

Cynthia Sax

*Dragon Lord's*  
**MATE**

Changeling Press

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## **Dragon Lord's Mate**

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**There comes a time when even princesses have to give up their dream men.**

**Every night in her dreams, Princess Taja experiments sexually with a dragon lord. She knows he isn't real. Her fantasy man is pressing her for a commitment, something she can't and won't give. She needs a flesh and blood man to safeguard her kingdom, not a man her lonely heart conjured up. When the line between dream and reality blurs, will Princess Taja find love?**

## Prologue

Taja's body trembled with anticipation as she glimpsed the black dragon. She'd waited four long nights, concerned he might not return. The thought was unbearable and the worry unwarranted. He was here.

Smoke drifted between them. When it cleared, the dragon was gone. In its place, there was a man. He walked toward her, clad only in black leather breeches, his powerful chest crisscrossed with scars. Although Taja called out in welcome, her words made no sound, the silence eerie.

He bent his head and kissed her, his mouth firm and heated and demanding, his nostrils flaring, his breath hot against her cheeks. His callused hands ran down her back, touching her as though she was frail and precious, seeing her the way she never thought she wanted to be seen.

Taja touched him greedily. She traced the scar on his face running from his left eye to his chin. She'd never realized she liked her men so battleworn. He stared at her, lightly touching her on the face and neck and arms as though reassuring himself that she was real.

He slipped the straps of her nightgown down her shoulders. She shivered with delight, her nipples puckering. He smiled slowly. Her breath caught at the unusual sight. He was normally so grim. He cupped her right breast, and she gasped as his rough thumb swept over her nipple. Taja arched, her fingertips digging into his shoulders.

His hard cock pressed against her. Would tonight be the night that he joined with her, the way she'd seen animals join with their mates? As though answering her

unspoken question, he lowered her onto the ground unlike any other ground, soft like a featherbed beneath her. His body was over hers, propped up by a muscular arm.

He stroked her from her shoulder, over her breasts, to the curve of her hips. She did the same, tracing his scars down to the breeches. She pouted when she reached the waistband, sliding her hands as far as she could. Then in a blink, his pants were gone. She laughed silently at the magic.

With those dark, almost black eyes twinkling, he rolled onto his back, his arms folded behind his head, his body laid out for her to explore. She pressed her fingers against the vein on his neck, feeling his pulse. Taja kissed the deep scar on his right shoulder. She pinched his flat male nipples, fascinated by how they tightened, like hers yet not. His stomach muscles rippled under her palms. And then as she curled his coarse hair around her fingers, there was his cock.

She stroked him, reveling in the textural contrasts. Did all cocks feel like soft skin over marble? She didn't know, having never touched another naked man. Taja swirled the precum on his cockhead down the shaft, smiling as he lost an ounce of his control and thrust forward into her hand. She licked from the head of his cock to its base, on top and then again underneath. His body vibrated as if with a groan. Taja pulled one of his balls gently into her mouth, teasing it with her tongue before moving to the other. They tightened, hugging his cock.

She fitted his entire cock into her mouth, his tip bumping against the back of her throat, and he kicked out, his feet curling. Taja maintained a constant rhythm of deep strokes. His thick fingers tangled in her hair; then he pushed his pelvis upward, stiffening, and hot salty cream squirted into her mouth.

As she swallowed, sucking the last drops from his cock, he pulled her up, kissing her on the lips, tasting of smoke and man. He turned with her, laying her upon the soft ground.

He rained hard, short, passionate kisses down on her. When he reached her breasts, he slowed, kissing around each nipple until she pulled him to suckle first one then the other. His mouth at her breast, he cupped her mons, running an index finger

over her pussy lips. She was embarrassingly wet, but he didn't seem to mind. If anything, this excited him more. He spread that wetness over her clit, flicking it lightly, and then he entered her with one finger, stretching her. He maintained the same rhythm she had, his thumb swiping against her clit with each stroke.

She closed her eyes, feeling it building, that wonderful pressure he'd taught her to crave, and when she thought she couldn't take it anymore, he added another finger, filling her further, all the while sucking her breast. As his rhythm increased, so did the pressure of his mouth on her breast, pulling at her nipple. A nip, a hard thrust deep into her, a rub against her clit, and her world came apart. Her body shook, light exploded against her eyelids, and she collapsed.

He took her in his arms, rolling onto his back. His powerful chest heaved under her; his hand rested on her stomach, his breath on her hair. Taja laid her head back, closed her eyes, and slept.

## Chapter One

Taja woke feeling relaxed. Perhaps her father was right. Perhaps it was time for her to wed. But the thought of touching any other man didn't appeal to her. She trusted her dream man. She rose, ruthlessly twisting her long brown hair into a tight braid. She believed in his attraction to her, that he saw her as a woman, not a warrior.

Taja tugged up her breeches. It would be over a week before she could wear them again; her cousin Sabine had made her promise not to don them while her suitors were here.

Her suitors -- she pulled the tunic over her head -- they weren't really *her* suitors. They didn't know her. They came courting for her connections, because she was her father's spare: second in line to rule the kingdom after her brother, the heir.

Taja grabbed her crossbow and quiver, slipping out the bedroom door and down the stairs, her movements silent. That she was the spare, along with her impressive dowry, might be enough to convince a man to marry her, but would he look at her?

Her dream man looked at her. And more. Her nipples puckered and her pussy became moist at the thought. But that was why he was her dream man. He wasn't real.

Taja was realistic. She knew what she was: a warrior. She knew that she had none of the softer skills required of a wife. The only sewing she did was of wounds. The only fire she tended was lit to the heads of her arrows.

"The Schattenhaft perimeter, my lady?" Tortoise held her horse for her. No one knew why the elderly stable hand was called Tortoise, but that was the only name he used.



"Aye." She mounted in one fluid motion. "We cannot be too safe." There had been rumbles of the Ubel Kingdom building an army.

"I s'pose that border is as safe as any." Tortoise slapped her horse's hindquarters.

It was the safest of their borders, and the reason, she suspected, she was given responsibility for it. Not that Taja could pass that border. Entering Schattenhaft was forbidden to everyone in the Kingdom of Erbin, even their princess. No one bothered Schattenhaft, and Schattenhaft bothered no one. Those were the rules.

\* \* \*

The Lord of Schattenhaft raised the invitation to his nose and breathed in. Her tantalizing scent hung onto the parchment. For months, he had looked for her, certain she was in the North Country, where his ancestors had come from, only to find she was next door.

So close. He smiled.

"My lord." Vafi, his number one man, put down his fork, his forehead wrinkled in concern. It was the smile, Grun knew. He didn't smile often, not having a reason to.

He would have reason to smile soon. He fanned himself with the invitation, and waves of her scent filled the room.

"Tomorrow, we set forth for Erbin." His men looked up from their morning meal. "Pasco, you and five others will go with me. Bring my tournament gear. Vafi, you are in charge. In my absence, we are on high alert." It was standard procedure. Although he would monitor his territory from Erbin, he needed someone trustworthy close by.

"Erbin," his young squire squeaked. "We are at war with Erbin, my lord?"

"No war. We go to Erbin for a tournament and a ball." Grun grinned at the stunned faces. "Tomorrow, I meet my bride. Nay." His nose twitched, his senses on overload. He stood up. She was in his territory. *His* territory. He fought the change threatening to overcome him, since getting out of the banquet hall in dragon form was hellishly difficult. "Today I meet my bride. Tomorrow I court her."

"It is daylight, my lord." Vafi warned, hurrying behind him.

It was risky. Grun preferred to fly at night, but not going to her wasn't an option. His beast had found its mate. It wouldn't wait. Scales crept over his skin, his physique growing in size. He roared as his beast gained control.

\* \* \*

Taja was never going to hear the end of this. She was lost. On her own land. The mist in the valley was so thick it was blinding, making it too dangerous to ride. She led her horse over the rocky terrain. Where? She didn't know. She thought she was going in the right direction. No. She was sure she was going in the right direction.

She wasn't lost. She stared up at a tree, the gnarled branches unfamiliar. She looked behind her. Had she gotten turned around?

There was the beating of wings, too big for any bird. Her horse whinnied, rearing up, yanking the reins from Taja's hands, and darted off into the mist. "Go!" she yelled after the horse. "You were no help to me anyway."

She sniffed. The familiar smell of smoke. She stared in that direction. The dragon! A shiver of anticipation ran over her. It lumbered, large and black, and magnificent, wings flapping, talons clinking upon the stone. She should feel fear. This wasn't a dream... Was it? But this was her dragon.

A wall of whiteness swirled between them. She lost sight of the dragon. No, no dragon. Man. He reappeared. Her dream man. Beads of moisture glistened on his chest as he strode toward her, his scarred face set in determination.

She must be dreaming. Taja's worries eased. Aye, this was a dream. Pebbles crunched under his feet. There was sound in this dream. Did that mean she could talk to him? "You came." She could.

"For you? Always." His deep voice reached down inside her. His hands clasped her waist; his mouth captured hers. That was normal, as normal as her dreams were. The taste of him, smoked hickory. He flicked the straps holding quiver and crossbow off her shoulders. "My warrior woman." He kissed her neck.

"My dream man." She pulled off her tunic.

"Grun." He kneeled, removing her boots.

"Grun," she repeated. It suited him. A strong name. She stripped off her breeches and underclothes, and stood naked before him. "I am Taja." It felt foolish introducing herself to her dream man, a man who'd touched her so intimately in previous encounters.

"Taja." His breeches and boots were strewn around them. She frowned. That was different. They usually disappeared. But that thought fled as he pressed her close to him, his cock hard against her belly.

She rose up on her tippy toes, trying to fit to him. "I want..."

Dark eyes looked down at her. "What is it you want, Taja?"

She took a deep breath. This was a dream. She could ask for it. There was no shame. "I want your cock in my pussy." Her face burned.

His cock twitched. "I will not fuck you, Taja." Disappointment threatened to overwhelm her. "Unless..."

"Unless?" She rubbed against him. She'd do anything.

"You wear my ring." He held his hand up; a gold band with a black stone circled the tip of his index finger.

Her dream man was asking for a commitment. Taja blinked. "I will wear it."

His black eyes glowed. "You will belong to me."

She wished she could belong to him. "Do I not already?" Would she ever find a man like him?

"You do." A slow smile. He touched her left hand, then slipped the ring onto her small finger. "You are mine." The heated metal contracted, formed tightly to her skin, the magic of dreams. "This binds me to you." He handed her a wider band.

She placed it on his finger. More magic. The ring became part of him. "And you are mine." He expelled a deep breath. She gave him a shaky smile. "Will you fuck me now?"

"Whatever my lady wishes." Grun's laughter boomed across the mist-covered field. She was his, his triumph only slightly tempered by his conscience. She hadn't

fully understood what she'd done, thinking this a dream like the others. Except the others hadn't been dreams either, the physical connection real.

That was why he hadn't taken her before. Today, with his ring on her finger, he would. He kissed her gently, pressing her back, draping her over the smooth stone surface. Because she was his. Forever.

His kisses intensified as he stroked the heat between her legs, preparing her pussy for him. She was so soft, so welcoming, so eager. Tomorrow, aye, tomorrow, he would woo her. Grun entered her wetness with his finger, and she moaned, holding onto him. Today, he would indulge his overwhelming need for her. He added another finger, pumping her. She writhed underneath him.

Never had he seen anything so beautiful. He sucked on her small breasts, her nipples like cherries, tasting as sweet. She was long and lean all over, tight around his fingers. She tugged demandingly at his hair, the slight pain exciting him even more. He nipped at her breast, flicked her clit with his callused thumb. She trembled. She was close. As was he. He replaced his fingers with his cockhead. He could come right now with a mere sample of her heat.

"There will be pain, Taja." So he'd heard, having never fucked a virgin before. And she was a virgin. Before their encounters, she'd been untouched, her innocence bringing him to his knees.

"I trust you." Those big blue eyes, the color of purest cut sapphires, stared up at him.

Her trust would not be misplaced. She was his to protect. He eased into her. She stiffened at his invasion. He kissed her to reassure her, distract her. He eased in until he reached her maidenhead. He took a deep breath -- this had to be done -- pulled back, and thrust inside.

She jerked with pain, and he cursed, holding himself still, the effort so great, his legs shook. He waited, the seconds, minutes stretching forever. "Taja?"

She gave him a small smile. "It is better now." She raised her hips.

He filled her up to his base. The heat. The tightness. It was unlike anything he'd ever felt before. He pumped into her, slowly at first, and then faster and faster until his balls bounced against her. His desire clawed at him, the inner beast, the dragon inside him. He waited as long as he could, wanting her to join him, but when she called out his name, he couldn't wait anymore. His seed surged into her ready womb. He collapsed, spent, draped over her.

That was interesting. Taja petted the back of Grun's head, listening as his breathing steadied. She didn't know if she liked this new dream. She liked the talking, his deep voice like the rumble of thunder, dark and primitive. She liked this, his cock remaining inside her, connecting the two of them. She didn't like the pain. That had been unpleasant. And she wished the stone at her back was the soft mattress of previous dreams.

He kissed her forehead, those black eyes searching hers. She offered him a reassuring smile. "It'll be better next time." He sounded confident.

Except there shouldn't be a next time. If she was to be married, she should stop dreaming of him. She wouldn't be unfaithful, even subconsciously, to her husband. She kissed his lips, touching the scar on his beloved face. "I should wake soon." She couldn't sleep the day away, no matter how tempting.

He frowned, his dark eyebrows drawing together. "This is no dream."

"Of course not." He was part of that dream. For him, it was reality. "I should return home." An explanation he'd accept. She gathered up her clothes. There was blood on her thighs and, she noticed, on his cock.

"This is your home." He stood, hands on his hips.

Her dream man was being uncooperative. "Back to the castle." The protective mask of mist was lifting. She hurried, grimacing as she dressed, sore.

He did the same, pulling up his breeches, putting on his boots. "I will come for you tomorrow."

Words she wanted to hear. Taja slung the crossbow and quiver over her shoulders. "Promise?"

"I give you my word." He walked with her, leading her back in the direction from which she came. "You are mine now, Taja." He kissed the ring on her finger, the black stone glowing.

"I am yours," she confirmed, the strength of feeling surprising her. If only it were true. That a man wanted her for her. She recognized a tree and that rock outcropping. This was her land. "We will meet again."

"Tomorrow." He kissed her once more before turning, and then walking back into the mist.

\* \* \*

She'd been delusional or feverish or hit her head. Those were the only acceptable explanations, Taja told herself as she trekked into the castle, her feet aching from the walk.

"Ta-Ta!" Sabine rushed out to greet her, her blonde hair flowing out behind her. "Where were you? You said you would break fast with me." Taja wished for once that her returning bedraggled was a cause for concern. "We need to review the seating arrangements."

"Again? I thought we settled that yesterday." The lords were worse than a bunch of old women, snippy over where on the banquet table they sat.

"A late acceptance." Her cousin waved a letter with a black seal. "The Lord of Schattenhaft is attending."

"Schattenhaft?" Taja paused. That had been a courtesy invitation, his attendance not expected. "Father knows?"

Sabine winced. "The king is aware, aye." Although he was her uncle, Sabine insisted on referring to him by his title. "I can not repeat his response."

Taja grinned. Her father was convinced Schattenhaft had a pact with the devil. Or dragons. There were rumors of dragons being seen on his lands. "Good. He will rethink this 'marry off his only daughter' plot."

"My lady." Tortoise nodded at her.

"You see my mount?"

He gave her a toothless grin. "Returned an hour past, my lady."

"You were thrown?" Sabine's pretty blue eyes widened. Even her eyes were a shade lighter, more delicate, more ladylike, than Taja's.

"I was not thrown," Taja replied heatedly. She was a superb horsewoman. She did not get thrown. She was a warrior. She did not get lost. The sun reflected off gold drew her attention. And she did not get married. Her stomach twisted as she stared at her hand. What had she done?

## Chapter Two

Taja caught Sabine's gaze across the room. Her cousin nodded encouragingly. She had to mingle with the guests. Like Sabine was. She was not to fiddle with the rather low neckline of the blue velvet dress Sabine picked out for her. She was not to play with her hair, Sabine having spent hours trying to tame it. She was to keep her hands clasped together, like Sabine's were. Taja touched her ring; the ring she couldn't remove even if she wanted to, drawing strength from it. She could do this.

"What is this, spare?" Her brother Raaf grabbed her waist. "A dress?" He swung her around and she laughed, causing heads to turn in their direction. He always made her laugh. "How are you to defend our kingdom in a dress?"

"I am to make a strategic alliance, fortifying our defenses." Taja recited her father's verdict gravely; then she grinned. "I may be the first sacrifice, heir. But I know who will be the second."

Raaf shivered in mock terror. "Nay, never, no dresses for me, not even for my kingdom."

"The ultimate sacrifice, Raaf." She laughed again, dancing away from him, smack into a tree.

A groaning tree. Arms caught her waist, steadying her. "My lady." Unearthly golden eyes held hers. This unknown lord had a face so handsome it was almost painful to look at, a smile so dazzling it made her blink.

"My lord." Although she appreciated the stranger's beauty, he didn't move her. She preferred a stronger, more weathered face. She stroked her gold band.



The movement was not lost on the lord. "That is a unique ring, Lady Taja." He dropped his hands, stepping back from her.

"It is." Raaf picked her hand up to look at it closer. "Did this belong to mother?"

Their mother had died while they were both small. "Nay." That response was echoed by the stranger. How did he know? Who was he? "I apologize for my rudeness. We have not been introduced. I am Lady Taja." She felt dumb for having said that. He knew her name already. Everyone knew who she was, the prize. Taja held out her hand to be kissed, the way she'd seen Sabine do.

She must have done it wrong because the beautiful stranger ignored it. "Lord Berg." A sweeping bow.

She curtsied awkwardly, having trouble with the long hem. The Lord of Berg, whose lands were in the mountains. He had traveled far. "You will be entering the tournament?" *Will you be seeking my hand?* she wanted to ask.

His gaze wandered in Sabine's direction, an arrested look on his face, his nostrils flaring, and her question was answered. No, he would not. He was interested in her cousin, as was every man in the hall. "If you'll excuse me, Lady Taja," he said absentmindedly and drifted away.

Raaf snorted. "Odd creature."

"Not so odd." Taja smiled ruefully. "If not for my dowry --"

"A dowry befitting a princess of Erbin," her father boomed. Heads turned. Taja's face flamed from embarrassment. "Your husband will be a fortunate man."

"She is mine." A deep rumble filled the banquet hall.

Grun, her dream man. Taja straightened as a path cleared between the doorway and her. As promised, he had come. He stood, taller than even the golden god, his width daunting, his scarred visage hard and menacing. He was flanked by six equally brutish men, three on each side.

\* \* \*

Grun assessed the room. The courtiers and weak-chinned lords, he discounted immediately. The warriors garnered more of his respect, but didn't threaten him. No,

the only threat in the room was -- he stared into golden eyes -- damn it, another drakon. The man nodded, recognizing him for what he was. Grun growled a warning and the other men gave them more distance.

He returned his attention to his lady and the men around her -- too close. No other man would touch her. Grun tightened the rein on his beast as he stalked toward them. The older one was her father; he saw some of him in her. He was not a threat. The younger one stood in front of Taja, and Grun didn't like that. He glared at the man. To his credit, the young lord paled, but didn't move.

"You presume too much, my lord." The king placed a hand on his sword.

Taja stepped around the young lord, her eyes large, her face glowing with wonder. She didn't know. He bit back his irritation. She had thought him a dream. That he was her dream lover confirmed a fact not needing confirmation. They were fated to be.

But he'd give her time, showing her that he was worthy, that he could defend her in battle. He would prevail in the tournament and earn the right to be her husband. "I am here to win your daughter's hand, Your Majesty. She will be mine. Everyone" -- his gaze swept the room, lingering on the laughing drakon -- "has the same goal, but I will be successful. I give you my word, my lady." He bowed to his Taja. "I keep my word."

Her cheeks flushed becomingly. She touched her ring.

He nodded, touching his own ring. She noted the action with her eyes. She understood.

The king's face relaxed. "We have not met, my lord. I am Erbin. This is my son, Prince Raaf, my daughter, Princess Taja."

Brother. A protective brother, and for that Grun was grateful. He had kept Taja safe for him. "Grun, Lord of Schattenhaft." There was a hiss throughout the room. Good, his reputation preceded him. He bowed. The men returned the bow. Taja curtsied. As she rose, the front of her dress pulled down, displaying a distracting flash of tanned flesh. She tilted forward and Grun caught her before she tumbled. "Careful."

"S-s-sorry." Her blush deepened to a vivid shade of red.

He wasn't. He tucked her arm in his, contentment shrouding his soul. To touch like this was enough, for now. He eyed her slight curves. Tonight...

"Schattenhaft." There was displeasure in the king's voice. "We are about to feast. My niece, Sabine" -- he beckoned a blonde girl -- "will show you to your seat."

"It is beside Lady Taja, is it not?" No one else would dine next to her.

"Not tonight, Lord Schattenhaft," Taja replied. "Forgive me, my lord. I did not know."

Who he was. She looked as unhappy as he felt. He touched her ring. "In the future, my place is beside you."

The king bristled. "That is yet to be determined, Schattenhaft."

\* \* \*

Taja sat in her personal section of hell. The lord to her left focused on his dinner, not responding to any of her questions. It was like he didn't hear or see her. The lords across the table avoided her eyes. The golden lord to her right, Lord Berg, stared with longing at Sabine.

Her cousin was seated to the left of Grun. Taja frowned down at her beef. He'd notice how perfect Sabine was, how ladylike, how charming. Everything Taja was not. She heard his voice rumble along the table. He was a warrior. He wouldn't want a warrior for a wife. He'd want someone soft, someone who could entertain for him. Her dowry wouldn't tempt him, his wealth surpassing her father's. She sighed. She couldn't even keep her dream man.

"How long have you known Schattenhaft, Lady Taja?" the golden lord asked.

"I met him today."

"You can tell me the truth, my lady." Lord Berg chuckled, tapping the table by her hand, her ring. "I will not judge you."

She glanced at her father, wrapped up in talks with a southern lord, and to her brother, flirting with a lady, an unwed sister of one of her so-called suitors, and then at Grun. His black eyes flicked to hers. The temperature in the room rose a degree. Her

nipples puckered. Grun sniffed the air and grinned, as though he could smell the wetness of her pussy. She gasped, looking away.

"My lady?" the golden lord repeated.

She glanced back at Grun. He still looked at her. "Six months."

"Good, good, very good. I can last six months." Lord Berg watched Sabine. "I think. Your cousin is very beautiful."

Taja groaned. Could she have another topic of conversation? "She is also very particular."

"She has a right to be." The young man seemed undaunted. "You know her better than anyone here, Lady Taja." She did. Sabine was her best friend. "Tell me what she likes and does not like."

\* \* \*

Taja and the other women retired early. Grun hadn't noticed the other women leave. All he could think about was his Taja. She'd sat too near the golden drakon during dinner. She'd given him too many smiles. Grun didn't like it. He didn't like how Berg kept one eye on him. They were the only contestants for Taja's hand and both drakons knew it.

Even now the drakon approached him, a mug of some sort of vile ale in his hand. "You know, if you waited until you completely healed to shift, you would not scar as much." This irritating advice was shared with a smile.

If the drakon had fought as many battles as he had, he'd know there were times when one had to shift. He scarred but he lived. Grun grunted. His men, in tune with his moods, looked his way. He shook his head. Berg wouldn't stir up trouble. Not if he wanted to win the lady.

He wouldn't win the lady. "She's mine, Berg."

"If she was, we would not all be here, would we?" Leaving him with the piece of wisdom, the drakon slunk across the room.

Grun pushed away from the table. He noted the nervous look the king gave him. The father would be difficult to convince. Grun would take Taja if permission wasn't granted. But it would make Taja happier if it were. He wanted to make Taja happy.

Pasco met up with him. "We camped at the far end of the grounds, closest to Schattenhaft, my lord."

"Good." Not that he cared. He wouldn't be sleeping in the camp tonight.

\* \* \*

The beating of wings woke her. The shadow of the dragon against the moonlight fell across the floor of her bedchamber. He was here, visiting her, not Sabine. She had left her balcony windows open with exactly that hope.

"Taja." His voice barely a breath.

"Here." She threw off her covers. "Do you need light?" She reached for a candle.

"I see you." Sniffing. "I smell you." She started as his mouth brushed against hers. "I taste you."

"We must be quiet. My maid sleeps outside the room. Father feared one of my suitors might get ideas."

"He was right." He kissed her neck, his body covering hers, his cock hard against her thigh. "Your husband has many, many ideas."

Her husband. Did he feel tied to the vows they made? Taja touched her ring. Would he rather be with Sabine? "I will not hold you to your promises, Grun, if you find another more to your liking." It pained her to make that offer.

He stilled. "I will hold you to your vows, Taja. You are mine. If another man touches you, he will pray for death."

His passion made her wet. "For truth?"

"For truth." He entered her fully with one long hard thrust, swallowing her gasp with his mouth. The bed creaked. "Shit," he cursed, her pussy impaled on his cock. "Wrap your arms around my neck." As she did so, he lifted her. She wasn't a tiny woman, but he didn't breathe heavily from the effort. He propped her against the wall.

"My lord?"

"Trust me." And he moved, thrusting into her again and again, the stone wall at her back, his rock-hard stomach in front of her. The darkness completed the perception of being surrounded. There was no pain this time, only the pleasure of him filling her, stroking her both inside and out, rubbing against her clit as he moved.

She panted. He grunted. There was a smacking of flesh on flesh, a wet sucking sound. The pressure, the feeling, the... she dug into his shoulders, thrashing against the wall, and her world burst. He groaned once more, thrusting forward, pinning her against the wall, and his heat filled her.

"Fuck, Taja." A shaky rumble. Still joined, him limp inside her, he returned her to the bed. It creaked as he tumbled beside her. "Tomorrow I take you somewhere else."

"How?" But as she asked, she knew.

"I will not hurt you, Taja. My beast will not hurt you. I give you my word." He spoke as if they were two separate beings yet they couldn't be. Could they? "The beast does not talk, but he understands. When he comes for you, climb on his back." He entwined her fingers with his. "You can do that for me, can you not?"

To ride a dragon was a fearful thought, but she was a warrior. She could do this. "For you" -- she kissed those callused fingers -- "I would do anything."

## Chapter Three

"They are all fine men. I do not care who wins this tournament as long as it is not Schattenhaft." Her father paced his private quarters. "Something is not right about him. His eyes, they are not natural. The devil's eyes. And the rumors..."

Were true, but Taja wasn't about to share that with her father. "There are rumors that I am a man." Hateful, hurtful rumors. "There are others that I was born before Raaf." And that their mother had been slain by a witch -- that rumor she kept to herself. "We should not hold faith in rumors."

"The spare should have been the heir. That is a good one." Raaf laughed. "There are rumors that half the bastards in the kingdom are mine." Taja knew how much those rumors hurt her very responsible brother. "Nay, we should not hold faith in rumors."

"Some rumors have a base in fact." Their father glowered. "Did you see how he entered and announced he would have Taja?"

And he had. Taja looked down at her dress. A dress. Would Grun like it? It was trimmed in black to match his colors. She straightened in her chair, sitting the way Sabine advised her to. Like a lady, not a warrior. She didn't want to embarrass him.

"Aye, that was an interesting turn of events." There was speculation in Raaf's voice. Taja studied her feet, avoiding her brother's eyes. "He does not need the money. He has never shown any interest in Erbin. It was almost as though he knew Taja. As though he wants her for her."

"He wants Erbin. That is the only reason." Their father expressed his low opinion of her charms. "I would burn in hell before he acquires it. He will marry Taja over my dead body."

Alarmed, Taja studied her father's resolute face. "And if I want to marry him?"

"And why would you want to do that, spare?" Raaf turned to her. "When you only met him yesterday?"

"You will not marry Schattenhaft." Their father saved her from answering that question. "If you do, you will no longer be my daughter. He is the devil. Erbin lands will never pass to the devil. If anything happens to your brother and I, Schattenhaft will not inherit. I will not allow it, understand?"

If she married Grun, she would no longer be the spare. Her father would prefer strangers inherit his kingdom. The gold of her ring warmed under her touch. "I understand."

\* \* \*

Taja hid behind a tree, gathering her skirt tightly around her so the fluttering fabric wouldn't give her away. Dresses were a damn nuisance, impossible to wear. She scanned the area, Grun's tent easy to spot. The black fabric of the tent was a rare yet prudent choice. It would be impossible to see at night.

She waited for the men in the nearby tent to turn away before running across the path, slipping inside. The men, Grun's men, tall and tough and weathered, turned, swords in hand.

"My lady." The tallest of them nodded, motioning to the others to lower their weapons.

She shouldn't be here. If she were caught, her reputation would be in ruins. But she had to see him before he fought. "I wish to speak with Lord Schattenhaft." He stood to the side, his back to her, clad in form-fitting black armor.

"Leave us," he rumbled. They did, silently, without question. Grun faced her. He looked taller, somehow, broader, a fierce warrior. Black eyes met hers. "Taja?"

He was magnificent and she wanted him. She couldn't have him. Not now. Later. She swallowed. "Here." She held out a piece of black silk. He took it, his rough fingers brushing against hers, sending tremors straight down to her pussy. "I am told some ladies give their lords a token to remind them of what they fight for."



He brought the fabric up to his nose, breathed in. "Some lords would never forget." He tucked the handkerchief underneath his armor, in the area of his heart.

She stared at him. He was so big, so dominant, so male. She should leave now as the tournament would be soon starting. But she didn't want to leave. She wanted to explore that body, uncover whether he was as hard under all that armor. "Some ladies kiss their lords... for luck."

He grinned, the scars on his face creasing. "Some lords need no luck, but welcome kisses from their ladies all the same." He reached out, drew her in, his hot mouth covering hers. She moaned in delight, squashed up against his chest, her tongue battling with his for possession of the kiss. When they broke, both were panting.

"You will be safe," she assured herself, running her hands over the black armor. She'd never felt anything like it. Hard yet soft.

"I will." He paused as though debating. "Dragon scales. The toughest material on earth."

He'd be safe. "I have to leave." She stepped back. "Fight hard, my lord Grun, for tonight you take your reward." She left him smiling as she dashed away.

\* \* \*

Although the crowd's applause was irritatingly loud, the only cheering he heard was Taja's, her face beaming proudly, her hands clapping, her father and brother frowning beside her.

"They came for you, you know." The golden drakon nodded toward the stands. "You could have given them more of a show."

Grun grunted. Fast and deadly was his style. He didn't play with his opponents as Berg did.

"You must fight often."

What was the purpose of this conversation? He slanted his eyes in Berg's direction, not bothering to hide his inner beast.

The idiot laughed. "If you moved away from the prime farm land into the mountains, you would not have to defend your territory as often." Another piece of helpful advice from the handsome lord.

His family had held that land for centuries. He would never move from it.

"I watched the others. You are my only real competition, though I hear Prince Raaf, if he had been allowed to enter, would have been a challenge... for a human." Berg continued to walk with him. "It is a pity that we have to wait until the finale to fight." The lord glanced toward the stands.

Toward Taja. He wanted to prove himself. Grun growled, the sound low and deep. "Touch her and you will not have to wait." He'd watched Berg fight also. The young lord was cocky and sloppy, leaving holes in his attacks. He was a foolish young drakon.

Grun flipped open his tent. The lord expected an invitation inside. He didn't get one.

"My lord." Pasco waited for him. "There is news coming from Ubel."

"Who do they attack now?" Would that lord never be satisfied with the holdings he had? Greed. Grun removed his armor, catching the handkerchief as it fell. Taja. He breathed in her scent.

"They move toward Erbin, my lord."

Here. His lady was in danger. Grun fought the change automatically triggered by the threat. "The king?"

"Has underestimated his enemies. Prince Raaf did not take enough men."

A mistake driven by pride. Better to overreact and look like a fool than put the kingdom at risk. "How many days until they reach the border?" He would take her from Erbin before then.

"By midday tomorrow, my lord."

He grimaced. He would have to continue his wooing of her in Schattenhaft. Not the best solution, but the most prudent one. "Send a message to Vafi. We will position

an army along all borders, with double along Erbin." Protecting Taja and Schattenhaft should Erbin fall.

## Chapter Four

Taja was concerned -- very concerned. Raaf had ridden out this morning. Ubel forces had been spotted near the border. It was nothing, both Raaf and her father assured her, Raaf with laughter in his voice, but she didn't believe that.

They were weak, distracted by this tournament. If she were the enemy, she'd attack now. Concealed by the banquet table, Grun covered her twisting hands with one of his. She favored him with a small smile. It gave her comfort that he was here.

"A fine dinner. It is a shame Prince Raaf could not join us." Grun addressed her father.

Her father's eyes narrowed. "He has gone hunting. God willing, tomorrow's dinner will be even finer." *Lies*. Her father was unwilling to show weakness in front of his guests.

The soft fabric of Taja's skirt brushed against her skin as it was pulled up. What was Grun doing? She kept her gaze on her plate.

"Hunts are a tricky business." Grun's fingers prodded between her thighs. Taja opened to him. "It is easy to underestimate the size of the game." He stroked her wetness. He wouldn't, not here, would he? He tapped against her clit, a light, playful tempo, causing her pussy to hum happily.

"Prince Raaf has hunted before." Her father didn't appreciate the insinuation. His defenses were up.

Taja's were not. She gasped as two fingers entered her.

"Easy." That low rumble only for her. Grun continued to pump her pussy, while the nobility dined to their left and right. Her father sat at the head of the table. "Even the most experienced hunter makes mistakes."

He was the devil. He was going to make her come while her father watched. Taja raised her napkin to her face, to cover her pants.

"My son does not make mistakes." Her father was red-faced.

Taja's pussy gripped and released his fingers. She was so close. She bit down on the napkin.

"I make mistakes," Grun admitted. "As you can see from my face."

Taja couldn't look at his face, her focus on his fingers, those wonderful fingers pumping her relentlessly: in, out, in, out.

"My son does not," her father maintained.

His daughter did. She stiffened. She couldn't... she couldn't... She shrieked. Grun's free hand whipped out, lightning fast, knocking a glass of wine into her lap. Taja convulsed, her orgasm sharp, intense.

"I am sorry, my lady." Those gleaming eyes belied his apology. His hands were everywhere, adjusting her skirts, dabbing the wine, soothing her body. "Your beauty makes me clumsy."

"Lady Taja." Sabine rose to her feet.

"My father was right," Taja whispered, her breath returned. "You are the devil."

"I am your devil. Tonight." He lifted his pussy-drenched fingers to his lips and sucked her juices off them.

She watched him, fascinated, her clit begging to be next, to be licked like that.

"My lord." Sabine was by her side. "These accidents happen. Let me take care of Lady Taja."

He'd already taken care of her. Grun watched the two women leave with smug satisfaction. A preview of tonight. He met the golden drakon's laughing gaze. Berg's nostrils were flared, his drakon's sense of smell heightened. He nodded.

Grun didn't nod back, turning back to the king. The man distrusted him. "I have learned to heed warnings regardless of their source."

"Some warnings only serve their source."

Grun shrugged. Why did he bother? "If you'll excuse me, I must change also." Shift into dragon form so he could further ravage their princess. He pushed away from the table. She was the only reason he bothered with the warning. Taja loved her brother, her father, her people. It would cause her pain to see them hurt. He couldn't allow that.

\* \* \*

"He is an ill-mannered brute, carelessly spilling his wine on you. There is no need for you to sit beside him again." Sabine hugged Taja close as they walked upstairs.

He was a clever brute. She came in the middle of the banquet hall, surrounded by people, and no one noticed. "I want to sit beside him." Him and his fingers.

"But" -- Sabine's jaw dropped -- "he is so rough and silent and... his face. Surely, Lord Berg --"

"Has eyes only for you, and I would not have him even if he did not."

"Because he is frivolous and never serious and..." An aggravated sigh from the normally calm Sabine.

"Because I am in love with Lord Schattenhaft."

Sabine stumbled. "L-L... Lord Schattenhaft? The king --"

"Will disown me, I know" -- Taja chewed on her bottom lip -- "due to who Grun, Lord Schattenhaft, is."

"Who is he?" Sabine opened Taja's chamber door.

"He is," she couldn't tell her, this was Grun's secret, their secret, "different." Magical. Mystical. Dragon. Part man, part beast. Her father would never accept him, would never accept her for marrying him.

"If he wins the tournament --"

"Father still would not accept him." And Grun wouldn't leave without her. "Will you visit me, Sabine? Secretly?" She'd never see her father or brother again, but her best friend?

"Of course." Sabine hugged her. "But it will not come to that. The king loves you."

He did, but he loved his kingdom more.

\* \* \*

The flapping of wings didn't wake Taja because she hadn't slept, too concerned about her brother, about her relationship with Grun, about the future. Dressed in her breeches and tunic, she entered the balcony, looking up and up and up.

The dragon was huge, the moonlight reflecting off his black scales, his white teeth gleaming, smoke from his nostrils swirling around them. He didn't breathe fire; that was a relief. Taja didn't know if she could have handled it. She didn't know if she could handle this. His front talons gripped onto the edge of the balcony. One swipe and she'd be crushed. One breath of fire and she'd be burned to a crisp. One snap of his jaw and she'd be dragon food.

He lowered his head and she stepped back in fear. He remained still except for his wings, allowing him to hover in the air. She could do this. She was a warrior. Warriors weren't scared. She reached out, placing a tentative hand on his snout.

A rumble from the dragon, from Grun, she reminded herself, as though her action pleased him. She stroked. The scales were velvet steel, like his armor.

Shouting from the castle prevented further exploration. This wasn't safe. He'd be seen. She gathered up all her courage and climbed onto his back. She clung to his neck as he flew, smooth and straight, his wings beating the air, his muscles contracting and releasing under her thighs. It was like riding a horse, a very, very large horse, high above the ground, fires from the buildings like tiny stars underneath them.

He landed at the mouth of a cave and waited as she dismounted. "Oh Grun." Giddiness bubbled up in her. Her dragon. She stroked his flanks, his neck. He lowered his head and she explored his face, touching him all over, peering into those giant eyes. "You are a gorgeous creature."

As though in response, a snake-like split tongue darted out, licking her from shoulder to knee. What that would feel like on bare skin? Eager to find out, Taja

stripped off her clothes. A ground rumbling roar from her dragon, a wrinkle in the air as happens when heat rises from the earth, and Grun, the man, stood before her, clad in his leather breeches.

She frowned. "Why?" She waved a hand at him.

"Why do I wear breeches? Magic, to protect your modesty, my lady."

"It is not necessary." As though she had any left. The breeches disappeared, leaving him exposed, hard and ready. "Why did you change?"

Dark eyebrows shadowed his eyes. "You wished the beast?"

Was that unnatural? She flushed. "Does the beast not have needs? Your tongue..."

"My brave warrior woman." He grinned. "Aye, the beast has needs. First, the man will show you what the beast likes." He pulled her to him. "Then, another night, you will decide if you wish to satisfy them." He placed her hands around his cock. "He likes to be stroked." He slid her hands up and down. "His cock is large. He is a large beast. You will need both hands."

So large? She continued the motion. "His cock will not fit in my pussy."

"Nay." He sighed, whether in regret or satisfaction, she didn't know. "All you will be able to take is his cockhead." She paused over his cockhead, teasing it with her thumb. "But that would be enough for him. His cockhead is very sensitive and when he comes, he will fill you, every last crack."

"May I lick him?" She knelt, licking his cock.

He shuddered. "The beast would enjoy that."

"He would be too large to suck." She took him into her mouth.

"Much too large. He rested a hand on her head as she sucked him, moving him in and out of her mouth. "And he can not suck on you. Instead he will lick you. Stand." She did. He turned her to face away from him. "Bend over." She grasped the rock, her ass exposed to him. "The beast likes this position." He widened her stance, stroking between her legs with one hand, his other hand on her ass. "It allows him access to everything. Your breasts." He reached around, cupping, squeezing, pinching. "Your



ass." He spread her cheeks, licking the crease, pausing at her buttohole, poking into her. "Your pussy." Another lick. A flick of her clit. "His tongue is very long. He will fill your pussy with it." He stroked in and out of her with his very human tongue. "He will do tricks with his tongue." He entered her and then vibrated his tongue rapidly inside her.

She moaned. "Grun."

"He will make you come again and again." His tongue fluttered. She tried to squeeze her ass cheeks together to prevent her orgasm. He wouldn't allow it. His hand slid between them, and he pressed a finger inside that hole. She came hard and wet and he sucked her dry. "The beast is a beast. When you can not take it anymore, he will enter you, only his cockhead here." He slid his cock into her pussy, pausing an inch in. "But I am not a beast. I can fuck you completely." He rode her, the way stallions took mares, bulls took cows, ramming into her again and again, his pelvis smacking against her ass, reaching around to play with her clit.

"Grun."

"Come for me, Taja. Show my beast how much you want him." His breath was hot on her back. She pushed back as he pumped forward, taking him deeper and deeper, until he became part of her.

His roar pushed her over the edge. His hot cum surged into her, her pussy milking his cock dry.

She would take the beast. She knew that. The beast was Grun. Grun was the beast. She would have all of him.

## Chapter Five

His mate needed him. He smelled her fear. Grun ignored the guard's protests, sweeping into the king's private quarters, his beast jerking at his chains of control. He had to reassure himself Taja was safe. He could think of nothing else.

"Taja." She was in her warrior gear, her crossbow and quiver strapped to her back.

"This is none of your business, Schattenhaft," the father railed at him.

It wasn't his business until Taja became involved. "You will not fight, Taja." Whatever she was thinking, it was out of the question. It was his job to protect her. If she was harmed... scales shimmered on his skin. He pulled the beast back.

"I must." A determined slant to her chin. "Raaf has been attacked. I have to. He is my brother, the heir, and I am only the spare."

"You are my mate." She was no spare. "He underestimated the size of game." Grun shook his head, and now he would have to fight a battle he was unprepared for.

"We can deal with this. It is a family concern." The king blustered, but Grun heard the fear in his voice. He would deal with that family concern by sacrificing his daughter, an unacceptable decision.

"Your daughter is my wife. I am family." He faced the older man. "I will rescue your heir; I will push back your enemies, and in return, you will acknowledge our marriage."

"I --"

"That is not up for negotiation," he snapped. He hadn't time for this.

"I am coming with you." Taja followed him out the door.

"Nay." He couldn't concentrate on the fight with her near. His beast would want to protect her.

"I am a warrior."

"You are my wife." At her crushed face, he softened. "Your brother will be safe, Taja. I give you my word."

Her chin lifted, those sapphire eyes blazing. She was glorious. His cock stirred. "It is not only my brother I worry about. You can not expect me to stay here while you put yourself in danger."

She worried about him? The stairs shifted under his feet, and he almost stumbled. "You are not coming." His men in full battle gear waited outside; Pasco held the reins of Grun's steed.

"I am."

Glorious and stubborn. Grun made a big show of frowning. "Where is my shield?" he roared.

His squire opened his mouth, and Pasco elbowed him hard in the stomach. The youth bent over, gasping.

"Taja, I need to oversee my men. Could you retrieve my shield? It is in my tent." He hated lying to her, but he would not put her at risk.

"You will not leave without me?" She searched his face.

Suspecting. Their link was too strong. "It will take minutes. How far could I go?" He wanted to kiss her one last time. He couldn't. It'd be too suspicious. He watched her braid bounce as she ran.

"You notified Vafi?" he growled to Pasco.

"Aye, my lord."

"Then we ride." He mounted. He'd shift in the shelter of the forest.

\* \* \*

Tortoise was brushing down Grun's black stallion when Taja returned, Grun's surprisingly light shield in her hands. The shield was huge, a challenge to run with.

"Where are they?" His men weren't in the courtyard.

"That's the peculiar thing, my lady." Tortoise scratched his balding head. "The black lord and his men rode out of here like the hounds of hell were after them. Minutes later, their horses returned."

They didn't need horses? Taja groaned. She was a fool. He didn't need the shield. He'd fight in dragon form. "He left me."

"You are his destiny." The golden Lord Berg stood behind her. "He will be back."

If only she could be so confident. "And if he fails? If he, our army, does not stop Ubel? Am I to do nothing, wait passively by as everyone I love dies -- Grun, my father, Raaf, Sabine, everyone?"

"Sabine?" The young lord stiffened.

"Nay, I will not. I am going. I will fight by his side." She stalked up to Tortoise. "I will take his horse, Tortoise." It was a beast, like its master, and already saddled. "He claims he wants a warrior wife, a warrior wife he gets." She mounted, her crossbow on her back, his shield on her arm.

"You do not mind if I join you, do you?" Berg swung up onto another horse. The horse whinnied and bucked until he brought him under control.

Taja didn't care if the devil himself joined her, as long as he stayed out of her way. In hours she should meet up with the Erbin reinforcements her father sent her brother this morning. She rode full out, concentrating on getting there as quickly as possible.

She ignored the flapping sound coming from behind her and jumped when talons curled loosely around her waist, lifted her off her horse. Taja looked up at the underbelly of a golden dragon, large though not as large as her dragon.

It could only be... Taja shook her head. Surrounded by dragons. She pushed that thought away, concentrating on her battle plan. They quickly passed the plodding reinforcements, soon spotting the smoke from the battle. Taja hooked the shield over the dragon's talon. It covered her completely. She loaded her crossbow.

Out of the clouds, she saw him, her dragon, Grun, his black scales reflecting the sun, fire blazing from his mouth. He soared; he dived; he torched the advancing Ubel army, his talons raking through the ranks. There were so many of them.

Then they were plummeting, Taja's stomach in her mouth. A screech of anger from the golden dragon, a burst of flames, singeing Taja's hair. She released arrow after arrow into the attacking men.

They battled, the black dragon, Grun, upwind and the golden dragon with Taja downwind. Taja's arm ached. Arrows and mortar bounced off the shield, the impact bruising her in a thousand different places. Sweat rolled down her neck, the heat from the dragon's flames making her gasp.

A roar shook the air. A burst of speed from the golden dragon, the wind whipping at her body. Her heart clenched. The black dragon, Grun, hurtled to the ground. He'd been hit. The talons securing her released. A jolt of impact as she hit the black dragon's shoulders, the golden dragon's talons claspings onto him. They were lifted slightly, the golden dragon straining from the weight and then placed on the ground. In the middle of battle, on the frontlines.

The Ubel warriors attacked her dragon. Taja screamed in anger, then grabbed the arrows bouncing off his scales to return fire to the enemy. The golden dragon surrounded them with a ring of fire.

It couldn't last. Grun was a giant target, lying on the ground, immobile.

"Get up, Grun." She moved to his snout, ignoring the panic the blood gushing from his side caused. She stood in front of his nostrils, a vulnerable position, at risk both from the advancing army's arrows and from her injured dragon. "Get up." Her crossbow twanged as she shot into the solid wall of approaching warriors. The dragon's nostrils twitched. "Protect me, damn it." His head lifted. "I am your mate. Protect me." He roared, struggling to his feet. The blood from his wound slowed. "That is it. Protect me. Protect yourself." She positioned herself underneath his belly, his front legs on either side of her. Flames raged from his open jaws, his big tail swinging. She assisted as best she could, gathering up arrows, releasing them back into the air.

They fought. It appeared hopeless, but it was all Taja could do. Fight and hope for a miracle. Her arms throbbed in pain. Her hands blistered.

A bugle sounded behind them. Reinforcements? Impossible. Taja ignored it. A wistful dream. They were miles away.

Another bugle sounded in front of them. The Ubel army backed up and up and up until they turned and ran. Retreat. A reprieve. They would attack again. That was a certainty but the next time, they'd be ready. She hoped. She staggered out from underneath her dragon. He lowered his snout and she sagged against it, her hands on his scales. "I love you, Grun." He roared, his body lowering to the ground, both of them exhausted.

"Your army is here, my lord," Grun's man, Pasco, covered with blood and grime, informed the dragon.

His army. She stroked his cheek. He'd sent his army to help.

"Your army?" A familiar voice.

"Raaf!" He was safe.

"Spare!" But not unharmed. He limped toward her, blood on his breeches.

Grun, her black dragon, raised his head, his black eyes intent on Raaf.

"Do not touch Lady Taja!" Berg, back in human form, yelled over the celebratory din. "Not if you value your lives."

"He will not hurt me." She was certain of that. She patted Grun's shoulder, leaning back on it.

"But he will protect his mate."

"His mate? Spare, what is going on?" Raaf looked confused.

More people gathered around them. "I will explain later. Now is not the time, Raaf." Taja climbed up onto the scale-covered back, putting herself safely out of reach. Her black dragon got to his feet, his head swinging from left to right. She felt his agitation. "We need to go somewhere quiet." That she knew. Her dragon beat his wings, testing them.

"Taja..." her brother protested.

"She will be safe," Berg assured him. "She is his mate. He would die before hurting her. Within days, when his wounds heal, they will return home."

Taja laid her head on her dragon's neck, her thighs straddling his shoulders. A couple more beats of his wings and they were airborne, the flight jerky, her dragon weak. They flew and flew and flew, the sky blue around them, fluffy clouds filled with misty moisture. She dozed, her cheek on scales, the rough landing merely stirring her. He stalked deep into a cave until there was not a hint of light. He turned once, twice, three times and then sank down with a huff.

They slept, his breath warming the cave, his body serving as her bed. Taja didn't know how long they stayed like that, there being no indication of time in the cave. She woke with her breasts bared and a tongue creeping up her trouser leg. Dragon tongue. All she could see was gleaming dragon eyes. All she could feel was his tongue.

"You must be feeling better." She patted... what was she patting? She ran her hands over the body part. It wasn't his snout. It didn't feel like a leg. Moisture eased from the slit on the...

"Oh, you are feeling better." He was right. His dragon cock was huge. And covered with those soft scales. She nuzzled it against her cheek. If it felt that good there... As she removed her breeches, he roared, the cave walls shaking. "Do you like what you see, my dragon?" His night vision must be better than hers. She couldn't see a thing.

But she could feel. She rubbed the cock up and down her body, the moisture from her pussy lubricating it. She lavished extra attention on his cockhead. He'd said it was sensitive. She kissed and sucked, tonguing the slit.

His tongue was as busy. One section of that wicked split tongue entered her pussy, the other flicked her clit, setting off an answering pulse between her legs. The experience of rubbing his cock while having her pussy eaten in two areas made her come, her wetness covering his scales.

That wasn't enough for him. He continued with the pussy massage and then... he hissed, an ultra-fast vibration of his tongue both on her clit and within her pussy.

"Grun," she cried out. It was too much. She shook; she quivered; she fell apart. "Grun." He nudged her until she bent over. That tongue retracted. His thick cock pressed against her, stretching her pussy to unbearable fullness. The tongue returned, flicking between her ass cheeks. Another hiss, another fast vibration, another soul ripping orgasm. "Grun!" she screamed as he roared and a torrent of hot cum shot deep inside her, penetrating every inch of her womb.

Over the next two days, they stayed in the cave. Her dragon would venture out, returning smelling of roasted beef, with a loaf of bread in his talons. They'd drink from a pool of crystal clean water deep within the cave. She would talk to him, pet him, touch him. And they would fuck every chance they could, Taja gaining a new appreciation for the skills of her dragon lord.

Then one morning -- she assumed it was morning -- she woke to find human fingers stroking her pussy. "Grun," she moaned, spreading her legs.

"I have wanted to do this for days." He thrust his hard cock fully inside her.

Her pussy clasped him. She hadn't realized how much she'd missed this. Him embedded deep in her. He thrust in and out, in and out, in and out.

He kissed her as he thrust, pumping her mouth with his tongue as he pumped her pussy with his cock. His rough hands squeezed her breasts, rolling her nipples between his fingers. One more hard thrust and they came together, a rumble of heat and wet and passion. "I love you too, Taja." He kissed her forehead. She must have screamed that during climax. "I will always love you. You are mine." He cupped her mons possessively.

She cupped his cock. "I am yours."



## Epilogue

They flew to the Schattenhaft/Erbin border and walked in, Grun in human form, a wide grin on his face, Taja's hand in his. She was his. His warrior lady. They had fought together and won. He'd never allow her to put herself in danger again, but he was proud she could defend herself if need be.

Berg, the golden drakon, was in the courtyard as they returned. He grinned, giving him a hearty pat on the shoulder. "A word of advice, Schattenhaft" -- his voice dropped to drakon levels -- "the old king might like you better if you were not so obvious about fucking his daughter."

"A word of advice, Berg," he rumbled back. "You put my mate in danger again and I will rip your skull off your neck."

The young lord chuckled.

Taja's father and brother were in the banquet hall when they entered. "Father." Taja rushed into the king's arms. Grun stood back and watched as she was passed from father to brother and then to her cousin and many other people he couldn't remember meeting. His dragon didn't like the men touching his woman, but he kept the beast under control.

Finally, she returned to him. He placed a possessive hand on her hip. "She is mine." He echoed the announcement he made when first meeting them.

"You are not the husband I want for Taja, Schattenhaft."

Quiet fell in the hall at the king's declaration. Grun growled. All he had done and he was to be denied? The dragon fought to express his fury.

"He is the husband I want, father." Taja patted his chest. "I will accept no other."

And Grun would not leave without her. He held the king's gaze. He let his beast show. The older man's eyes widened.

Her father looked away. "You know not what he is, Taja."

"I know exactly the man Lord Schattenhaft is, father. He fought for me." She glanced around. "For Erbin. He is a warrior. This is a strong alliance, for Erbin and for Erbin's princess."

A shake of his crowned head. "You were always a stubborn child."

Taja's chin lifted. "I am no longer a child."

"In my heart, you will always be my child." The king sighed. "Lord Schattenhaft, I am an indulgent father and, as Taja will have no other, I cannot deny her. If you wish, she is yours."

Grun looked into Taja's sparkling blue eyes. "I wish." He kissed her and a cheer filled the room.

## **Cynthia Sax**

Some girls dreamed of knights in shining armor. Cynthia Sax dreamed of dragons, magnificent flying dragons. Being a bloodthirsty little thing, Cynthia usually dreamed of these dragons eating the damsels in distress. Now, she dreams of them doing... ahhh... more pleasurable things.

Cynthia is happily married. Although her hubby has not yet shown any shapeshifting abilities, he does buy her medieval princess costumes to wear around the house. Cynthia's rather traditional mother-in-law now always calls before visiting. You can learn more about Cynthia by visiting her website at [www.CynthiaSax.com](http://www.CynthiaSax.com) or email her directly at [Cynthia@CynthiaSax.com](mailto:Cynthia@CynthiaSax.com).