of blood a well-placed sword swipe could provide. Andvari never shied away from the violent history of his people. Once they found peace among the clans, the study had changed, but even Andvari's generation learned the old ways. The blade belonged to them, in all of its forms.

He preferred a broad sword. It was a beast of a weapon, although not as heavy as many misinformed people expected.

What they required was a strong arm to heave them through the air with the precision required for accurate wounding. A blunt stroke would do damage, of course, but a well placed swipe, at the right speed and correct angle? Andvari could remove a head with a single blow. And had, in the past. He was a warrior of his people, after all.

What he'd never trained for was fighting with his weapon of choice while protecting his charge behind him while on the back of a dragon. He'd never had to contend with attacking birds while avoiding the wings of his mount of choice. He'd been unable to use many of the forms he prized so greatly. They didn't work in the position he found himself in.

Although he had failed the challenge during the attack, receiving his near fatal wound in the process, Sawyer had survived, as had the other guardians. And now it was his duty to prepare and make sure such a thing didn't happen again. He finished his forms and removed his scabbard. The leather molded to his body, well loved and worn from years of use. It had been repaired many times over the years, but never completely replaced. Until today. His expertise was needed in close quarter combat. They had a mage and a dragon's flames for longer defense. But in close combat, a different weapon was required.

The door to the gym opened and Sawyer stepped inside. He still looked tired, but the time in bed with his guardians had served him well. He smiled softly at Andvari, let his eyes drift up and down his body in appreciation, then returned to meet Andvari's gaze.

"Hi," he whispered shyly.

Andvari hung up his sword and crossed to him. "Hello."

"Are you doing your forms?"

“I just finished,” Andvari said. “I’m actually going to create some new ones today.”

Sawyer tilted his head to the side and his brow furrowed. “New ones?”

“The old ones were less than effective, wouldn’t you say?”

Sawyer’s scowl deepened. “No, I wouldn’t say that at all. You were breathtaking.”

Andvari slid his arms around Sawyer and held him close. “But I almost let you get killed. That cannot happen again. Would you like to help?”

Sawyer breathed in a huff of annoyance, but nodded. He didn’t have any of the skill necessary to actually assist, but his presence was something of a boon to Andvari’s pride. He had survived. Andvari had made sure of it, and would continue to fight with the last drop of blood in his body.

“I’ve never fought with a winged mount. It possessed challenges I wasn’t prepared to face.”

Sawyer made another of his expressive faces, this one in understanding. No one could ever doubt what he was thinking. He showed all.

“Draco’s wings prevented you from making full swings.”

“Yes. And although I could use more close quarter defenses, and did, I was still in danger of cutting him, which would have been a devastating blow to all of us.

“No kidding. And since we’ve got two guys with wings on Team Sawyer, this could very well be an ongoing issue.”

“Precisely,” Andvari said.

“So you’re going to create something new. That’s... amazing.”

“I will be working closely with our dragon and griffin to come up with new techniques that will ensure both their safety and yours should we again find ourselves in an aerial battle.”

“And we need to think about some sort of armor. Not like knights in shining type, but dude, a bullet proof vest might have gone a long way to preventing that bird from literally going straight into you. And... not to freak myself out completely here, but if it had hit me?”

“My worst nightmare would have come to pass. I will look into human armor. It will not work against magic, but a blunt force attack could be prevented.”

“I mean, look, I’m not going to leave the house dressed like I’m on some swat team or something all the time, but having a little extra insurance is probably a good idea. I’m freaked out enough by the giant sentient birds without thinking about how it was my idea to go up there completely unarmed and unprotected.”

Andvari arched a brow. “Unprotected?”

“You know what I mean. Yes, I had you and your mighty sword, and Draco and his dragon breath and body armor, but my person? A T-shirt wouldn’t have done much to help me. So... I think you should teach me. And Henry, too. I hope I’m never in another position where I have to fight like that, but let’s face it, that’s not likely. I don’t want to be helpless.”

Andvari held Sawyer a little closer. “Then I will teach you. After you eat.”

Sawyer’s stomach rumbled and he looked down at it like it had betrayed him. “Okay, tell me the truth. Can you hear it

before it growls? Because Draco always knows and I want to know if there's like advance warning or something. Some weird gurgle that I make that's only heard by like... super ears or whatever."

Andvari grinned. "You're always hungry."

"Ugh, that's what he always says!"

"Come. Let's see what Cecil has prepared for us today. The others will be rising soon, I'm sure."

"Don't count on it," Sawyer said with a laugh. "I think Henry would come down here and get your sword and stab me with it himself if I tried to make him get up."

"Our seer does prefer to sleep whenever possible."

"Eduard will be up soon, though. I bet he's going to get to work on the pool and stuff."

Andvari huffed. "I don't like leaving you so exposed."

"I know, but if one of the guardians needs a salt water pool, then I want to get it ready as soon as possible. I feel like whatever is coming... well, I think we need all the guardians here. I'll feel better once all the pieces are in place. I don't have the full picture yet, you know?"

"I understand. We will make it happen." Andvari led the way to the kitchen, where Cecil was busy putting another of his trays together.

"Morning, Cecil," Sawyer said with a smile. "Smells yummy in here."

"Good morning, Master Sawyer. I prepared you a restorative drink."

Sawyer sighed and Andvari had to bite back a laugh.

“Cecil, buddy, I appreciate you more than you know. I swear I do, but do those drinks *have* to taste like you dug up something dead and marinated it in sewage?”

Cecil’s lips twitched, but he managed to keep his butler cool. “I prefer to marinate in the blood of our enemies, sir. Shall I change to sewage?”

Sawyer burst out laughing as he accepted the small juice glass Cecil held out. “I suppose not. But I really don’t want to ask what is in this, do I?”

“Every butler has his secrets.”

Sawyer chugged the drink, then sat the empty glass on the counter. “Oh, that’s horrible.”

“Yes, sir. Brunch is almost prepared. Shall I serve in the dining room?”

“Nah,” Sawyer said. “The breakfast table will work. We don’t need that much space.”

Sawyer skipped around the counter and sat down on the floor beside Pearl. She was spread out on her dog pillow but raised her head happily at his approach.

Andvari glanced at Cecil, who was smiling at them both in a dotting way. “It’s been a long time since you’ve had so many people to care for, isn’t it?”

Cecil smiled and turned his attention back to the breakfast tray. “It has. I believe I will take you up on your offer of assistance, though. I don’t want to leave Master Eduard’s estate too understaffed. The housekeeper there will manage fine in my absence, but I don’t want to leave her at a disadvantage. It is a large property with many valuables which require special handling.”

“I’m sure it’s a museum,” Andvari said. “Tell me what you need and I’ll bring some of my people in to assist. I trust them with my life, and with Sawyer’s.”

“Thank you, sir. A housekeeper would be helpful. I am bringing the chef from the estate. She will arrive later today, and can travel with us as needed. I will also bring one of the head gardeners to help with the new building project. He will bring some of his staff as well, but I have arranged other accommodations for them. Anyone allowed inside the house will be carefully vetted, of course.”

“I’ll make arrangements right away. I would also like to bring some of my clansmen in to serve as security. We’ll need to provide accommodations for them as well.”

“Someone can stay at my house,” Sawyer said. He hadn’t looked up from his position on the floor, staring down at Pearl as he stroked her neck. “Draco’s too, probably. We’ll have to check with him. I... guess I need to think about moving in here, don’t I?”

Andvari crossed the room and knelt down beside Sawyer. “Whatever you need, Sawyer.”

Sawyer reached out for his hand. Andvari laced their fingers together and sat down beside him on the floor. Sawyer leaned against him, letting out a long sigh as he did. “I don’t want to think about all this but I guess I have to. I’m not... I don’t know how to manage staff. I don’t know what to do with a house full of people. I don’t know when I’m going to wake up and find out all this was just some weird, stress-induced dream and I really don’t have a bunch of creatures from myth and legend both fucking me and trying to kill me. I’ll wake up and won’t be falling in love with four guys at once and won’t know what it’s really like to fly on a dragon’s back while my

sword-wielding vampire strikes down attacking ravens. You know, just some weird dream because I ate too much hot sauce on my Thai take-out.”

When he said it out loud, Andvari actually realized just how much Sawyer had experienced in such a short period of time. It was a wonder he hadn't lost his mind or run away screaming. Andvari believed to the depths of his soul that Sawyer was born for this role. He'd make it work, even if they did have to learn to cook their own food or do their own laundry. They would do it if it made Sawyer happier.

“What can we do to help? We don't have to bring in additional staff, you know. We can do—”

“No, that's not what I'm saying. I know what Cecil does. He makes things better. Thank you for that, Cecil. Seriously. I can't tell you how much I appreciate what you've already done. And I know that I'm about to take on more than I can imagine. I'll figure it out.”

Andvari leaned his head over and touched his forehead to Sawyer's temple. “We'll figure it out together, love. As the saying goes, how do you eat an elephant?”

“Eww. You don't. Elephants are glorious creatures who... oh my goddess. Are there elephant shifters? Because please, please, please let me have an elephant shifter as a guardian. How cool would that be?”

“I do not believe such a thing exists,” Andvari said through a laugh. “Although if they did, I have no doubt one would be called to your service.”

“Damn,” Sawyer said. “Although I suppose a vampire, a dragon, and a griffin are, you know, more amazing than an

elephant. Probably. Elephants are awesome. Oh, are unicorns a thing?”

“Anything is possible.” Andvari believed that, especially where Sawyer was concerned.

The others drifted in as they woke, surrounding the breakfast table and munching on the brunch feast Cecil placed before them. Andvari stayed by Sawyer’s side, basking in the moments of peace as they found them. Dark times were ahead. Challenges were before them. Other guardians had yet to arrive, and their addition to the household would keep things in turmoil.

But in all that, he’d found moments like these. Moments where Sawyer sent him a beaming smile as he popped a grape into his mouth. Draco sneaking a grope under the table while pretending to concentrate on every word Eduard said. Henry’s eyes catching on his chest, and when he flexed, Henry’s resulting catch of breath. Those were the moments that brought him hope. As long as they were together, things were going to be fine.

The End

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Macy Blake believes in unicorns and fairies, in moonbeams and stardust, and that happily ever after comes in all colors of the rainbow. When she's not busy at the day job, she loses herself in paranormal romance, living vicariously through her favorite sexy fictional heroes. These days you can often find her pounding away at the keyboard, trying to capture the magic of her own worlds.

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