

Dragon Shift



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Alice Gaines

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Ilona's always dreamed of her dragon. Now that she's grown, the images have become so erotic no real man can compete with them. But lately, she keeps getting jolts of sexual energy, and she needs relief. So when a hunk of male flesh named Zimm shows up on the scene, she's tempted to finally lose her virginity.

Drake, crown prince of the realm of dragons, seeks his mate so that he can help her with her first shift. Unfortunately, he finds her living with demons, and one in particular has nearly seduced her into his bed. Drake now has to convince Ilona that she's his princess, and the best way is to take her on their mating flight.

Chapter One

It took all of Drake's self-control to keep from shifting on the spot and gliding through the barrier between his world and the humans' to find his mate. Months of sending probes had won him nothing.

He paced the small chamber, his hands behind his back. Even now, his skin ached to turn to scales. Patience. He needed to find patience somewhere.

"Do sit down," his family's royal magician mumbled from where he sat hunched over his newest charm. "I can't will this to go faster. Some things take time."

"You've had sixteen years since Princess Ilona went missing," Drake shot back. "She'll hit her mating age soon. I'm older and more experienced. I need to help her through her first shift."

"You mean through her first fuck, don't you?"

Drake stopped pacing and glared at Xander. "How dare you use such language with a member of the royal family?"

"Save your fire breathing for someone who cares," Xander said. "Do you want me to find the princess, or don't you?"

The gods knew he ought to breathe some fire. Just enough to singe the bastard and teach him some respect, but his family had tolerated Xander's family going back so many generations not even myth recorded how they'd established their alliance. All Drakenians endured all Xanderians. Their sphere worked that way.

Grumbling, Drake found a chair and sat in it as loudly as he could. In response, Xander only chuckled and stared into the shimmering blue obelisk on his worktable.

"Something's blocking us from finding Princess Ilona. A spell of some kind, and a powerful one," Xander said.

"So you've told me before. Did you call me here to repeat your usual explanation for failure?"

Xander bristled, his back stiffening. "I haven't failed."

"Not completely... Not yet," Drake answered. "But if I'm not her first lover, you will have failed."

"You expect her to have lived among humans to the age of twenty-one and not lost her virginity?" Xander's eyes rolled.

"I know she hasn't," Drake said. "Our connection would have broken if she had. I only sense her faintly, but she's there."

Xander crossed his arms over his chest. "And I suppose you saved yourself for her, too."

Drake didn't answer with words but glared at the magician.

After a moment, Xander's expression changed from sarcasm to disbelief. "Don't tell me you're a virgin, too."

"You know it's written that the future king and queen must be pure when they first mate."

"Sure, I heard that," Xander said. "I didn't think you took it literally."

"So you see, there's more than a little urgency in finding her."

"I do see." Xander turned back to his obelisk. "You and your hand must be really good friends."

"Enough!" Drake opened his mouth and released a small fireball. It danced across the room and hit Xander at the back of his neck.

"Yee-ay!" Xander batted at his hair, as a bit of it had caught fire. "It was only a joke."

"I don't like your jokes, old man," Drake said. "Do your job, or I'll turn you into your own funeral pyre."

"All right, all right," Xander grumbled. "Horny dragons... pain in the arse..."

The obelisk glowed golden for a moment and then went back to blue. Drake rose and went to Xander's workbench. "The signal. You found her again."

"Found and lost again," Xander answered.

"Send another probe."

After closing his eyes, Xander moved his fingers in geometric patterns over the obelisk. A crimson current appeared inside and then disappeared through the tip.

"Let's hope that penetrates the contrary spell, whatever it is," Xander said.

"Spells," Drake said. "Who could make such spells? Witches?"

"A witch is more likely to want to watch you fuck your virgin intended than to stop you from doing it." Xander's eyes got a wistful look to them. "I had a few witches in my day."

"More likely they had you, fool."

"Either way... you should try a witch." Xander's voice broke into a cackle. "But then, you have to be a virgin. And you call me a fool."

"Never mind that. If not witches, then who?"

"I hate to tell you, but the spell has an aura of demons."

"Demons." Drake paced some more. "My betrothed is held by demons?"

"Pray to the gods it isn't so, but there's a stench of hellfire about this."

Drake bent over the obelisk, even though he didn't have the training to read it. He smelled nothing other than the incense that always clung to Xander's hair. The magician knew what he was doing, even if he was a pain in the ass most of the time. No Dragon King, or in his case, Crown Prince, could afford to ignore Xander's advice.

"Damn, and we thought she'd wandered into the human realm and gotten lost," Drake said.

"She's in the human realm, all right, but humans didn't adopt her if my guess is right," Xander said. "Demons took her."

"Damn it all, we must find her. Without her, my life is nothing."

Xander touched Drake's arm. "I know I tease you, son."

Son. Xander never called him that anymore. Ever since he'd grown to full maturity, Xander had treated him like a man. The magician had even attended his first shift and had bowed in loyalty to his new Crown Prince. The comfort of their old relationship soothed, if only for a moment.

"I know what it would mean for you to lose Ilona," Xander went on. They both did -- perpetual loneliness, early death, and no heir to the crown. "I have something that may help."

The old man rose on knees so stiff they creaked and went to the cabinet where he kept his potions and astrological charts. He returned with a velvet box and handed it to Drake.

When Drake opened it, he found what looked like a huge jewel. It vibrated against his palm, giving off the same blue light as the obelisk. "Is this the same material?"

"A similar crystal with a slightly different function," Xander answered. "If it works the way I hope, it amplifies the connection between you and Ilona."

"You mean the way our minds touch, even across distance and realm boundaries?" Drake said. "This will make it stronger?"

"I haven't had the time to test it properly. Perhaps if you try it..."

Drake clutched the crystal in his fist and sent out a mental probe. All through the years that Ilona had been missing, their minds had touched from time to time. He'd only learned the importance of finding her at the time of his first shift. Forces of darkness had been gathering for some time in hopes of taking over his kind's realm. His subjects needed an uninterrupted succession along the royal line -- king and queen and offspring -- to serve as symbols and leaders for any battle that might come.

Since his father had shared all this knowledge, he'd worked more systematically to get her back. If this crystal worked, he should get a jolt in return right... about... now.

Holy gods! A blast of sexual energy surged back to him, radiating from the crystal out to every part of his body. His breath caught on a gasp as his cock instantly hardened to full erection. He'd reached her, all right, and she'd sent the message back.

"I take it the crystal worked," Xander said.

Drake gulped in a few breaths. "I don't think I'll be doing this in public."

Xander clapped him on the shoulder. "Good lad. Now off to find your mate."

"I only need to take leave of my father."

"Enter the human realm and keep using that," Xander said. "You'll find your princess well enough."

* * *

Hells fucking bells. Ilona went from dream to full alert in a second. Tingling everywhere, especially between her legs. So highly aroused, she'd climax any second. She'd been gripping her breasts through the silky material of her nightgown, and the nipples felt like tiny rocks against her palms. Her pussy had soaked past the lips to her thighs. What had been going on in that dream, anyway?

Oh yes, the dragon again. She'd dreamed of him since she was a child, and the images had grown sexual as she matured. Lately, they'd gotten completely out of control, but none of them had packed this much wallop.

She closed her eyes and let the dream images slide back into consciousness. The dragon wrapping his body around her -- jewel like scales rasping against her skin as he lifted both of them into the air. Strong arms held her as the dragon's wings took them higher. With each soar, her body came to life. Throbbing. Aching. Begging to be filled.

Oh God, hot. So hot. As if his fiery breath burned her. Sighing, she slid her hand between her legs and stroked her pussy. In her mind's eye, she and her dragon lover dipped and spun, linked together in spiraling excitement. Then, he became a man and joined her here, in her own bed. He still breathed fire against her skin as he surged forward, impaling her on his cock.

She cupped her mound, her fingers pressed against her clit. Swollen and hard, it responded by sending a shock through her. She moaned and kept up the pressure, now making firm circles over the head.

Though she'd never taken a man inside her, she knew exactly how he'd feel as his control slipped and he had no choice but to move faster and deeper. If only she could have him now. How much sweeter the climax would be.

Still, she dreamed of him -- his body crushing hers, his lusty sounds in her ear -- as she toyed with the nub between her thighs. The pressure built, swelling inside her until it crested over the peak. She bit her lip but couldn't quiet a cry as her sex contracted in orgasm. So powerful. Stronger than she'd ever come before.

When it ended, she rolled onto her stomach, whimpering into her pillow. Holy shit. What had that been about? Maybe horniness had finally gotten to her. She ought to just give in and let some guy fuck her. She'd had enough offers, and some men turned her on well enough for mutual orgasm. She was getting damned good at oral sex -- giving and receiving. But every time she decided, "Okay, this man is good enough," he somehow still came up short.

Maybe she was waiting for a dragon. If so, she'd die a fucking virgin. There were no dragons, and she just had to get over her pickiness.

A knock came on her door. "You through getting off in there?"

Shit. Emmaline. Her sister must have bionic ears. Ilona jumped from the bed and went to the door. Before Emmaline could knock again, Ilona had the door open, grabbed her sister's arm and dragged her inside. "Were you standing out there listening?"

"I didn't have to be. You made enough noise."

"Fuck." Ilona looked up and down the empty hallway before shutting the door.

Emmaline had already seated herself on the bed and twirled a lock of her red hair. In her baby-doll pajamas, the teenager made the perfect picture of naughtiness.

"Honestly, Ilona," Emmaline said. "I gave up masturbating years ago."

"Years?"

"Well, maybe months. The real thing is so much better."

Ilona stared at her. "You haven't had sex yet."

Emmaline gave her an evil smile and twirled, twirled, twirled her hair.

Oh, for crying out loud. Ilona sat on the bed next to her younger sister. Younger and more sexually fulfilled. "So, who's the lucky guy?"

"Howard, of course." Emmaline's grin grew even wider.

"What happened to Jimmy?"

"Pfft, Jimmy." Emmaline dropped her hair finally and made a dismissive gesture with that hand. "Not big enough."

"You did him, too?"

"He was good for a start. Then, there's Howard." Emmaline held up both hands now, measuring the length of a huge male member between them. The dimensions had nothing on her dragon's cock. Ilona's pussy clenched remembering it, or the dream of it, anyway.

"Howard has a frie-end," Emmaline singsonged at her.

"No, thanks, and you shouldn't be having casual sex, either."

"I take all the right precautions," Emmaline said.

"With your body. What about your heart?"

Emmaline rolled her eyes. "Did your heart get you off just now?"

"I'd appreciate it if you didn't say anything about that."

"Eww. I don't want to tell the world my sister is that hard up," Emmaline said.

"Don't tell Holly, either."

"Holly wouldn't care. She's the original love child."

True. Their grandmother had come of age during a time of sexual exploration. Sex, drugs, and rock and roll. Holly didn't do drugs, but she still listened to rock and roll. Lord only knew if she still had sex. It wouldn't take much to imagine her with a sexy sixty-four-year-old.

"We're a family of women who know how to enjoy ourselves, according to Hollyhock Smith," Emmaline said.

"Yeah, well, I'm adopted."

"You're hopeless. Pathetic."

"And employed, at least so far," Ilona said. "I need to shower and get to work."

Emmaline rose and sauntered to the doorway. She paused on the threshold and gave Ilona a saucy look. "Remember, Howard's frie-end."

"I suppose you've checked out the size of his tool, too."

Emmaline's expression got downright wicked. "Good idea."

Ilona launched a pillow at her sister.

* * *

"Damn it. Masturbating again." Without her willing it, Holly's backspines bristled sharp around her shoulders, and her talons emerged, newly sharpened. She needed to take more care. Even human furniture was frail, and she'd dinged the table top more than once. "What kind of perverted human being does she think she is?"

"The kind that can shift into a dragon maybe?" Emmaline let down her disguise, reverting to her demon shape. "I don't know what else to do with her."

"You offered her a human male with a large penis?"

"I showed her how large. She stared at my hands as if she'd come just imagining a lover so well-equipped."

"Her dragon nature's too strong."

Emmaline rested her chin on her leathery hand. "I'm afraid she might be getting help."

Holly stared across the table at her daughter. "What kind of help?"

"I heard her muttering something right after she came. It sounded like Drake."

"Damn, shit, fuck." Holly pounded her fist on the table and rose. "I didn't steal her and then spend all these years pretending to be her sweet grannie Holly just so that spawn of the skies could take her back from me."

"What about me? I have to play her stupid sister," Emmaline said. "I have to share a fucking bathroom with her."

"I promised the Dark One that we could pollute the dragon's lineage with spawn of our own." Holly paced for a while, fury building inside her. "If the dragon makes her pregnant first, his species will be secure for another generation. We'll be stuck here on Earth for another twenty years or more while we steal and raise a royal child for one of our kind to corrupt."

"What are we going to do?"

"She has to lose her virginity to one of us. Even if she doesn't mate for life, she's still tainted. Drake can't use her."

"I've tried everyone I can think of," Emmaline said. "She rejects them all for humans. Can you imagine? Humans."

"She probably knows they're safer than one of our men."

Holly paced to the window and stared out over the idiotic organic garden she'd grown. Vegetables. They made her puke. How many times had she retreated to her bedroom where the cloying scent of patchouli had covered the smell of real food -- burned animal flesh? Even a hotdog in a pinch. "We can't wait much longer. The dragon prince may find her."

"What's your plan?"

"Zimm."

"Zimm? You can't be serious," Emmaline said. "You know how he is. He'll take all the credit for ruining her."

"We don't have any choice," Holly said. "No female can resist him."

"This was our best chance to win the Dark One's favor for our clan. We worked for this. We've earned it."

"I'll have to deal with him somehow." Holly scanned the kitchen she'd occupied for so many years. Tedious duty, waiting for the dragon girl to grow. Baking brownies, adding the stinking herb when their captive was old enough to ingest it. Dangling male after male of her clan in front of the little idiot, only to have her turn up her nose. Holly would *not* let all that go for naught by having the bitch's mate show up to the rescue.

"We'll have to share the honor with Zimm. It won't be what we'd hoped for, but it'll have to do."

"All right. I'll set out for his domain immediately."

"Bring him right back here," Holly said. "I know what a temptation he is."

Emmaline's bony eyebrow went up. "You do?"

"We've crossed paths before."

"Is he really as good as everyone says?"

"Our little dragon whelp doesn't stand a chance against him."

* * *

Drake furred his wings and landed softly in the dark athletic field of some kind of school. Now a naked human, he clutched his pack and scrambled into the shadow of a shed. Once dressed, he checked the wallet Xander had prepared.

The magician followed things in the human sphere, and he'd equipped Drake with identification, cash, and credit cards. He only needed to find a place that rented cars, and he could start his search for Ilona.

He took the jewel from its velvet case and let it warm his palm. It sent out a pulse to search for his mate. All the way here, the magic had served as navigation, homing in on his mate and sending back her signal. Stronger each time.

It returned hard and fast this time, nearly buckling him with the force of her hunger. Poor Ilona. At the other end, she'd be getting bursts of desire she couldn't explain. At least, he knew the reason for his constant erection. With any luck, he'd find her soon and give them both some relief.

After slipping the crystal into its case, he put it into the pocket of the leather jacket Xander had found for him. Both that and the jeans he now wore fit him rather more snugly than dignity required. The magician had assured him that showing off his shoulders and ass would make him irresistible to any female he encountered. Problem was tight pants might show off the state of his member if he wasn't careful. He hadn't come here to excite human females -- or worse, scare them. He'd come for Ilona.

Out on the street, he found himself near the downtown area of a small city. Courthouse, church, library, and a public square. Various businesses surrounded it. One looked promising -- a bar of the dingy type where a stranger might wander in without raising eyebrows. He loped across the park, checked for traffic, and crossed the street to the dump. Once inside, he paused to let his eyes adjust to the lack of light.

One old man sat at the end of the bar with a shot glass in front of him. Staring off into space, the guy seemed oblivious to everything around him. Most likely, he'd been drinking since the place had opened in the morning. Drake crossed the room and took a stool near the center.

The bartender wiped the area in front of Drake with a cloth that didn't look entirely clean. "What'll ya have?"

"Whatever you have on tap." Drake laid a bill down and watched as the man poured the beer and set it in front of him.

It was cold and not half-bad -- brew being one of the benefits of visiting the human realm. "Do you know where I can rent a car around here?"

"Out by the airport's the only place I can think of." The bartender seemed to care nothing for the fact that a man with an alcoholic beverage in his hand was asking about driving a car.

"How would I get out there?" Drake said.

"I'll call you a cab. It'll take a while for it to get here."

"Thanks."

The bartender headed toward the back where, presumably, he'd call a taxi. Drake savored his beer for a few minutes until the skin on back of his neck started to crawl. He could almost feel it turn scaly in warning. Something had gone seriously wrong and pretty damned fast. He sat, clutching his glass, and centered himself.

Something not right had entered the room, and the sounds of footsteps said it was approaching the bar. The man appeared after a bit. He could have been human, as plenty of them harbored evil. Wearing leather from top to bottom, he leaned on the bar with the sort of insolence that made female hearts flutter. He wore a jacket not unlike

Drake's, pants that could have been painted on, and boots with a high shine. The black of his clothing contrasted with his pale skin and shocking blond hair that spiked in places but also flopped down over his forehead to his eyes.

He looked Drake up and down and then smiled. "What do you have to do to get a drink around here?"

"Bartender's in the back."

The man pulled a wallet out of his hip pocket and put some money on the bar. After glancing around a bit more, he gestured toward Drake's jacket. "You ride?"

Given the man's leathers, he probably meant motorcycles. "Some. I don't have my bike with me."

"I didn't think I saw one outside. I didn't see a car, either."

"I'm visiting. I need to rent one."

"Uh-huh."

The bartender returned. "Cab'll be here in a while."

"I'll have a tequila while we wait," the new guy said.

"We?" Drake said.

"Figure of speech." For a moment, the man's image seemed to waver -- the sign of a shifter who'd become overconfident and let himself change a bit. Interesting.

The bartender put a large shot glass in front of the man and filled it with liquor, which the guy immediately picked up and emptied in one swallow. He grimaced and slammed the glass down. Without batting an eyelash, the barkeep refilled it, took some money, and stood there as if waiting to dispense even more spirits.

Instead, the blond rested his elbow on the bar and sipped at his tequila. "I'm a visitor here myself."

"Business?" Drake asked.

"In a pit like this little burg?"

"No, of course, not."

"Amazing how a place can be God-awful and boring at once." He swallowed some more tequila. "I'm here for pleasure, myself."

Looking for pleasure in a God-awful yet boring town made even less sense than doing business there, but business and pleasure were different for a shifter than regular human beings. This guy wasn't dragon, or they would have recognized each other. That left a lot of other possibilities, some benign and others not so much. This one didn't feel benign.

"What about you?" the man asked. "Business or pleasure?"

"Business." Very serious business, no matter how much pleasure he'd get from it.

The man straightened and came a bit too close for protocol with dragon royalty. Probably too near for comfort among humans, too. Shaping Drake up, no doubt about it. He'd been careful with his form, so this man couldn't know for sure he was a shifter. He clearly sensed something other than human, though.

They stared at each other for a moment. Sitting on the stool, Drake had to look up, but they were about the same height and build. More important -- what kinds of weapons did the man have at his disposal?

"Someone call for a cab?" came a voice from the door.

When Drake looked in that direction, light from outside blinded him for a second. "I did."

He counted out a tip for the bartender and rose to stuff the rest of the money into his pocket. The blond had disappeared.

"Did you see where he went?" he asked.

The bartender cleared off the shot glass and wiped the bar beneath. "He left."

"How?"

The man looked at him as if he was crazy. "Through the doorway."

"Did you see him?"

"Didn't you?"

"Never mind." The guy had probably gone out the normal way, but he would have done it pretty abruptly. Or he might have cast a brief spell. He could be outside waiting to follow Drake. What a laugh, as he had no good idea where he was going. Let

the shifter follow him around in circles for a while. He wouldn't approach Ilona until he could feel sure no one followed.

"You coming or not?" the cab driver asked.

"I'm ready."

* * *

Something rumbled outside on the street loudly enough to pull Ilona out of her latest sexual daydream. She had them all the time now. Much more of this, and she'd have her head examined.

Holly jumped out of her chair, dropping her latest crochet project into its basket. "He's here. Now remember what I told you."

Ilona set aside her magazine. "What did you tell me?"

"About Zimm."

"Does this mean Zimm is responsible for that noise?" Ilona asked.

"Be nice to Zimm. He's my friend, Sadie's, grandson, and he's perfect for you."

"Holly, tell me you didn't try fixing me up again."

"Wait until you get a look at him." Holly went to the door and pulled it open. A deafening roar erupted outside. A huge motorcycle being revved for maximum noise. Holly waved her arm a couple of times. "Come on. Come on."

Ilona joined her grandmother and checked out the new arrival. He sat straddling a monster of a bike, occasionally giving it more gas. When he spotted them, he turned off the engine, set the kickstand, and dismounted.

"Did I tell you he's a hunk?" Holly said.

Ilona stared at her. "Holly! He's your friend's grandson."

"I'm not going to lust over him," Holly said.

"Thank heaven."

"You are."

"You have fixed me up." Ilona groaned. "I wish you wouldn't do that."

"You're not a girl anymore. You should have some fun."

"You're importing men to seduce me?"

Holly glared at her. "He's here to look for a job."

"So, he's sticking around."

"You'll have plenty of time to get to know him." Holly dashed across the porch and down the steps to the street. The man opened his arms, and Holly launched herself into them. The man -- Zimm -- stared at Ilona over her grandmother's head. His expression didn't say whether he approved of what he saw or not. After Holly released him, they climbed the stairs together, arm in arm.

At the top, Holly grabbed Ilona's hand and put it into Zimm's. "Ilona, Zimm. Zimm, Ilona."

"Nice to meet you," she said.

His brow quirked upward. "Nice?"

No, not nice at all, but she wouldn't tell him that. In fact, she'd just lost her voice and wouldn't be telling him anything at all for a minute.

With rare understatement, Holly had labeled him a hunk. Tower of lust-worthy male flesh fit him better, as did creature of erotic fantasy and crotch-wetting super-stud. His impossible honey-brown eyes looked her up and down and then widened with masculine approval so frank it stopped her breath. His lips parted as if in preparation for a kiss, and damn her, she wouldn't stop him from doing it right in front of her grandmother.

"It's definitely nice, Miss Ilona," he said in a husky purr. "I'd say you're very nice, lady."

"I knew you two would get along," Holly chirped as she entered the house, leaving them alone.

Ilona swallowed hard but stood as if glued to the porch, waiting to see what he'd do. He moved closer, the leather of his clothing creaking softly. Finally, he pushed a lock of white-blond hair out of his eyes and smiled again. "Come on. Let's go for a ride."

"But, Holly..." Ilona gestured inside the house. "You only just got here."

"She's known me since I was a kid. She won't forget about me in the next hour or two."

"Hour or two?"

He put a finger under her chin. "I want to get to know you, precious."

Precious? She looked up into his luminous eyes and did her best to breathe.

"I'll keep you safe. Come on."

Chapter Two

Even with her head tucked behind Zimm's back, the wind whistled in her ears. She should never have gotten on the back of a stranger's motorcycle, even if the stranger was a friend of her grandmother. She should have insisted on a helmet. She should have demanded he slow down the moment he jerked them away from the curb at home. Fool that she was, she hadn't done any of the smart things, and now she could only cling to him and hope for the best.

They left town and headed along a country road between farmers' fields. On the long straightaway, she didn't have to worry about leaning into turns and could concentrate on Zimm's wide back and the feel of his solid abdomen under her palms. The thrumming of the bike's engine between her legs made the ride even more sexual -- as if man and cycle had merged to create one being dedicated to total seduction of her senses.

After a while, they left the pastureland and entered woods. Here, the road did twist. The bike went with it, banking and swerving. Not unlike the flight from her dreams when her dragon turned her this way and that while his member plundered her pussy.

Damn, damn, damn. In another moment, she'd become fully aroused, and the man in her arms seemed well capable and willing to give her the ultimate satisfaction. Fucking him wouldn't be right, not after just meeting him and speaking no more than twenty words to him. *He* wasn't right. No matter how sexy he might be, she would not give her virginity to this man.

He pulled off the street onto a dirt road. The bike's roar seemed to echo off rocks and trees as he went a few yards and stopped behind a huge oak. As soon as he stopped the engine, she climbed off and smoothed her hair, her fingers catching in the tangles.

Zimm took his time dismounting as if showing off his body. And what a body he had. She'd noted his broad shoulders. Now she had to admire his slender hips and curved buttocks. The leather pants showed off his ass, making her stare, despite her usual good sense.

He caught her, and in return, let his gaze settle on her breasts until her nipples tingled. Before she could form a word in her head, he took her arm and pressed her against the huge oak. Pinning her there with his body, he gave her another of his wicked smiles. "You're just like me. A good ride makes you horny."

"Look, I don't even know you."

"Oh, you know me, precious." He grabbed her hand and pressed it against his fly. No mistaking the hard bulge there. He was as aroused as she was.

She jerked her arm back and tried to slide away from him, but his mouth came down on hers in a searing kiss.

Wrong. Wrong. And yet, she couldn't keep herself from kissing him back. He burned her somehow, his lips setting fire to her own. She could only survive by consuming him. Demanding more and more. She held his face as she took what she needed from his mouth, even parting his lips so she could stroke the insides with her tongue.

After several moments, he pulled his head back. "Hey, there. Slow down a bit."

"Can't." She found the zipper of his jacket and pulled it down. Once she had it open, she tugged his T-shirt out of his pants and ran her palms underneath. He was all muscle and smooth skin. And heat everywhere. Hot. So hot. More fire, singeing her fingertips. While she nibbled along his jaw and down his neck, she found his flat nipples and rubbed her thumbs over them.

"Precious, you're too much." He pressed his pelvis against hers and sucked in a breath. "Shit. Keep this up, and I'll have to fuck you until you can't see straight."

Still wrong. But now, his hands moved over her body. Pushing up and into her sweater. Shoving her bra aside. Cupping her breasts and squeezing. Callused fingers worked the nipples to furious hardness as her clit began to throb.

"Yes. Yes more." She clutched at his shoulders and let him explore her. She had to come now. Her body had gone too far to turn back. She imagined her dragon -- flying with him embedded deep inside her. In reality, another male was taking her to the peak.

"Don't worry," he murmured. "I'm going to take care of you."

"Please." Shit. Had she said that aloud? Had she really begged?

When he popped the snap on her jeans, she spread her legs for him. The zipper took forever to go down, but finally, he had his hands inside and into her panties.

Now, he spread her own moisture over her as he stroked her pussy lips. Almost there. Not quite. Just a little more.

Back and forth he went, until she'd dampened his hand and her upper thighs. The instant he touched her clit, she came. The climax rushed through her as she arched her back and shuddered. He kept pressing and rubbing until she'd finished. When she collapsed against him, he removed his hand from her jeans and held her against his chest.

"Precious, precious. What a hot little thing you are," he said.

She couldn't answer. Even if she could have made her voice work, she couldn't have found any words.

"You're so fast, you sorta left me behind," he said.

Oh damn, she had. She'd finished, and he hadn't climaxed. "I'm sorry. I can take care of that. Honest."

"What did you have in mind?"

"My hand." She hesitated. "My mouth."

He groaned. "Some head would feel fucking good right now."

She pushed away and reached for his fly, but he stopped her hands with his own. "Some other time."

"Don't you want me to?"

"I want you in the worst way." He kissed the tip of her nose. "But I want my cock inside you the first time."

She stepped out of his embrace. "This isn't exactly the best place for that."

"I wasn't going to do it now. I only planned to get you a little hot. Find out what turns you on."

Oh God, how embarrassing. He hadn't meant to get so intimate, and she'd almost torn his clothes off. She'd begged him to touch her, and she'd shattered immediately after he had.

Something had gone seriously wrong inside her. She'd always had erotic dreams, and she'd never had any trouble climaxing. But lately, she'd snapped. She spent all her time thinking or daydreaming about sex. She'd get urges out of the blue -- any time, day or night. They kept getting stronger. Now, she'd humiliated herself in front of a stranger.

"I misunderstood." She put a hand over her face. "What you must think of me."

"Hey, don't beat yourself up. You have a hair trigger. That's good in a woman. I can make you come multiple times."

"Oh, God," she moaned.

"No, really." He pulled her against him. "That kind of response makes a man feel like he's king of the world."

"I think you'd better take me home." Where she could hide in her room and never come out until after Zimm had left.

He pulled her face up to look into his. "You didn't misunderstand. I do plan to fuck you -- long, hard, and often. I just want to do it in a bed."

"See, here's the problem." She searched her brain for the right words. There weren't any. "I'm not going to fuck you."

He tilted his head and looked at her out of the corner of his eye. "Sure you are."

"I'm not. I can't."

"But you just offered me a blow job," he said.

"I'll do that for you. After just now..." She cleared her throat. "I owe you."

"I don't want you to owe me anything. I want my cock inside you."

"I'm sorry. That's not going to happen."

"Don't you worry, precious. It is."

* * *

Drake sat in a motel room, holding the crystal in his hand. He'd find Ilona tomorrow. He'd gotten close enough today to pinpoint her neighborhood. He'd run into a bit of a glitch when she'd gone off somewhere. Still, the probe had found her, and in the end, she'd returned home. Tomorrow, he'd find the house, introduce himself, and eventually get her to a place where he could help her with her first shift. Then, they'd mate, and he'd take her home.

For one last check, he sent out another signal. It came back loud and strong, stiffening his cock -- yet again. Hard enough to set his teeth on edge. He'd never get to sleep in this state. Worse, he'd need to save some control for when he found her. If he tried mounting her before she was ready, he'd lose her. If he shifted too early, he'd frighten her. He had to have the upper hand over his body.

He set the crystal aside, rose, and took off all his clothing. Finally free from confinement, his member stood straight out from his pelvis, already ruddy with lust.

Maybe he could forge a mental connection with his mate while he stroked himself. Though she'd never communicated with him this way, she might be close enough to feel his mind inside her own. He could prepare her, if only a little, for what would come when they'd actually met. Yes, to feel her mind, if not her body, while he climaxed would form the beginning of their union.

After sitting on the bed, he turned on the radio and ran along the dial until he found some soothing music. Something full of ethereal harmonies. Then, he lay back and gripped his shaft.

I'm here, my love, my mate. Ilona, feel me.

By the gods, he was going to explode. He'd waited so long, come so far. Maybe not tomorrow but the next day or the next, he'd watch her release the beautiful dragon

inside her. He'd caress her scales in the traditional mating dance, making her ready. His mind's eye played her virginal quiver of recognition and acceptance.

I'm here, my darling. Open for me. Take my body inside yours.

Using two hands now, he gently tugged at the tip of his cock while still running his fist along the rest to the base. Not as magnificent as his dragon's organ, it still responded well enough to send his brain reeling.

You part your legs for me. Inviting penetration. I take my position and slowly inch into you. Your wetness eases the way as our bodies take their first embrace. My sex inside yours.

There. He might have felt the pull of her brain as she climbed the pinnacle with him. A weak note and yet pure and sweet.

Ilona, my Ilona. Come with me as I lift you into my arms and take you on your first flight. Your wings tucked under mine, my body still inside yours. I feel your wonder. The freedom to soar as we reach the ultimate together.

Oh, now. He couldn't hold back any longer. If only he could feel her -- her pussy tight and wet around him as her cries came louder and faster. Her muscles contracting in wave after wave of ecstasy.

Yes! Oh, now... yes. Even across the distance, he felt her come. He joined her as the orgasm started in his sac and shot along the rest of him. His hips jerking, he came into his own hand, hot semen shooting out of him in spurts.

As he floated back to reality, he made one more psychic reach for her mind. When the answer came, he sat straight up on the bed. Someone else was with her.

* * *

Shit, not again. In the middle of dinner, no less. As calmly as possible, Ilona set her fork on her plate and clutched her hands together in her lap.

On Monday, she'd see a doctor. Embarrassing as it might be to confess, even to another woman, she had to do something. The sexual jolts had to stop.

"Are you all right, dear?" Holly asked.

"Fine. Just got something stuck in my throat." She coughed a few times for effect then took a drink of her water.

"Yeah, right," Emmaline said. That one was entirely too perceptive and could probably see her skin had flushed. "Where did you and Zimm go today?"

"We went for a ride," Zimm answered from where he sat across the table from Ilona.

"I should have asked what did you do," Emmaline said.

"None of your business." Ilona picked up her fork again, but the throbbing in her pussy wouldn't give her enough peace to eat. Thinking of that afternoon with her back against the tree and Zimm's hand in her pants didn't help. Neither did the fact that he was sitting only a few feet away -- close enough for their knees to bump.

"You shouldn't be ashamed of sexual expression. It's perfectly natural," Holly said.

"Good God," she said. "Why do I have to live with a former hippie?"

Zimm turned to Emmaline. "Ilona's right, squirt. It is none of your business."

That would have been decent of him, but his grin told the whole story of what had happened between them that afternoon. Actually, it told even more because looking at him, you'd have to conclude they'd fucked each other's brains out. They hadn't, but she'd love to do it right now. In fact, it'd be damned nice to slide under the table, open his fly, and suck on his cock while the others watched. Holy shit, she really was one sick cookie.

She got up, almost knocking her chair over. "Excuse me."

As she fled the kitchen, the sounds of the conversation there floated after there. Emmaline snickered. Zimm spoke. "I'll take care of Ilona."

She groaned inwardly and headed up the stairs. Of course, he'd come after her, and of course, she'd give in.

Damn, how could she resist the ultimate with him? Why should she even try? Why did she have to have this silly scruple in her head? Why couldn't she just let him screw her and get rid of the ache?

She managed to get upstairs and into her bedroom before he caught up with her. She even locked the door and pulled the drapes on the window closed. But moments later, his knock said he'd arrived.

"Come on, precious. Let me in."

"Please go back and finish your dinner," she called back.

"I'll finish something," he answered. "I'm going to eat you up."

Oh God, where was her dragon? Crazy with lust as she'd become, she could almost sense him. See his long, thick member as he stroked himself. Feel his hardness as he slowly entered her. Why wouldn't he find her so she wouldn't have to surrender to the man outside her door?

"I mean it, Ilona." The doorknob rattled. "My face between your thighs."

"Don't talk like that."

"Why not? Holly doesn't mind."

"Emmaline will never let me live it down," she said.

"Then, you'd better let me in."

"All right." She couldn't win this battle, not with her body on his side. They could do lots of things short of actual coitus. She just had to keep her wits about her.

The second she'd released the lock, he let himself in. She backed up as he re-locked the door and watched as he sat on the bed to remove his boots and socks.

He was every bit as sexy in jeans as he'd been in his leathers. The denim fit him like a second skin and had faded over his ass and thighs. When he stood again, she got a good view of his front and the bulge that pressed against his fly.

"All yours, precious," he said. "Every inch."

He jerked off his T-shirt and held it in his fist, exposing the flat belly and broad chest she'd had under her palms earlier. Then, he dropped that and unfastened his belt. "Want to see the woody you gave me?"

"Um..." Her mouth went dry, and she couldn't pull her gaze away from his hands.

He popped the snap and slid the zipper down slowly. "I've been hard since this afternoon."

"All that time?"

"You have some kind of love potion. Pheromones or something," he said. "I only have to look at you and... wham... instant hard-on."

"I had..."

The zipper went down a few inches.

"... no idea," she said.

He finished undoing his fly. Underneath lay skin... no shorts or briefs. She held her breath as he pushed his jeans over his hips, exposing his cock. It had, indeed, grown hard and thick, its reddened color signaling the height of his arousal.

"No idea at all," she whispered.

He gripped his sex by the base. "All for you, precious."

"No matter what, I'll make sure you're satisfied."

"I know it." He pushed the jeans down to his ankles and stepped out of them. Now naked, he approached her. "My turn to see."

Heat radiated off him as he pulled her sweater over her head. She had to lift her arms to help him, and then, he dropped the garment to the floor.

Leaning over her, he unfastened her bra. His breath scorched her neck and shoulder, and she leaned into him as if drawn by a magnet.

After he removed the bra and tossed it aside, he stepped back and cupped her breasts in his palm. "Small and round. Just the way I like them."

Her nipples responded to his touch the same way they had that afternoon, sending a shock from their tips to her heart and lower. She closed her eyes and moaned as her pussy released moisture into her panties. No fair. She couldn't resist pleasure this intense, and right now, the tip of his tool pressed against her belly. All she had to do was finish getting undressed, lie on the bed, and spread her legs, and he'd give her everything she needed.

Still, her dragon would know. She wouldn't take her maiden flight with him. She might never fly with him if she gave her virginity to someone else.

A dream. Was she so wrapped up in a dream she'd never have satisfaction in her real life? As impossible as it was, her dragon was real. She could feel him now. Nearby.

He'd fallen to his knees now, and his hand tugged at one of her sandals. She let him remove first one, then the other and then waited for what he'd do next.

Instead of taking off her jeans, he ran his hand along the inside of one of her legs all the way up to the space between her thighs. Rubbing up and down, he nearly grazed her sex. Tormenting her with almost there.

"Not quite right, huh, precious?" he said.

"Zimm..."

"This is the place, right?" He cupped her mound and squeezed a few times.

"Oh!" Even through the layers of her clothing, her clit came alive. Hair trigger, he'd called it. She'd turned into an addict, craving his touch.

"I wonder what's going on in there," he said. "My guess is you're getting good and wet for me."

This time when he rubbed the jeans into her sex, she moaned.

"Let's find out." Finally, his fingers went to her fly, first undoing the button at the top and then pulling down the zipper. Yanking, he pulled the jeans down to her knees and then buried his face in her panties.

"Damn, but you smell good," he murmured. "Sweet, clean woman in heat."

Her voice failed her. Her sex had taken control of her entire body. It demanded satisfaction, and she could only trust that he'd give it to her.

After a moment, he rose and led her to the bed. When she stretched out on it, he slid her panties over her hips and down her legs. Smiling, he brought the silky material to his nose and breathed deeply. "Soaking wet. I think I'll keep these."

He tossed her panties on top of his jeans and rolled on top of her, supporting his weight on his forearms. "Do you want me to kiss you?"

She put her arms around his shoulders and nodded.

"Where." He sampled her lips for just a moment. "Your breasts?"

She nodded again.

"That isn't what you really want, is it?"

"Just do something."

"You want me to eat your pussy, don't you?"

"Yes," she breathed.

"Say it."

"I want you to eat my pussy," she whispered.

"Zimm. Say my name."

"I want you to eat my pussy, Zimm," she said.

"Do you want me to suck on your clit?"

Her sex kept getting wetter and wetter, and he wanted to play twenty questions.

"Say it," he said.

"I want you to suck on my clit, Zimm."

He chuckled. "I thought so."

"Do it. Stop talking and do it."

"Your wish is my command." He scooted down her body, spread her legs wide, and guided them over his shoulders. Now, her sex was completely exposed, his nose brushing the hairs. Before she could scream in frustration, he grasped her hips and pulled her against his face.

What a wicked tongue he had. It found her clit immediately and stroked it softly. Like the petals of a flower in a breeze, touching and retreating. Enough to send her near the peak but not enough to push her over. Even when she dug her fingers into his hair and pushed his face harder against her, he still kept on with his maddening gentleness.

Her breath came in gasps and sobs now. How long could he prolong this torment? How long could she endure it? She fumbled for his face and dragged her fingernails across his cheek. Begging silently. *Now, damn it, now.*

He got the message. He finally sucked her clit into his mouth. More than enough pressure to make her snap. Enough to make her toss her head back and shriek as the

orgasm hit with such force it threw her into another reality. Her sex constricted in a wild rhythm as the climax continued.

Above all the madness came a voice. In her mind. *Ilona, my Ilona*. Even after she'd come and she went limp against the bed, the cry stayed with her. Someone had contacted her during the supreme moment. He'd gotten into her mind just as her dragon got into her dreams. He was her dragon. He was real.

Now spent, she hardly noticed when Zimm released her and scrambled back up to hold her in his arms. He'd given her that amazing climax, and at least she could pay him some attention.

"That seemed like a good one, precious," he said.

"Amazing," she whispered.

"My guess is Holly and Emmaline enjoyed it, too," he said. "You were loud enough to carry into the street."

She groaned and pressed her face into his shoulder. "Oh, no."

"Maybe not the street, but the kitchen for sure."

"I'll never live it down."

"I'm sure Emmaline has done the same," he said. "And Holly in her day, too."

"You're probably right." Come to think of it, she had heard some strange noises coming from Emmaline's room. As for Holly, she wouldn't let her mind run in that direction.

"There now," he said. "I'll give you a rest before the main course."

Well damn, he still thought she'd let him put his cock inside her. Why wouldn't he? Now, she had good reason to resist. She'd heard her dragon. He existed. He had to be nearby.

She wouldn't leave Zimm wanting this time. In fact, she could use oral sex to get him to give up on the idea of full coitus. She'd sneak up on him.

She snaked her hand between their bodies until she reached his cock. When she grasped the shaft and stroked him, he sucked in a breath.

"This is so beautiful," she whispered. "I want to suck on it."

"Not a good idea this time. I'm too fucking hot."

"That's why I want it."

He rolled onto his back and put his fingers around hers to stop the stroking.

"Don't you want to sit on it instead?"

"Not yet. Suck first."

"Come on," he said. "Climb on board. I can give you the ride of your life."

"Come on," she said. "Let me taste it."

Before he could object, she switched positions so she knelt next to his pelvis. He didn't put up much resistance as she pushed his hand aside and grasped the base of his tool. With the same sort of devious tenderness he'd shown her, she ran her tongue around the head of his member and then flicked it at the pucker.

He groaned. "Easy. I won't last long."

Exactly what she wanted to hear. She sucked the whole head into her mouth and resumed stroking his length.

"You know what you're doing, precious." Another groan. "Shit, that's good."

Lowering her head, she took more of him, now moving her head up and down in rhythm with her hand. His breath grew fast and raspy. Nearing the edge of his control. A little more now, and she'd have him.

"Stop now. Let me fuck you," he cried.

She didn't stop but kept on sucking, giving him as much friction as she could.

"Damn it, Ilona. Stop. I mean it!" he shouted.

She went on, now feathering her fingers over his sac with each downward stroke. She had him. Just a little more.

"Ilona. Oh, fuck." He held her head and pumped his hips upward. "Never mind. Oh, fuck."

She had to hold his cock by the base to keep him from pushing too much into her mouth. She'd won. She only needed to prepare for his orgasm.

He kept thrusting, punctuating his movements with gasps. A hint of salt danced on her tongue, the sign he'd nearly arrived. Soon, soon. Wait for it. Make it good for him.

When he stiffened and a shout started in his chest, she pulled her mouth off him and pumped like mad with her fist. Just in time before semen shot from him. He bellowed as a second spray flew onto her fingers and the bed. A third came right after before he finally finished, and he sagged against the comforter. "Un-fucking-believable."

She stretched out beside him. "You did as much for me."

His hand grazed her hip. "I wanted to be inside you. I could have made you come again."

"I'm sure."

"So, why not?" He'd opened his eyes now and was staring at her out of his honey-colored eyes. He did not look pleased.

"It's complicated," she answered.

"What's complicated?" he said. "I'm a man. You're a woman. My cock belongs in your pussy."

"I'm sorry, Zimm. It's not going to happen." She got up and started a search for her clothes. Her panties lay on top of his jeans, still soaked with her lust. She wasn't about to put those back on, so she went to her dresser and pulled open one of the little drawers on top.

"Listen, Ilona," he said from behind her. "You keep having some kind of fit of horniness. You had one at the kitchen table just now, didn't you?"

She gripped a pair of panties and didn't look at him. "So what if I did?"

"You know eventually you're going to need a cock when one of those hit. I'm here. I'm willing."

She did turn finally. He still lay stretched out on the bed -- every glorious inch of male flesh and muscle of him. Michelangelo could hardly have found a better model for his David.

"You know you're going to want me again. Maybe in an hour. Maybe four or five times tomorrow," he said.

Damn it all. He was only telling the truth, and they both knew it.

"You can't resist me forever. Eventually you'll have to give in, and I'll give you that ride I promised."

That was true, too. Even now, she couldn't look away but stood and stared at his masculine beauty.

And -- oh, Lord -- while she watched, his softened member began to grow thick again and lengthened. Becoming engorged again after so little time, as if he could will it erect.

She went to the door and snatched her robe off the hook there. Without looking back at him, she shrugged into it. "I'm going to take a shower. Please, be gone when I get back."

Chapter Three

Now that Drake had gotten so close, he didn't need to use the crystal to locate Ilona. He could feel her. His skin tingled, and his nose picked up just a trace of her scent. With no traffic in his way, he drove the rental car slowly along the residential street, passing one modest house with a neat lawn after another.

He finally stopped outside one home that didn't fit with the others. Ornate wind socks and chimes hung from every corner of the porch, and the house itself needed a layer of paint. One huge flowerpot in a corner held what looked like a plant that produced a controlled substance. Highly ornamental and probably illegal. And Ilona lived in there.

He stopped the engine, and though every cell in his body demanded that he go inside and drag her out, he had to plan his approach carefully. If Xander was right, he could be dealing with demons here, and he couldn't take Ilona from them without either tricks or a fight. Given demons' strength and razor-like claws, he'd do better with tricks.

Maybe, he could lure her outside and have a few words with her before her captors realized she was gone. He reached toward the glove compartment where he'd stashed the crystal and then thought better of it. Using it when they were this close would send a blast of lust powerful enough to send both their brains reeling. They'd both need their wits for the next few minutes.

Instead, he opened his mind and concentrated on their connection. Once they'd mated, the bond would be strong enough for them to converse across vast distances.

Right now, she didn't even realize she was a dragon shifter. She'd only hear him softly in the back of her mind, and the message might come through fuzzy.

Ilona, I'm here. He used all his concentration to send the message. After a bit, a weak answer came.

What... Not strong, but the first time she'd contacted him directly.

I'm outside. The street. Come outside.

A long silence followed. Then, finally. *Who are you?*

Glory halleluiah. *I'm your dragon. Come outside.*

He waited again, holding his breath. After what seemed like forever, the front door opened, and someone appeared on the porch.

Ilona!

Her head jerked around, and she spotted the car. Though he ached to run to her and take her in his arms, he forced himself to not alarm her but sit quietly and watch her approach.

Damn, she was perfect -- voluptuous in a way that most human females undervalued. Small-breasted but with the sort of hips that promised a glorious ass. She wore a flowing dress of a wheat-colored material, and her hips swung naturally as she descended the stairs from the porch and walked down the concrete path toward him.

His cock immediately came alive, swelling to full size and hardness within seconds. Still, he stayed in the car, only pushing the button to roll down the passenger side window.

When she reached the car, she hesitated. He sent another psychic signal, softly this time, so it would just whisper in her mind. *You're safe. Don't fear me.*

She rested her arms on the door and leaned into the car. "Who are you?"

For a moment, he let himself study her face -- soft lips, upturned nose, green eyes. She'd have emerald scales when she shifted. With any luck, he'd see that tonight.

"Listen closely," he said. "We don't have much time."

"Time for what?"

"Your dragon..."

She gasped. "What do you know about that?"

"Two a.m. The high school athletic field. You'll see the dragon then."

"Hey, Ilona," a male voice called from the direction of the house.

"You know where the high school is, right?" he asked.

She nodded, her eyes wide.

"Two a.m. Tell me you'll be there."

A hand shoved her aside, and none too gently. This time, a man stared in at him -- a guy with spiked blond hair and a malicious gleam to his eyes. The one from the bar. The smell of demon rolled off him.

"Move along, pal," the demon said.

"I was talking to the lady."

"Not anymore. The lady's not interested."

"She can speak for herself," Drake answered.

"It's all right, Zimm," Ilona said. "He wasn't bothering me."

Zimm. A demon name. Clearly, the bastard had staked out an interest in Ilona. In his mate. If the monster had befouled her, the mating would be difficult if not impossible.

No, his mate couldn't have done that with a demon. He'd sense it, wouldn't he? And yet, Ilona thought she was merely human. If she'd allowed a human to lie with her, that would be understandable, even if the mere thought did roil his gut.

"I don't think you heard me," the demon said. "I told you to go away."

Ilona gripped the demon's arm and turned him around. "You don't own me, Zimm."

"Come on, precious." The demon stroked her face. All for Drake's benefit. Precious, indeed.

"Let's go take a ride," the demon went on. "This asshole will be gone when we get back."

"Zimm," she chided.

Hell and damnation. As a stranger, he couldn't do anything about the situation short of shifting and blasting that abomination with fire. That would cause an all-out fight, and his mate would learn the reality of the situation in the most traumatic manner imaginable.

When the demon tried to put an arm around Ilona, she shoved it away. "You're acting like a jerk."

Zimm held his hands up in surrender. "I just want to show this guy how things are between us, precious."

"Stop calling me that," she said. "You don't own me."

That's right, Ilona. Don't give in to him.

She did nothing to give away the fact that she'd heard his mind except for a slight stiffening of her back. The demon wouldn't notice because he couldn't listen in on their communication. He and Ilona had forged a link. As much as Drake would like to stick around to make sure of her safety, that would only tip the demon off that real competition had arrived. Instead, he could trust Ilona to take care of things for the next several hours.

"It's all right. I'm leaving." Before he started the car, though, he sent out one last reminder. *Two o'clock. Athletic field. Your dragon's waiting.*

Then, before he changed his mind and did something unfortunate, he started the engine, put the car in gear, and drove off.

* * *

She had to be out of her fucking mind. Ilona clutched her sweater around her against a cool breeze. She'd gone out in the middle of the night on the word of a stranger that she'd meet a dragon on the football field of Sanders Mill High School. The man had seemed normal enough, but he might be a homicidal maniac. A homicidal maniac who could put thoughts into her mind.

He knew about her dragon. She'd never told anyone about her nightly visitor -- at first, a friend and playmate and then much, much more.

She couldn't leave, not if she might find out her dragon was real. If she could only see him, touch him, ride on his back through the night. Humans and dragons couldn't have sex, of course, so that part would have to be a fantasy. But, if she could witness his majesty, stroke his scales, tell him she loved him... that in itself would fill so many of her dreams.

The man appeared, walking along a path around the equipment shed. Taller than she'd imagined, he strode with a sense of purpose and even an air of royalty. His very ordinary clothes -- slacks and a sports shirt open at the collar -- seemed anything but common on his impressive body. Dark hair, pale skin, and eyes that revealed themselves to be a deep blue as he grew closer completed the picture of any woman's all-around dream man.

He walked to within a few feet of her and stopped as if he'd suddenly become shy. "You did come. I was afraid you wouldn't."

"What do you know about my dragon?"

"You'll learn that soon enough," he said. "First, let me look at you."

His shyness proved contagious because she sure caught it fast. When he took her hands in his and spread them for a better view of her, her knees threatened to tremble. His touch was gentle. Reverent, even. He stared at her as if memorizing every feature. "By the gods, you're even more beautiful than I expected."

"Who are you?" she asked.

"Call me Drake."

"Is that your name?"

"There's something I need to ask you, Ilona," he said.

She backed up a step, pulling her hands from his. "How do you know my name?"

"Aren't you more curious about how my mind can talk to yours?"

Well, yeah... there was that. "And you haven't told me how you know about my dragon."

"All right. I wanted to break this to you softly, but I don't suppose there's any good way to do that." His gaze bored into hers for several seconds. "I am your dragon."

"What the fuck?" This time, she took two steps back.

"I can prove it, but before I do, I need to know... oh hell, there's no soft way to put this either... did you have sex with that demon?"

"Hey, pal. You are seriously sick." She turned to go and even got a few yards before the zap hit her. Sexual, just like the others. It nearly knocked her from her feet.

"I'm sorry. I didn't want to do that," he said from behind her.

"You?" She turned back. "You did that?"

He held up what looked like a blue crystal of some kind. "This. I get a dose, too, when I use it."

"Ah, shit." She sucked in a breath. "You freak. You use that on me, and it makes you hot, too? What kind of pervert are you, anyway?"

"Ilona, please calm down."

"I don't have to calm down," she shouted. "You crawl into my mind, claim to be my dragon -- how you found out about that, I'll never know -- and then you shock me with that thing and tell me it turns you on, too. I think that gives me good reason to be pissed off. I think I'll call the cops."

"All right." He shoved the crystal into his pocket and started to undress.

Shit, he was going to rape her. She spun and ran as fast as she could across the field. After a moment, he followed, his rapid breathing telling her he was catching up.

Shit, shit, shit. "Help! Someone help me!"

No use. At this hour, everyone would be asleep, and she was too far from any houses for her voice to wake anyone up, so she kept running, but his footfalls kept getting closer.

His arm caught her finally and dragged her around. *Think, think.* Okay, to rape her, he'd have to get close, and she'd give him a hard knee to the groin. She'd never done that, but she'd manage now.

He didn't though. He kept her at arm's length, and then, the damndest thing happened. His form wavered as if a curtain of water had fallen between them. Behind that, he began to change. Growing larger and metallic. No, not metal -- scales, shiny blue scales. The kind you saw on fish sometimes. And dragons.

Her legs failed her, and she dropped onto her knees against the grass while he continued to grow and take form. He sprouted wings, and his arms turned into forelegs. Fingernails became obsidian talons. He grew a tail. Of course, a dragon needed a tail. This one had dorsal spikes that continued up his back. Finally, his head took shape. Aquiline -- more like a horse's than a lizard's, with upright ears on the top.

She forgot to breathe. He hadn't lied. He *was* her dragon. The exact creature that had taken her to flight her whole life. Her beautiful male -- a lover so perfect she'd refused to surrender her virginity to anyone else.

He bent his head low, arching his long neck, and brought his face toward hers. *I didn't want to frighten you.*

"You didn't." She lifted a hand and stroked his cheek. "You are so beautiful."

He made a soft, rumbling noise -- dragon's purr -- and nudged her shoulder with his nose.

All her life she'd waited for this. Somehow, her heart had known her dragon would come for her. She'd never fit in with Holly and Emmaline, even though they'd been good to her in their way. All through the long years, she'd held back from giving all of herself, but she didn't have to hold back any longer. This dragon had a human form, and she could make love with him.

"Are you going to take me flying?" she asked.

His blue eyes twinkled in response. *Of course.* He straightened and scooped her up in his arms. In an instant, he lifted them from the ground with powerful beats of his wings.

His four legs made a comfortable sling as he held her back against his front. She stared down on the place she'd lived her whole life, and now it seemed so small. With

her dragon, she could fly. She could experience life as magic, not the day-to-day routine of work and sleep.

As he took them higher and higher, he held her firmly against him. *Still not frightened?*

Laughter bubbled out of her. "It's wonderful."

He made his rumbling sound again and flipped over so that she stared up at the moonlit sky. The stars glimmered down on them, but they seemed dim in comparison to the blue light she'd seen in his eyes. After a few moments of that, he banked and then spiraled. The world turned around her -- sky-earth-sky-earth -- before he went into a dive and then swooped back up again toward the heavens.

Did you like that?

"I loved it," she answered.

Wait until you can fly on your own.

"I can what?"

Later. He straightened out and went along a steady course back toward the football field. The ground came up on them fast, but at the last minute, he dropped his rear legs, and they landed softly.

Now, his shape changed again -- a bit faster this time. The moment he'd turned back into a man, she launched herself into his arms. Who cared if he was still naked? Her dragon -- this stranger named Drake -- had taken her flying.

"Thank you. Oh, thank you," she said. "I've dreamed of that for so long."

"And I've dreamed of this." He kissed her, his mouth possessing hers. He devoured her as if he couldn't get enough. And neither could she. Their lips did battle for more and more as their bodies fit together. Through her clothes, she felt his member grow thick and hard against her belly. His breath burned her cheek, but that only heightened the experience. Her nipples stiffened, pushing against the lace of her bra, and at her core, she began the climb to complete arousal.

She pulled her face away from his and struggled for breath. "Fuck me. Please."

"By the gods, I want to." His hands on her face, he rested his forehead against hers. "Not here. Not tonight."

"Okay, not here," she said. "We can go back to my house. My room."

"Not there, either. We need somewhere very special."

Shit, he was right. She'd waited all this time. She could wait a bit more so she could lose her virginity surrounded by all the magic that had filled her fantasies. "I know the place."

"Tomorrow, then," he said. "For now, we'll go to my motel room."

"All right, let's go."

He got dressed, somehow managing to get his pants on around that erection. Watching it disappear made her pussy ache. She could wait. She could wait.

Finally, he took her hand. "This way."

"My car..."

"Leave it," he said. "We don't want your friend Zimm tracking it to my motel."

* * *

Drake set his keys on top of the motel television and watched Ilona sit on the bed to remove her shoes and socks. He'd only found her a few hours ago and still hadn't gotten used to looking at her.

She knew what he was now and had accepted him. They'd kissed, and what a kiss. Already, she was coming into heat to the point where her scent filled his mind, even from across the room. She'd begged him to "fuck" her, as she put it. Every inch of his body vibrated with need to do exactly that, and he had to wait until he'd helped her with her first shift.

As much as his human body could enjoy hers -- and would in the years to come -- their first time would come as dragons so that he could perform all the ritual moves that would mate them for life.

She seemed shy now. The woman who'd asked him to fuck her a few minutes ago now gazed around the room as if she didn't dare look at him. Just as well. If she'd

clung to him again, he'd have the devil's own time resisting giving her exactly what she'd asked for.

He sat on the bed next to her. Not touching but close enough that her scent went right to his gut.

"I hate doing this, but there are things I need to know," he said.

"Is that a joke?"

"Did it sound funny to you?" he said.

"You're the one who changed into a dragon. I'm the one who ought to have questions."

"Forgive me. The shift is perfectly normal for me. I don't think much of it."

"I hardly know where to start," she said. "Who are you? What are you? Where did you come from? How do you *do* that?"

"I come from a different realm, and so do you."

She stared at him. "I do?"

"You must know you don't belong here."

"I was adopted." She nibbled on her lower lip for a moment. "I never have fit in with my family."

"Those people aren't your family." He took her hands in his. "If I'm right, they aren't even people."

"Hey, come on. Holly's weird, but she's human."

"Listen to me, love. That man you were with... Zimm... he's a demon."

She pulled her hands away. "You're nuts."

"An hour ago, did you think a human could turn into a dragon and fly?"

"I guess you have me there."

He took her chin in his hand and lifted her head so she'd have to look in his eyes.

"I need to know, Ilona. Did you ever have sex with him?"

She stared at him for several seconds while his lungs refused to work.

"I did things with him," she said finally.

He managed to breathe, barely. "What things?"

"Oral sex."

Damn, that shouldn't hurt so much. Zimm couldn't have gotten his evil seed inside her with oral sex, but the idea of his mate letting the bastard put his mouth on her pussy made his innards flip. The image of her lush lips around the bastard's cock didn't feel much better. "You didn't let him inside you, did you?"

"He wanted to," she answered. "I gave him a blow job, instead."

He sighed. "That's all right then, I guess."

"You guess?" she said. "What right do you even have to ask?"

"I'm your mate, Ilona. I have every right."

"Screw that." She rose from the bed and paced across the small space to the entrance to the bathroom. "I never laid eyes on you until this afternoon when you showed up and put words in my head. Tell me, did you have that blue thingie with you?"

"I did. I had to locate you."

"You've used it before on me, too, haven't you?"

"It was the only way I could reach out for you." He glared at her. "I'd send a signal and get your reply."

"A sexual signal?"

"Our connection is sexual," he answered. At this exact moment, he'd leave love out of the mix. She didn't seem very loving with anger flashing in her eyes.

"Great. You've been using my pussy for some kind of perverted sonar."

"I didn't have any choice," he said.

"So, there you are, zapping me night and day, driving me crazy with lust, and you're mad that I went down on him?" she shouted. "You're lucky I didn't let him go ahead and fuck me."

"Would you mind cleaning up your language?" His own voice had risen. "It isn't proper for the mate of a Crown Prince."

That caught her up short. Instead of the next level of female fury, she gave him an expression of utter astonishment. "The mate... of what?"

"I know this is a lot to absorb. Sit down and let me start at the beginning."

She crossed her arms over her chest and stared at him as if she couldn't decide if he was safe or not. Perhaps he wasn't. He'd searched for her so long, his body aching for the completion only she could give. He'd used the crystal over and over to find her, each time getting her sexual signal back. Now, here she was -- mere feet away from him -- giving off the spicy perfume of a female of his kind on the threshold to maturity. Even his human senses had gone on overload with wanting her.

"Please sit down," he said. "I am your dragon, after all. I've proven it."

She did as he asked but stayed far enough away that they didn't touch.

"You and I are the same species," he began. "An ancient line of dragons who can also take human form."

"You mean I'm a dragon, too?"

"Not only a dragon but of a royal family. You and I were betrothed when we were infants -- mated at even that young age." He reached out and brushed the backs of his fingers against her cheek. She flinched a bit at first but then settled in to his touch.

"I'm destined to rule our realm when my father dies. The Crown Prince -- and you're the Crown Princess," he said.

"Impossible," she said. "It's too fantastic."

"Think of your family. They're not blood relations, so how did an older, single woman get custody of a small child?"

"I've never really thought about it," she answered.

"Humans don't do things that way, do they?"

She shook her head.

"You disappeared. My family started a search for you immediately. I joined when I was old enough. I found you just in time."

She gazed at him out of her bottomless, green eyes. "In time for what?"

"Your first shift. I'm here to help you."

"Oh, God." Air rushed out of her in a sound of wonder and fear. "I'm going to turn into a dragon."

"Not only that." He stroked her jaw with the pad of his thumb. "We'll have our mating flight."

"Mating."

"We'll fly together with my sex deep inside yours."

"I understand now." She turned toward him. "Why I never wanted to take a man inside me."

A warm feeling blossomed in his chest. Hope. Fulfillment. Love. "What are you telling me?"

"I did... well... things with a few men."

"Like Zimm," he said.

"Exactly. But technically, I'm still a virgin."

"Oh, my darling." The feelings inside him swelled until he could scarcely breathe. "I'm a virgin, too."

She stared at him in disbelief. "You must have done a few things yourself."

"Of course. I had to learn how to make love to my mate."

"So, we'll do it tomorrow?" she asked.

"Tomorrow morning, in your special place."

She moved closer and put her arms around his neck. "I can't wait."

"I'm having a hard time finding patience, too."

Her eyebrow went up. "Hard?"

"Very hard."

"Let's see." She put her palm against his pants and found his erection. So eager for her touch, his cock fairly jumped in his pants. Though he tried to swallow a roar, the sound burst from him as a grunt.

"Very hard," she said. "And very, very big."

As she continued pressing against him, he clenched his teeth for control. "You have no idea what you're doing to me."

"I know what you did to me with that crystal," she said. "I think we both need a few of those sexual things we mentioned."

"Bless you." He reached to the hem of her sweater and pulled it over her head. When she lifted her arms, he scooped the garment off and tossed it away. That left a tiny bra -- no more than a scrap of fabric -- cupping her breasts. The hook opened easily, and soon he had her flesh in his hands. So perfect. So delicate and soft. He bent to kiss one, taking the nipple in his mouth to suck.

Her fingers burrowed into his hair. "That's right. That's what I needed."

He continued for a while, and then gave the other breast the same loving.

A cooing sound floated from her chest as she held his face against her. "Unbelievable. As if no one else has ever touched me."

"I need more," he whispered against her skin.

"Let's undress." She pulled away and stood beside the bed, waiting for him. He did the same, and now they faced each other as he removed his shirt and let it drop to the floor.

Slowly, they took off their clothing, moving as mirror images of each other. His slacks, her jeans. His shorts, her panties. When they were finally naked, they stood and gazed at each other.

"You're a vision," he said softly.

"You're amazing." She stepped closer and took his swollen member between her palms. "And this... magnificent."

He pushed her hands away. "Easy. I'm ready to snap."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Lie on your side on the bed. Let me snuggle against you while I tell you of the mating."

"Oh, yes." She stretched out, her luscious ass facing him. In an instant, he found his place behind her, nudging his shaft between her buttocks. The pressure was nearly unbearable, so he quickly reached around and found the swollen lips of her sex.

She gasped when he found her bud, and moisture coated his fingers. "Yes! I'd touch myself when I had my dream."

"Now I'll touch you."

"So much sweeter. Oh, please. Just like that."

"You'll become ready for me the instant you've shifted for the first time, but I'll still perform the rituals." He kept stroking her as he talked. "You'll be a beautiful, deep green, and I'll want you so much."

"Green?"

"The color of your eyes." He stroked her harder, readying her the same way he would in the morning.

"So good." She moaned. "Will you do this tomorrow?"

"Something like it. The patterns are written in every cell of my being. Yours, too."

"My body will know what to do?" she whispered.

"We'll come together the way our kind always have," he said. "Neither of us will have any choice. Mating fever will drive us."

She made a few keening noises as she drew closer to the peak. "Will I come before we fly?"

"You'll climax while we soar. Your contractions will make me join you."

"I can feel it now. I swear."

She couldn't, and neither could he. Neither of them would experience their true sexual power until the mating. Right now, they'd share a pale imitation, even if that could stop his breath with its force.

"Drake." She was panting now, moans and cries punctuating every breath.

"Yes, my love."

"Don't stop."

"Never." She had to finish soon. He'd burst if he couldn't release all the pent-up need inside him. He needed to hear her song in his ears before he could climax, and yet, he couldn't wait.

Yes, there. Her cries grew louder, soaring to fill the room. She'd come close enough now that he could allow himself some more pressure. He thrust his hips rhythmically, pushing his cock between the firm globes of her ass. Still, he managed to

hold onto enough control to keep rubbing her bud. Even breaths. Thrust, retreat. Stroke, stroke. When he could stand no more, he took her clitoris between thumb and forefinger and rolled it.

"Oh!" she cried. "I'm gonna come. Don't stop!"

She arched against him as she climaxed. At last, he could hold back no longer. The orgasm raced through him like wildfire. He shouted as his essence spurted out of him and landed on her buttocks and even at the small of her back.

An orgasm like he'd never had before, but tomorrow promised even better.

* * *

Ilona's skin tingled all over. After a whole night, she couldn't possibly still feel the aftermath of that incredible orgasm, but she hadn't stopped glowing since the contractions had rushed through her pussy. She'd spent the night in Drake's arms, and a cloud of something had seemed to hover around them. When she dozed, it buzzed and crackled near her consciousness, and when she awoke -- she'd done that often during the hours of darkness -- it retreated but never left entirely.

This day would bring miracles, and Drake would guide her through all of them. He smiled at her occasionally as they drove out of town to the tract of land owned by the power company and ringed with guard rails and no trespassing signs. Holly had taken great glee in flipping the finger to the signs as she and Emmaline had climbed over the rails on the way toward their picnics.

Imagine. Holly and Emmaline demons. It was easier to believe of Zimm. If Drake had told the truth, nothing in her past life would matter.

She watched Drake's face as he stared ahead of them, guiding the car along the narrow road. Light and shadows played over his features as the car passed beneath the tall trees.

Studying him now, she had no trouble imagining him as royalty. He had a commanding presence -- a strong line to his jaw and a gleam in his blue eyes.

He glanced at her out of the corner of his eye. "Frightened?"

"I'd be lying if I said no."

He put a hand over hers. "I was, too, the first time."

"Does it hurt?"

"It's disorienting," he said. "I'll be there."

"I can't wait." She leaned forward, squinting through the windshield. "There. Pull over."

He steered the car onto the shoulder and stopped the engine. With one more smile, he climbed out and went around to open her door. A gentleman. A prince, indeed. She took his hand and let him help her over the rail. No picnic basket this time. Just a man and a woman scrambling down one side of the ravine and up the other. The woods closed in around them as she led him to her favorite spot.

The property must have served as someone's home in an earlier time. Low walls of stones fitted together enclosed it on all four sides. She'd never mentioned it to the others, but she always had a feeling of magic as soon as she entered the quadrangle. She did again today, only now she had good reason. As Drake helped her over the stones, the feeling of impending change intensified until she hardly seemed to fit inside her own skin.

"Lovely place," he said.

"You can still make out the patterns of the gardens." She pointed toward a corner. "There's a very old rose growing over there."

"The wildflowers fit you better than a cultivated one," he said.

"That comes from being raised as an old hippy," she said.

"She's a demon, Ilona."

"You don't know that. You've never met her," Ilona answered.

"I met that Zimm character. That tells me all I need to know."

"Maybe Zimm's the only demon. Holly probably doesn't even realize it."

He took her in his arms and kissed her nose. "Trust me. You're new to this."

"I don't know..."

"Hey. I'm your dragon, remember?"

"That you are." She ran her arms around his waist and brought her body up against his. "Now, you'll be my lover."

"Your mate," he corrected. "Ready?"

She took a deep breath. "Sure."

He went down on his knees to undo the laces of her shoes. Balancing on one foot and then the other, she let him remove them and her socks. When she started to undress herself, he rose quickly and put his hands on hers.

"Let me," he said. "The male undresses his woman. Ritual."

"This feels strange suddenly. As if I've never been naked with a man."

"My heart's racing." He took her hand and placed her fingers on his neck. His pulse beat rapid and strong, just as her own did.

"Now, then..." He removed her sweater as he had the night before, and again, her bra followed. This time, he didn't kiss her breasts but undid the snap of her pants and pulled the zipper down.

Again, he bent in front of her, pulling down her jeans and panties in one motion. Again, she helped him remove them until she stood without a stitch on her body as warm air caressed her everywhere.

Once she'd regained her balance, he eased her legs apart and moved between them. His tongue found the lips of her pussy and delved inside to stroke her clit.

She let out a gasp of surprise and pleasure and rested her hand on his head while he continued. So sweet. So hot. Irresistible. Her head grew heavy, and she let it loll back as he continued pushing her hot button.

"Is this ritual?" she breathed.

He rose and took her in his embrace. "Nope. I just wanted a taste."

"Then, let me shift so we can finally mate."

"All right. It's easiest if you sit." He lowered himself to the ground and crossed his ankles over each other to create a space between his legs. Then, he helped her to join him, her back to his front, her buttocks pressed against his already engorged member.

Holding her against him, his hands covering her breasts, he began to chant in a foreign language unlike any she'd ever heard. The tune had a hypnotic lilt to it, and her eyes drifted shut on their own. As he went on, fragments of words came to her and then whole ones. *Mate... want... need.*

Her skin started to change first. It crackled and rose up on itself as it formed scales, hard and smooth. Drake seemed to shrink behind her, but of course, he hadn't. She'd grown larger. As her limbs lengthened, her nails became talons.

Now, whole snatches of his song made sense. *My eager sex... large for you... aches to fill...* The song seeped into her as her spine lengthened into a tail. She grew bigger still and stronger. Wings formed at her shoulder blades and unfurled. She flapped them a few times. Clumsily, like a child's first steps. But she continued until each downward thrust lifted her briefly from the ground.

See, my love, Drake sang. *See your beauty.*

She opened her eyes and found her head at the level of some of the trees. Turning, she spotted Drake still in human form. Tiny in comparison with her bulk. Now naked, he stood with his feet apart and hips thrust forward so that she could admire his erection. By human standards, he was huge. If he maintained those proportions in dragon form, he'd make a truly heroic lover.

With no verbal language, she cooed her approval. It came out a dragon purr like his own. Deep and soft. As he'd done with her, she bent her long neck and nudged his shoulder.

Eager to couple? his mind said to hers.

I've been eager to couple since forever.

He grasped his cock at the base. *Want to see what this looks like on your dragon?*

I want to do more than see it.

Here I come. He shifted quickly, growing taller than her by almost a head. She reached out to touch him, but with claws for hands, not much sensation came through.

This way. He bent his hands outward and stroked her chest and belly with his wrists. Though she had no breasts in this form, the rasp of his sapphire scales over her

green ones created a friction that penetrated to her core and sent shock waves to her sex. A spicy fragrance filled the air between them as she grew wet.

Drake's nostrils flared, and he let out a roar. Flame leapt from his mouth, singing a few green leaves. The more he stroked her, the hotter she became, the stronger her mating scent grew, until he trembled and his wings spread behind him.

I want, his thoughts screamed. Your legs spread. Me deep inside.

Do it.

There's more ritual. Bend over. I'll show you.

Of course. The way most creatures mate, the male mounting the female from behind. She turned and lowered herself onto all fours, bending her forelegs slightly to offer her rump for his view.

He moaned in a long, low rumble and bent over her, not enough to press his cock against the entrance to her pussy but far enough that he could caress her flanks with his wrists. Here again, the passage of his scales over hers made her senses reel. Her sides moved in and out with her breathing, which matched the rhythm of the long passes he made over her ribs to her hips.

His escalating arousal came to her in bursts of thought, each word filled with his lust. *Hungry. Need. Fuck. Need to fuck.*

Foul language? He must have gone wild with lust, but he kept caressing her as her pussy seeped more and more perfumed juices onto her thighs.

Smell. Oh, the smell. Taste. Eat, his mind fairly screamed. He moved abruptly, crouching behind her. After forcing her legs far apart, he pressed his face to her mound. His forked lizard tongue flicked over the lips of her pussy. Rough and long, it traveled the length of her slit. Front to back and front again.

Now, she released fire in a roar. She sent out her own signal of need. *Mount me. Inside. Fuck me. Now.*

He snarled in reply and kept on driving her wild as he lapped at the moisture that wouldn't stop coming.

Her whole body shook, scales rattling. *Need, need, need!*

His tongue found her clit and fluttered against it until she lost all thought and could only scream for relief.

Finally, he rose up over her, grabbing her ribs with his forelegs and pressing the tip of his mammoth member into her. Her membrane breaking sent only a hint of pain, and then, he was easing himself inside her. Hard flesh finding its passage through her wetness.

So huge. If he hadn't prepared her, he'd have split her in two with his monster. Instead, his cock filling her created pleasure so intense she almost came on the spot. If human, she could have wept at the miracle of how they fit together so perfectly.

When he'd buried himself completely inside her, he pulled back and then surged into her again.

Good, his mind crooned. So good.

She could only make high-pitched cries in response.

His cock still inside her, he rose up to make space between her back and his front. *We'll fly now. Beat your wings with mine.*

In her larger form, she'd have to help him get them both aloft. Uncoordinated at first, she kept trying until she found his rhythm, and soon they left the ground.

She flew! Her wings spread just below his while his hips moved to create powerful thrusts of his member inside her. Fucking, flying, soaring. Her own exertions sent her fever higher as he impaled her, withdrew, and speared her again. Earth and sky whirled around her as they dipped and then rose again. Her most heated dream, only more erotic and real.

Each time they went higher in the sky, she neared the pinnacle of her desire. They'd swoop low again, and she'd only manage to steal a breath before he guided her upward again. Nothing existed anymore except his sex pounding into her and the sweeps upward.

Now, mate, he shouted. Come for me. Come.

Straining, he shot them up and up until she couldn't breathe. The climax grabbed her and squeezed as she opened her mouth and released her lust in a pillar of flame.

Her pussy erupted in spasms that started deep inside her belly and coursed out along the length of his cock. They hung suspended for a moment before gravity called them back, and they used their wings to slowly descend.

At least, she tried to help him, but she floated in a different level of consciousness. When they finally reached the ground, she'd turned human again. They lay together, him spooned against her back. Still drowsy, she rolled over and kissed him. "That was amazing. Thank you."

"Thank you, my darling, but we're not done yet." He took her hand and placed it on his cock. Still hard. Still huge.

She opened her eyes. "You haven't come yet."

"I want to feel you in this form, too."

"Oh," she cried. She could have more of him right now. She wouldn't have to wait.

He stretched out with nothing but fallen leaves beneath him for a bed. Gripping his member at the base, he held it straight out from his body for her to admire, and there was a lot to admire. Long and thick and with a prominent head, it promised as much pleasure as he'd given her during their flight. She took his invitation, casting a leg over him so that she could part her pussy lips and guide herself down onto him.

He completed her as perfectly in human form as he had as her dragon mate. After a sweet, slow passage of his hardness into her, she'd taken every inch of him, their pelvises meeting.

"Oh, God," she crooned. "That is so good."

"You're squeezing me so tight."

"You're big," she answered.

"And ready to explode," he said. "You set the pace this time."

She rested her palms on his chest for leverage and tested a movement -- up along his shaft and then back down. His answering groan testified to his pleasure, so she repeated the process. Soon, she was fucking him in a strong, steady rhythm. Each up

thrust forced her muscles to contract around him, creating a delicious friction until she couldn't get enough and moved faster.

His face twisted into a mask of lust as he neared the edge of his control. Eyes squeezed shut, jaw clenched, lips parted as he fought for air. Such joy that she could give him such pleasure, and such a gift that it pleased her, too.

After several moments of shared bliss, he grasped her hips and thrust up into her. She matched him, and soon, they were straining against each other, desperate for more and more as they neared the ultimate together.

"Come again, Ilona," he said. "Come all around me."

"Yes. Yes. Oh, soon." She straightened, grasped both breasts, and rolled them under her palms as he slammed up into her. The madness built inside her. She'd climax again as she had in her dreams. Only this time, she'd have a hard cock inside her.

Something pressed against her clit, and she cried out at the force of the shock. Drake had placed his thumb between the lips of her pussy and had found that hypersensitive spot.

"Come, lover." His voice came out strangled. "Now."

"Just don't stop."

She surrendered to her body, not able to even think of his pleasure she was so at the mercy of her own. Still, his hardness pushed her, and still, his thumb created fire against her bud. He'd made her wild with need, and nothing penetrated except the orgasm coiling inside her. One more flick of his thumb, one more savage thrust of his cock, and the climax swept through her. Her whole body shuddered as she tightened around him and then burst into spasms.

His orgasm followed hot on hers. Stiffening, he plunged deep inside her and released his seed against the entrance to her womb. His cry of victory came as a roar that filled her ears like music. She'd pleased him as much as he had her.

Finally spent, she collapsed against his chest and listened to the hammering of his heart.

"I'm glad I waited," she whispered after a bit.

"Me, too. I'm glad we both did." He stroked her hair, brushing it back from her face. "That was even better than I dreamed."

"You dreamed, too?"

"Constantly. Day and night."

"So, what do we do now?" she said.

"Lie right here until my brain unscrambles," he answered.

"No, I mean with our lives."

"Simple enough." His hand moved to her back, his fingers traveling up and down her spine. "We go home to my realm. Our realm."

"I've never been there."

"It's where you're from, love. It's your home."

"I guess so." She hugged his ribs. Odd how a man's body could feel like an extension of her own.

"Is there anything to hold you here?"

She pushed up until she could look into his face. "Holly and Emmaline."

"They're demons."

"Why do you keep saying that?" she said. "You don't know them."

"Oh yes, I do," he said. "They either kidnapped you or are in league with the ones who did."

"I grew up with them."

"They're very patient, I'll grant you." He frowned at her. "Demons often are if it gets them what they want."

"What would they want from me?"

"From a dragon princess?" he said. "Are you kidding me?"

"Don't use that tone." She climbed off him, breaking their connection. Their clothes lay nearby, and she got into her panties and bra.

"I'm sorry, Ilona," he said. "Please don't be angry."

"Why shouldn't I get mad?" Damn it, now she was shouting, too. "You call my family monsters."

"Not monsters. Demons."

"Big difference."

He sat up and rubbed his face. "You don't understand."

"Damn straight, I don't." She got into her jeans and pulled up the zipper. "I only met you yesterday, and I'm supposed to believe you against my family?"

"I'm your family now," he shouted back. "We're mated."

She shook her sweater free of leaves and pulled it over her head. "They raised me. I owe them something."

"I don't owe them anything, and I need my queen." He got up, too, and went to the pile of his clothing. "This whole thing is ridiculous."

"I just want to go home, pack a few things, and say good-bye," she said. "I'll tell them you're giving me a job in another state or something."

"I forbid it. We'll leave for my... our... realm immediately."

She paused, a sock in each hand. "You what?"

"I said I forbid it. I'm your prince. Someday, I'll be your king."

"This is the United States of America," she said. "We don't have kings."

"Perhaps that's why the place is such a mess."

"I don't believe it," she said. "I just got mated to a fucking potentate."

"And enough of that language!" he bellowed.

"Listen, pal." She walked to him and jabbed a finger in his chest, her sock swinging back and forth as she did. "You may be my mate, but you're not my keeper. I'm going home."

"Haven't you forgotten something?" The gleam in his eyes turned lethal. "Zimm's there."

"Oh, that's sweet. That's really sweet," she said. "Do you honestly think I'll hop into bed with him within minutes of fuc -- mating with you?"

"I know he'll do his damndest to seduce you," he answered. "Demons are pretty good at that, too, when it suits them."

"You must have a pretty low opinion of me."

He bent until his nose almost touched hers. "You've done *things* with him before."

"That's it." She backed away, holding out her arms to keep him at a distance. "End of discussion. Take me home, or I'll fly there on my own."

* * *

Neither of them had calmed down much by the time they got back to the high school and Ilona's car. When she went to open the door, he reached across her and grabbed her hand. "Remember, I'm following you."

"Do whatever you want. It's none of my business."

"Curse it all." His voice filled the car. "I'm the only business you have from now on."

She glared at him. "Let me out."

He grumbled but removed his arm.

If anyone could slam her way out of a car, Ilona did it. She did slam the door closed behind her and walked to her sub compact. With all the drama of the last twenty-four hours, the fact that her keys were still in her pocket made for a miracle. A sign, maybe, that she still had some freedom of will, despite Mr. Crown Prince Dragon or whatever the hell he was.

She opened the car door, got in, and started the engine. When she pulled away from the curb, she checked in the rearview mirror. Sure enough, Drake followed only a few yards away. It wouldn't do her any good to try to get away from him, as he already knew where she lived and he'd show up there without an escort.

How had this turned into such a holy hell of a mess, anyway? She'd found her dragon. She'd shifted into a dragon herself and had mated with the creature she'd loved her whole life. She had to believe the unbelievable because she'd seen it with her own eyes. The rest of his story must be true, too. There were no dragons in this part of the universe. He had to have come from somewhere else, and that meant she'd come from there, too.

It didn't sound half bad, when you got right down to it. Dragon Princess, someday to be dragon queen. His world -- theirs -- must hold other wonders. Heaven knew this one had never done much to excite her. She only needed to see the people who'd raised her one more time. Wish them well. Tell them she loved them. Why couldn't he understand?

She passed the town square and turned onto the street to her neighborhood. The sex was pretty good, too. No, forget that. The sex put all her novels to shame. Who would have thought she'd find a man so talented *and* well-equipped? Both as a dragon and a human, he'd rocked her world. Everyone said sex got better with practice. If so, she had quite a life ahead of her with this mate.

She'd almost started to smile when she pulled up in front of the house. Zimm's motorcycle wasn't in the driveway, so maybe, she wouldn't have to confront him. He held no appeal now, but try telling that to His High-and-Mightiness.

Before she could get out of her car, Drake appeared at the driver's side. She almost had to hit him with the door to get out, but he finally stepped back.

He crossed his arms over his chest. "I'm going in with you."

"With that scowl on your face?" she answered. "I don't think so."

"It's not safe in there."

"Look, Zimm's not here." She pointed to the empty driveway. "I don't think I'm in danger from my grandmother and sister."

He started to speak, but she held up her hand. "No more demon crap, okay?"

"You don't know it's crap." He gestured toward the house. "If you tell them you're leaving, they may very well shift."

"Fangs and claws?"

"Once they've torn you to shreds they'll likely make a meal of you."

She put her hands on her hips. "I'll shift and fry them first."

"There isn't enough room to shift in there."

Honestly, why was she even having this conversation? All of her life that she could remember, she'd lived in this house with these two women. They didn't pose any threat to her, and she wouldn't leave this realm without saying good-bye.

"All right," he said. "I'm not going to change your mind."

She didn't say anything but stood, glaring at him.

"But, I'm going in with you," he said.

"Normally, I'd love to introduce you to my folks, but I don't think you're in any mood to act polite."

"Polite, she says. Polite, with demons."

"Thanks for proving my point." She turned to enter the house, but he caught her arm.

"Ten minutes," he said. "There's a clock in the car. I'm giving you ten minutes, and then I'm coming inside."

"Suit yourself."

This time, he let her go, and she climbed the stairs to the porch and went inside. "Hello?"

"In the kitchen," Holly called back.

Ilona went in there and met two intense stares. Emmaline sat at the table, a mug of coffee between her palms on the surface. Holly stood by the sink.

"You know, dear, that I hate to stifle your freedom," Holly said. "But we're not used to you staying out all night."

Emmaline released her mug and tipped her chair back on its back legs. "My sweet little sister has been holding out on us."

"Not really," she said. "I only met him yesterday."

The two women glanced at each other. An undercurrent of displeasure passed between them.

"Him?" Holly asked.

"The dude Zimm saw you with yesterday?" Emmaline said.

"His name's Drake," Ilona said.

"Now, you know I'd never try to dictate your love life." Holly came to her, put her hands on Ilona's shoulders and guided her to the table. When she "helped" Ilona into a chair, she used more strength than necessary. In fact, she was damned strong for a woman of her age.

"But, I hoped," Holly went on. "You and Zimm. He's hot as all hell, and he thinks the same about you."

"Yeah, precious," Emmaline added. "Where is he, anyway?"

"He went for a ride," Holly answered. The flash of communication passed between her and Emmaline again.

"So, sis, is this new guy better in bed than Zimm?" Emmaline asked.

"I wouldn't know." That wasn't strictly true as she had sampled some of Zimm's considerable skill, but she wouldn't gossip about that sort of thing.

"Come on," Emmaline said. "You have fucked them both, right?"

"I wouldn't tell you if I had," she answered.

"You should give Zimm a chance," Emmaline said. "He's a sexy dude."

"You try him." She got up and pushed her chair under the table. "Look, I know this is going to sound strange, but I'm going away with Drake."

Holly's features hardened. "When?"

"Pretty much right now," she answered.

"But you can't," Holly said. "You have to stay here."

"I had to leave home eventually."

Holly approached her, her eyes flashing fury. "Oh no, you don't, you little bitch."

"Excuse me?"

"I didn't cook all that macrobiotic crap for you all these years so you could take off at a whim," Holly said.

Ilona could only gape at her. "You like that stuff. I don't."

Holly grabbed Ilona's sweater. "You're not going anywhere."

Ilona tried pushing Holly's hands away, but the older woman's fingers might have been steel. They didn't move. She took a step backward, and her rear hit another body behind her. Holly and Emmaline had surrounded her.

"What is wrong with you two?" she demanded.

"Nothing," Emmaline answered. "And you'll stay alive, too, if you do as we say."

"Stay alive?" She moved, trying to get out from between them. But arms from both in front and behind held her fast. The two of them seemed to have inhuman strength -- the way she'd heard crazy people sometimes did. Or maybe Drake had told the truth. Could the two women she'd known all her life have been demons the whole time?

Still, she struggled against their hold. "Let me go."

"Oh, we will, dear," Holly answered. "You'll go straight to hell as soon as Zimm returns."

"You see, once Zimm's fucked you, we'll present you to the Dark Lord as a present," Emmaline said.

"You're crazy," she said. "Both of you."

"Zimm would have made it good if you'd come to him on your own," Emmaline said. "Now? Who knows."

Impossible. She couldn't have sex with another man now that she'd mated with her dragon. That would kill the beautiful treasure she'd just discovered. And if Zimm was a demon, as well, the act would defile her even further.

If Drake could accept that, could she still go home with him to the dragon realm? Somehow, she had to get away from these two.

She glanced up at the ceiling. Not enough room to shift, and she could break her dragon neck if she tried. Fiery breath could send the whole house up in flames with her stuck inside, trapped on both floors. What in hell was she supposed to do?

"Guess who I found sneaking around in here?" It was Zimm at the doorway, and he had Drake by the collar.

"Damn it, Ilona. I warned you about these creatures," Drake said.

"I'm sorry," she called back.

Zimm shoved Drake away with enough force to toss him against the counter. Drake straightened and lunged for Zimm, but before he could reach his target, Zimm's clothing fell away in shreds as his shape blurred and then settled into the foulest creature Ilona had ever seen.

Zimm pulled back his leathery arm and hit Drake on the jaw so hard he fell in a heap on the floor. Then Zimm smiled and turned toward her.

The demon resembled a hideous gargoyle from a medieval church but worse, because the evil lived and breathed in him. His skin formed leathery plates that covered him, overlapping from head to toe. He had claws for hands and feet, complete with sharp, metallic nails at the tips. Fangs protruded from his mouth and buds of horns from the top of his head. Worst of all were his eyes -- blood red and glowing as if with flame. Surely, staring into them would show the path to hell.

He reached down and grasped his erection in his fist, pumping its length. His cock had the same hard skin as the rest of him, as well as prominent ridges. "Impressive, isn't it?" he said. "It'll hurt you like hell, but you turned down the human version."

"What is this all about?" she said. "Why are you doing this? I've never done anything to you."

"It has nothing to do with you," Holly said. Her eyes had taken on a reddish glow, too. Drake had been right about all three of them.

"It's a long and ancient battle," Holly went on. "You're only a pawn."

"Yes, Little Miss Dragon Princess. You're our ticket to the upper echelons of hell," Emmaline said.

"You two, bend her over the table and hold her there," Zimm said. "I'm going to give her a fucking she'll wish she never had."

Oh, shit. If she didn't do something, and quick, he'd shove that hideous instrument inside her. She fought like hell as Holly and Emmaline pinned her upper

body against the tabletop and held her there, but she couldn't escape their strength. Each one held an arm down, and one of them pinned her head so that the side pressed against the wooden surface, giving her a view of the hideous creature who planned to rape her.

She watched as he approached, clacking his blade like claws together. When he reached her, he kicked her legs apart and stood between them.

Drake! Drake, are you here? Can you sense me?

Only a weak response came back -- enough to know that he was alive but not conscious. What had the monster done to him with only one blow?

Cold metal slid up the inside of her sweater, followed by a slashing sound as Zimm sliced through the material.

Holding her breath, she lay as still as she could and sent out another mental probe to Drake. Not much but static came back. She'd have to fight this battle on her own.

When Zimm had finished with her sweater, he sliced through the straps of her bra. The two she-demons lifted her long enough to pull all the fabric from beneath her torso and then slammed her face down on the table again.

"Nice little titties," Zimm said. "Should I fondle them now? I wonder how they'd look covered in red."

"Why don't you change back and let me fuck you properly?" she said. "This can't be as much fun for you as seducing me."

"There are all kinds of fun. This is the kind I want today." He moved to her jeans, hacking at the denim. Her knees started to tremble, causing his claws to nick her, first on her buttock and then at the back of her thigh. None of that mattered as much as the impending rape -- not only pain and degradation but a fouling of her virtue as a dragon. Still, if she struggled, he'd cut her deeper, and she didn't have enough strength to fight off the two females.

Just as he had her jeans off in shreds, he let out a loud grunt and flew backwards.

Drake!

Get away, Ilona, Drake sent back.

Thank heaven. She used the surprise and confusion to push free of the other two demons. She made it to the stove and picked up Holly's heavy cast-iron skillet. It wasn't hot, but it was heavy and easy to swing.

By now, the two she-demons had shifted into creatures as vile as Zimm. Only the difference in height betrayed which was which.

They came at her, red eyes blazing. In the split second she had before they could get her, she brought her arms back and then swung with all her might. She hit Holly smack against the side of her head, and the monster dropped like a rock, a black liquid oozing from her ear.

"You killed her, bitch!" Emmaline screeched.

Ilona swung the pan again, but Emmaline caught it in her claws. The impact pushed the demon back, and Ilona raced back to the table and picked up a chair to fend Emmaline off.

Drake had managed to land a few blows against Zimm, but he'd taken some cuts doing it. One on his upper arm bled freely. He had another weapon, though. Even as a human, he could spit fire. Not the huge blasts his dragon form could make, and not enough to burn Zimm to a crisp, but enough to set the demon back.

She tried it herself. At first, she only got a column of smoke, but she took a deeper breath, concentrated all her revulsion for these hideous creatures in her mind, and tried again. This time, she hit Emmaline on the shoulder, but she also got the drapes. They went up in flames, spreading a cloud of acrid smoke. The whole house could catch, so they'd better get out of here fast.

The demons blocked the way, though. Even singed, they continued their attack. Perhaps fire felt good to them, used as they were to hell. Ilona's eyes stung as she fought to keep Emmaline away while Drake fought Zimm. The demons never tired, while their human bodies did. With the smoke burning their lungs, they couldn't win this battle against the demons' strength and sharp claws.

We have to shift, her mind said to his.

Can't. Not enough room.

It's our only chance, she sent back. I'm going to do it.

No! If you don't burst through the ceiling right, you'll break your neck.

Better than letting him rape me.

The house will burn. If you're stuck here, you'll burn with it.

I got you into this, she sent back. I'm going to get you out.

No!

She'd only shifted once before and had little idea how to do it. It came more naturally than she would have guessed. A sense of peace washed over her as images of dragons flying freely raced through her mind. She felt herself grow larger as strength rushed into her body. Her head hit the ceiling immediately, and she bent so that her shoulders did the pushing against the plaster instead of her neck.

A loud crack and then a splintering sound filled her ears as the ceiling gave way. Now using the power of her legs, she pushed upward.

Plaster fell all around her as she slammed into the floor of the room above. Her own bedroom. She pushed with all her might and those boards broke as well.

She straightened, widening the hole she'd created. A sudden pain tore through her, coming from a place unfamiliar to the human part of her mind. Her dragon-self knew, though. She'd wounded her wing, and badly.

Damn, Ilona, Drake called to her. I felt that.

Never mind. I'm free. Not entirely, though. Her head and neck had broken through, but the hole wouldn't allow the passage of her body. The floor that held her had weakened, though, and she pounded up against it, making it wider.

Her lower body caught the heat of the fire below. She had good air, but what about Drake? The demons had him trapped down there. *Drake, you're still with me, right?*

I am.

He sounded weak. If a mind could choke, his was. She kept breaking through the materials that held her. Her talons helped, but even so, her arms hurt with the effort.

The pain in her wing became a mind-numbing throb. Even worse, her scales were hot from the fire on the floor below. She had to get Drake out of there.

Shift, Drake. I've made room for you.

Damned bloody demons, he sent back.

Do it now. It's our only chance.

More falling plaster and splintering of wood told her he'd changed into his dragon form. His head appeared and then his shoulders. Stronger and more used to exerting his strength, he smashed the area around them clear in a few blows. Then he tipped his head back and let loose a blast of fire to the ceiling above. It caught quickly, opening a hole into the crawlspace above and up toward the roof.

They'd need a larger hole, so she added her own fire to his until the roof opened enough for them to blast through.

We'll need to fly through the flames, he sent.

I can't fly.

All right. He put his arms around her in a hard grip. Shift. I have you.

Don't drop me.

Never.

She had to trust him, despite the wound Zimm had inflicted on his arm. If she fell below, she'd burn to death with those demons. She let herself shrink and turn to soft, human flesh. The change only made the pain worse -- the cuts and burns. The broken wing disappeared inside her body where it seared her lungs.

Drake didn't let her loose. He held her against him in a death grip as he crashed upward, splintering the wood around them and then shooting through the flames at the roof.

Finally they were free, and they soared away from the burning house beneath them.

Epilogue

The official wedding waited until all their wounds had healed and Ilona could join him in the traditional mating flight. Of course, they'd done that already in the human realm, but now they could repeat it with all of their clan looking on.

They flew surrounded by other dragons. Drake helped protect his mate's still-healing wing while they soared on their mating flight, his cock buried deep inside Ilona. As on that other flight, the muscles of Ilona's sex gripped him tightly enough to make concentration on flying nearly impossible. No matter how many times they'd joined, the pleasure never lessened. Night after night, day after day, even while she recovered from her wounds, his throbbing sex found its home in her wetness just as it did now.

His brother swooped beneath them and fluttered his wings upward to stroke Ilona's flank before dipping away. She let out a low purr of approval as her pussy pulsed around him. He almost came right then, except that his father swooped nearby, warning with the golden gleam of his eye that Drake needed to hold off until he'd pleased his princess. The old dragon couldn't fool anyone, though, as his own cock rose rigidly away from his body. The queen hovered near her husband, her scales quivering for a moment before they flew off to find privacy for their own coupling. Many months from now, baby dragons would be born all over the realm, their creation inspired by this ceremony.

More and more of his kin drifted off now, the females soaring and dipping in a mating dance and the males following as their members grew and thickened.

Ilona had neared her crest, and each time he pushed them into an upward surge, her inner muscles clamped around him. Her purrs had risen to growls -- the ancient

sound that spoke of impending orgasm. They needed their own place to finish now privately as their fluids mingled deep inside her. With his mind clouded with lust, he had to search to find the area the ladies of the court had prepared for them. There... surrounded by trees on one side and a stream on the other. He guided them to the spot and gently put them down onto the silken sheets and piles of cushions that made their marriage bed.

Without separating, they shifted in synch with each other. Within a few heartbeats, she'd become human, poised on her hands and knees. His cock slid easily in and out of her, glistening with her juices. His flesh had turned red with lust, readying itself to explode in climax. He gripped her hips to hold her steady as he plunged into her. Hard, fast, deep.

She shuddered with each thrust. "Please. Oh, God, please more."

"Come for me, Ilona." He moaned, hopeless in the face of his own need. "Can't last."

"Touch me," she gasped.

Of course. He bent and ran his arms around her. While one hand parted her lips, the other found her swollen bud and stroked it.

She threw back her head and roared with completion -- as much dragon as human when she came. While her pussy spasmed wildly around his cock, he slammed into her once more and released his essence into her. Powerful waves that emptied his soul next to her womb. His roar of victory joined hers, announcing to the entire realm that their Prince -- next in line to the throne -- had mated for the rest of his life.

When it all ended, he flopped onto the cushions and pulled her down on top of him. Her face rested against his shoulder, and her hand made a soft fist on his chest.

"It happened, didn't it?" she whispered. "We made a baby."

"The gods willing."

"I can hardly believe any of this," she said. "I keep thinking if I pinch myself, I'll wake up."

"It's real now, my love," he answered. "It isn't a dream any longer."

“My dragon. My mate. My love.”

Alice Gaines

Award-winning author Alice Gaines has published several sensuous and erotic works. She prefers stories that stretch the imagination, highlighting the power of love and sex. Alice has a Ph.D. in psychology from U. C. Berkeley and lives in Oakland, California, with her collection of orchids and two pet corn snakes, Casper and Sheikh Yerbouti. Alice loves to get mail at authoralicegaines@yahoo.com. Visit her website at <http://home.pacbell.net/halice/>. She also sometimes updates her Twitter account (AliceGaines at Twitter) and you can find her on www.goodreads.com.