**Five Dragons: TLoP: Chapter 3: A New Home**

It was late afternoon and the sun was already moving towards the horizon. The warm glow fell brightly on the tiles of Ironwing's roofs and made the silver gutters shimmer. The golden glow climbed up the walls, over the railing of the narrow terrace through the windows into the room. A boy was lying on the bed and began to move. Roland woke up slowly and the blurred outlines of a head formed in front of his tired eyes. A face he knew looked at him.  
  
Two sapphire blue eyes beamed at him and he heard a happy “Meep”. An orange-red hatchling excitedly moved back and forth on the sheet, making small leaps of joy on the mattress. The female brought her head to eye level with his and licked him all over his face. The little dragoness cooed happily and looked at him with wet eyes. She was visibly glad that he was awake again. The hatchling snuggled close to his side and made eye contact again.  
  
Roland wiped his face dry with his arm and stroked his dragoness’ back as he returned her warm look. “Nice to see you too.” He said to her with a big smile. She replied with a happy “Chirp” and nodded with her head with closed eyes.  
  
He picked up the covers to get up, but paused unexpectedly. His right leg was stiff, the lower leg was bound in bandages and splinted with two long pieces of wood. He exhaled slowly, sat upright on the edge of the bed and put both feet on the floor. The female took a seat to his right. She sniffed at the bandage a few times and looked at him excitedly before nudging his hand with her nose.  
  
The boy put his arm on her back as she lay over his thighs and let his gaze wander around the room. The female purred happily. He was sitting on a large bed with white sheets, the sunlight came through the wide windows and flooded the room with a warm, already slightly reddish tinge.  
  
The floor was covered with a large red carpet, which was decorated in the middle with a strange pattern. The tapestries had the same decoration. He opened his eyes in shock and held out his right hand frantically, looking in amazement at the burned-in mark on the back of his hand. “The same symbol.” He muttered to himself, staring nervously at it. It seemed to him, that he still felt the burning pain when he got it.  
  
He looked exhausted at the dragoness, who closed her eyes and purred softly as she put her head on his thigh. Roland ran through with a hand between her black horns and felt the gentle hum of her warm body.  
  
Lost in thought, he went through the latest events: The dragon egg on the stone base in this weathered chamber. A shimmering blue rune on the wooden door. And then this echo. But above all, this odyssey over the pass road. The wind rushed past his ears and the creaking of wooden wheels on a stony road could be heard.  
  
  
Roland was sitting in the carriage again, opposite his mother. He remembered her voice with that warm, loving sound. And her defining words too. “I said hold on!” Echoed in his head. Then she climbed out of the window and disappeared in the dark. The cabin was torn back and forth. Bright flashes, followed by a deep rumble of thunder made him flinch. A scream echoed through the air and the vehicle overturned with a strong jolt.  
  
Roland was flung back and forth inside the carriage. The wood creaked under the enormous strain and started to break. The car kept spinning until it smashed between two trees and the back seat was thrown at the boy. He held one arm protectively in front of his face and it grew dark with a thud.

Roland woke up terrified. He lay under the open night sky between numerous parts of the wreck. The wooden bench he had first clung to was now heavy on his chest. Roland coughed off the bench and tried to get up. He felt a bleeding wound on his forehead and a stinging pain let him sink back to the ground. A spear protruded steeply from his right lower leg. He was shocked to see the throbbing injury.  
  
A familiar voice caught his attention. “Roland, NO!” He heard loudly from outside the rubble. Breathing heavily, he straightened up, taking a slow step out of the wreck toward the Echo.  
  
The boy looked at his mother, who was lying on the ground not far from the scene of the accident. With a deep sob, he strode towards her. He laboriously pulled his right leg behind him.  
  
He knelt convulsively in front of her. The woman raised her head and put her fingers on his dirty cheek. “I thought I lost you.” She whispered weakly. Roland felt his mother's hand and held it with his own. Unable to say anything at the moment, only tears ran down his face.

It was the last time he saw her. The last picture of her.

Then a loud thunder rang him out of his thoughts. Roland came to himself frightfully and looked nervously at the shutter, which was hit by a strong gust of wind against the outer facade.  
  
He shook his head and rubbed his eyes with one hand as the sad memory faded away. The boy looked out of the window with a teary look and began to breathe harder. He held his left hand to his cheek, trying to hold the fleeting warmth of the memory. A few drops of his grief sought their way across his face.  
  
The female sat upright to his left, gently placing a front leg on his arm and drawing his attention to herself. She raised her head and looked him straight in the eyes with a wet look. The deep blue tint seemed to glow and a light turquoise gleam flashed out of them. She closed her eyelids briefly and snorted gently, then cooed quietly and held her comforting gaze.  
  
Roland felt her warm breath on his face. He put a hand on her nose and looked into the blue gems. At that moment it clicked in his head. She had seen his memory too. He found no explanation for it, but could see it deep in her captivating look.  
  
The female came closer to him and put both front legs on his thigh. She leaned forward and brought her head closer to his. Roland returned the gesture, put his left arm around the orange red creature and his right hand on her chest. She closed her eyes halfway, started purring, and snorted gently in his face.  
  
The female straightened up and put both forelegs on his shoulders. She gently pushed him back until he was lying on the bed with his back and her on his chest. She spread her wings protectively over him, covering him and herself. She lovingly licked his tears from his cheek and ran her head past his face. She put her nose to his and the boy looked into her blue eyes with a warm smile, her pupils dilated like little black holes. The turquoise shimmer around the iris lit up in the glow and a bright spark appeared in it.

Roland felt the pleasant vibrations of her purring on his chest, closed his eyes and accepted her comforting gesture with thanks. Lonely tears of joy squeezed out of his closed lids when he realized what understanding this dragoness had towards him.  
  
Understanding from a dragon, not another human. “From a four-legged, scaly, orange-red dragon with wings and horns.” He thought to himself at first. However, he felt it ultimately, that he didn't care who or what she was in the end. Roland was just happy that the female was there by his side. He felt a strange but pleasant feeling, which drove through his body.  
  
Her tactic seemed to be working. Roland put aside the harrowing memories and only concentrated on her. Covered by her wings, she put her head on his chest and purred softly. Roland felt the pleasant vibrations and kept his eyes closed. He felt her right paw find its way into his left hand. The velvet scales gently rubbed against his skin and reached the palm of his hand, where the black claws hooked tightly with his fingers.  
  
Without saying a word, he closed his right arm around her and held her with light pressure. The little female gave a soft, happy “Churr” as she felt the gentle touch. Both enjoyed the comforting moment to the fullest.  
  
Time seemed to stop. Roland wanted it to last forever. He felt safe and secure with her at his side. Dragoness and human lay together in peaceful silence. A calm and almost magical moment.

However, the silence was broken by the fast opening of the room door. Both startled and abruptly broke up the close company. Roland looked at the opening door and frantically sat back on the edge of the bed. Then he got up, braced himself on the bedpost, and watched the entering stranger. The hatchling looked up in a hurry and jumped from the mattress between the door and the bed. She tilted her head down, held the wings steeply back and hissed at the stranger once.  
  
A tall, thin man with slightly tousled, shoulder-length hair entered the room absentmindedly. However, he stopped abruptly. His skeptical gaze went from the little female to the boy, then back to the dragoness.  
  
He looked at the orange-red lizard in front of him for a long time. She looked back with a fixed look and growled softly. The man paused and exhaled strongly. He tilted his head slightly and raised both eyebrows in astonishment. Then he held up his right index finger. “Uh, wait a second.” He said completely calmly. Then he turned slowly and walked quickly out of the room, his index finger always held up.  
  
The female took a more relaxed attitude, gave a short “Chirp” and looked questioningly at Roland. He stood next to the bed and looked back just as confused. He raised an eyebrow and shrugged his shoulders. “No idea what that was supposed to mean.” He said to her with a skeptical smile on his face. The female gave a soft “Chirp”, snorted and shook her head as well.  
  
The door to the room was still open and there were voices from the hallway outside. Roland tried to understand the scraps of talking, but only small chunks could be understood.

“Where do you want ... then there?”  
“Nobody has….…. dragon…. why…?”  
“Now don't pose like this... ... ... go in there and .... .... the dragon ... ... do nothing ..  
... do it now. I'll be right back!”

“But that wasn't in the job description!” It finally echoed plaintively from outside, then it became quiet.  
  
A long, thin arm emerged. “Do not shoot! I'll be at peace.” Said the man who entered the room again. He held both arms up as if a crossbow had been pointed at him and knelt on the floor. He looked at the two in the room with a serious expression, while isolated drops of sweat ran from his forehead. Roland looked at the trembling man. “Shoot? With what?” He thought to himself as he shook his head with a smile.  
  
There was a short, embarrassing pause, during which everyone in the room just looked at each other in silence. Roland took a deep breath and took a determined, if somewhat shaky, step towards the still kneeling man. “I'm Roland.” He began, holding out his right, open hand in greeting. “And who are you?”  
  
The man lowered his arms and looked at the boy, somewhat puzzled. He quickly let his gaze drift off to the orange-red female who stood behind Roland. She snorted at him once and sat up straight. The dragoness looked at the man with open eyes, who looked back in the deep blue color, as if enchanted. Almost as if he were drowning in it. He tilted his head slightly and let his mouth open. The turquoise glow in her eyes reflected in the man's pupils and made him take a hard breath. The female looked at the man skeptically. She seemed to see something in his eyes. A shady sign that rotated around its own axis.  
  
Roland didn't seem to notice. He stood there without a word, his open hand still stretched out. He looked at the man in front of him and waved a few times in front of his face. He was completely gone. The man's eyes grew dim. Roland dropped his outstretched arm on the man's shoulder. “Hey, are you all right?” He asked him.  
  
“Hello?” He said again, jerking him back and forth once. The man realized the movement and looked at Roland in shock, as if he had just pulled him out of a nightmare. He rubbed his watery eyes and shook his head in confusion. The man breathed shallowly and uncontrollably as if he were on the verge of a nervous breakdown while holding a trembling index finger at the female. He covered one ear with the other hand.  
  
“Get out of my head!” He gave fearfully and with a teary look. His voice sounded somehow distorted. He stared stubbornly at the hatchling. His previously mindless face increasingly solidified in a malicious expression. The female took a cautious step towards him. She held her head slightly slanted with a confused “Chirp”. What had she done wrong?  
  
“Make the voices silence!” Was heard from the man. This time louder and more decisive. He jabbed his index finger once to underline his last word. The dragoness flinched in alarm, bowed her head, and took a few steps back, hissing slightly. The man's face looked like a somber shadow as he growled softly.  
  
The hatchling made plaintive noises as she lay down. Her eyes sadly to the side, she breathed out heavily and loudly. Roland reluctantly heard her noises, which made an uncomfortable shiver run up his back. The sound burned in his soul.

Roland grabbed the man's second shoulder and shook him again, taking a more serious look. “Hey, calm down now!” He shouted angrily in his face. He looked once at the female behind him and gave her a comforting look. She didn't notice this, she closed her eyes and gave a sad “Chirp”. Roland saw a single tear from her closed eyelid and turned back to the trembling man. “What voices?” He asked with an angry expression on his face.  
  
The man seemed to finally wake up and his breathing calmed down. Roland saw the cloudy coloring of his eyes clear up again. He shook his head, put a hand to his forehead, and then looked confusedly at his still outstretched finger. He slowly lowered his arm and looked into a helpless and angry face. He started grinning sheepishly, both eyebrows raised, as if he had been caught spying. There was a strange, silent pause.  
  
“What was that about?!” Asked Roland sharply. The man then shrugged his shoulders briefly. He looked at him for a while with his head tilted slightly. “What was ... what?” He replied confused and shrugged. He didn't seem to remember anything.  
  
Roland sat up and scratched the back of his head questioningly as his gaze wandered to the sad female. It choked his chest as her whine reached his ears again. He went in front of her and sat down cautiously by her side. With both hands he gently lifted her head and looked at her comfortingly. She cooed softly at his touch and slowly opened her eyes before turning her gaze to him.  
  
Roland looked into the dilated pupils and felt her depressed emotions, the turquoise shimmer disappeared in the deep blue color. “It's not your fault.” He said calmly to her, stroking the tear from her face with one hand. The vibrations of her cooing were intense and Roland paused to take a breath. He smiled comfortingly at her and spoke calmly. “You didn't do anything wrong, so why the sad expression?” She snorted hard at him once, but let her sad gaze fall aside.  
  
“You know,” He began slowly. “it really hurts here, to see you like this.” She raised her head again and saw Roland put a hand on his chest. She straightened up and poked her nose slightly against his hand. He exhaled calmly. “Yes, right there.” He said, nodding his head. She understood the gesture. The female closed her eyes halfway, cooed contentedly and made eye contact again. It seemed like she was trying to smile. The thin edge of turquoise came out again and shimmered brightly around the iris.  
  
Roland stood up slightly shaky, always looking back. He put both hands on his hips and leaned down to her. “So who is a happy dragon?” He asked with a big grin. In a flash she stood on all fours and jumped a little. Still in the air, she pushed a loud but happy “Meep” out of her throat. Roland leaned down again and patted her head. “That's exactly what I wanted to hear.” She cooed contentedly and quickly licked his hand.  
  
Only now did Roland remember that someone was still in the room. He thought again of the man's violent reaction to his companion. What had that triggered?

The stranger had got up and opened the window. He stood by the long window ledge and took a deep breath. With a relieved groan, he pushed the air out again and turned elegantly to them. He breathed in to start a sentence, but someone came before him.  
  
“What do you need so long?” Asked a strong man who was standing in the door. He was wearing a white vest with red sleeves, which bit a little bit with the brown trousers. Two large black shoes rounded off the picture.  
  
The thin man held both arms apart and put on a questioning expression. “I was just about to ...” “No longer needed.” Interrupted the tall man. “Conrad asked for you.” He took a step back out of the room and waved a hand in the hallway. “You can go now. I take over from here.”  
  
He dropped his face, exhaled indignantly, and walked out of the room with his forehead held down. He looked briefly at Roland as he passed. “We'll see each other later, sometime.” He murmured, waving two fingers at him before disappearing into the hallway. Roland looked after him skeptically. The man had a strange way of walking and talking. But his thoughts were still centered around the confused reaction to his companion. But that had to wait.  
  
“Good mo...” “Did he say what he wanted?” Interrupted the skinny man inappropriately when he stuck his head back into the room. “No.” Replied the latter, exhaling strongly. He sounded slightly stressed. “Alright.” With these words, the shaggy face disappeared into the hall again. “Again.” The older man began. He came into the room again and made a bowed gesture with his head. “Good morning, or should I rather say, a nice evening?” Roland looked out of the open window in surprise. It was very late indeed. The reddish veil of the setting sun was already over the horizon. He wondered how long he had slept and turned back to the man.  
  
“You can call me Daniel.” Said the stranger as he approached the boy. “The other man was Timothy.” He added, pointing with his right thumb over his shoulder. Roland looked at him with a serious expression. “How long have I been here?” He wanted to know.  
  
Daniel put a hand on his chin as he gathered his thoughts. “With today, for three days.” He replied, holding out three outstretched fingers. Roland's eyes widened in shock. “Three days!?” It echoed in his mind. He looked at the female questioningly. A nodded “Chirp” confirmed Daniel's statement.  
  
“You were in very bad shape, when you got here.” Daniel began. “Your leg wound was infected and you had a high fever.” Daniel pointed to Roland's right leg with one hand. “But the Sorati did a pretty good job.” He added. “Huh? Sorati?” Roland frowned. “What is a Sorati?” He asked curiously.

Daniel frowned somewhat skeptically. “You've never been in ...” He stopped when he saw the boy's unknowing look. He briefly summarized a few sentences. “Well, to put it simply: The Sorati are a dragon-like folk who serve to the Guardian-Dragoness Sorathis. Her priests are specialize in the magic of restoration, which they use in the name of their master all over the land.” “How dragon-like?” Interrupted Roland, raising his eyebrows in astonishment, pointing to his companion. “Like her?” He asked. Daniel shook his head. “Not quite. They do have human traits, but more with dragon characteristics.” Daniel started to smile. “But you will see for yourself when we go back to meet them tomorrow.” “Why that?” Roland asked uncertainly. “Because of your leg.” Daniel argued calmly.  
  
“A human dragon?” Roland muttered to himself, not really knowing what to make of it. But then his companion nudged him in the leg and brought him back from his thoughts. “Yes.” Daniel started again. “She was also skeptical.” He gestured to the female. “And didn't let the priest near you at first.” He looked at her with a smile. “But she recognized his intentions very quickly.”  
  
Daniel clapped his hands in front of him once. “So enough of that, we can talk about everything else later.” He took a few steps out of the room and waved Roland to him. “You must be hungry after such an adventure.”  
  
Roland looked at him wide-eyed because just as Daniel mentioned it, he felt a huge hole in his stomach and held a hand to the source of the growl. “Yes, you can say that out loud.” He said, following Daniel out of the room, closely followed by the little dragoness.  
  
Roland was led through the big house by Daniel. Slowly, but steadily, he moved through the passage. The hallway was decorated with numerous tapestries, which always had an alternating color. Red and blue were the most represented. The walls were covered with many old-time paintings. Most of the faces were strange to Roland. But the same heraldic cross kept appearing again and again. The same like on the back of his right hand.  
  
“These are the generations of the House Daventry.” Daniel began to tell. He stopped with him in front of a picture in which two women could be seen. “These are Lady Catherine and her sister Lady Claire.” Said the man. He exhaled heavily and then went on quietly. Roland stopped short of the portrait. He looked hesitantly into his mother's painted face. His eyes started to get wet, but he was poked in the leg by a little female dragon. He looked at her in astonishment, but then had to smile when he made eye contact with her. She snorted hard once and gave a low “Meep”. “You're right.” He replied and went with her to Daniel, who had already gone a little way ahead.  
  
At the end of the long hall they came to a staircase that led in a semicircle to the lower level to the entrance area. With Daniel's help, he reached at the bottom. They went through the hall to the back. After they passed a massive wooden door, they stood in a larger room. In the middle was a long table, which numerous chairs were lined up around. A red tablecloth ran the entire length of the plate and was covered with many tasty dishes.  
  
“Ahh, finally among the living again, it seems.” Came from the top of the table. A man in uniform was sitting on the chair. Three red fabric ribbons hung down from his right shoulder over his chest. The left shoulder was covered with an armor plate, which had the same heraldic cross on it like on the pictures in the hallway. Roland already knew the person. It was the leader of the soldiers who had been looking for him too. The man got up from his chair and made a leaning gesture with his head. “Allow me to introduce myself. Koris, James Koris. Captain of the Ironwing-Guard.”  
  
“We'll have time later for formalities, Koris.” Interrupted Catherine, sitting next to him at the end of the table. “Now let the boy have something to eat first.” “Very well.” Replied Koris and sat down again. She smiled kindly at Roland and waved him to the empty chair on her left.  
  
Daniel pulled it back invitingly. “Have a seat.” He said afterwards and made a gesture on the seat with his open hand. Roland did not have to be asked twice and took a seat in the offered chair. The female sat down on the floor to the right.

He let his gaze wander across the richly laid table. “Don´t be shy.” Catherine said with a smile on her face. “There is enough of everything.” Roland was initially somewhat skeptical. But when his stomach started to growl again, he started to fill his plate.  
  
Step by step more people came into the room and took a seat on the empty chairs. Everyone looked at the newcomer and his companion closely. Roland felt a little uncomfortable in this situation, which hit his appetite a little.  
  
“Is that him?!” A child's voice called loudly through the hall. A girl with long brown hair, which was braided, entered the room and looked at Roland with an odd look. The strange thing was that her eyes weren't the same color. The right eye was green and the left turquoise. “He's way to small.” Came her afterwards with a disappointed and slightly plaintive undertone.  
  
Roland raised his eyebrows in astonishment. “Small?” He thought. “If someone is small here, it's this girl!” He shook his head briefly and looked down at his companion. She snorted once and cocked her head questioningly.  
  
The girl hurried around the table and stopped in front of the dragoness. She got up a bit frightened and looked skeptically at the child standing in front of her. “Now everyone was talking about a dragon!” She complained aloud, holding both arms forward and pointing provocatively to the female. “And then I come here and he looks so small.”  
  
The dragoness took a few steps back and looked sadly at Roland once before pulling back behind his chair. “Not again!” He thought to himself annoyed. With a jerk, Roland pushed his chair back and stood up. Everyone at the table fell silent and looked at him intently.  
  
Roland knelt awkwardly next to the female and put an arm around her. He looked angrily at the girl. “What is your problem?!” He asked her out loud. “I have no problem. He is the one with the problem.” She continued energetically. “The dragon is far too small.” She said, pointing her finger at the female.  
  
Roland looked at his companion once, who met his gaze with wet eyes and a soft “Chirp”. Then he turned back to the girl. “First.” He began. “HE is a SHE!” Roland looked at her seriously. “And secondly, she hatched just a few days ago, so I'm sorry that she doesn't match your idea of ​​a dragon!” The dragoness stuck her head out from behind Roland and snorted at the girl once condescendingly. The child put her hands on her hips and took a breath. But before she could say anything, she was interrupted.  
  
“That's enough now, Rebecca!” Catherine said with a determined tone. Rebecca stomped with her foot on the floor, walked vigorously around the table, and sat as far away from Roland as possible. She sent a few angry looks at him, but he didn't respond. He stroked the female's head once and looked at her comfortingly. She cooed quietly and licked his hand trustingly.  
  
Roland put the chair back straight and sat down at the table again. The dragoness went next to him and lay down on the floor to the right of the chair. There was a short, silent pause before the table talks started again. After this brief battle of words, Roland didn't feel like talking. He chewed on his food for a long time and listened to the individual conversations instead.  
  
Koris had a serious conversation with Catherine. Roland heard some small details. It was about some unknown people who are looking for someone in the city and the surrounding area. But he didn't notice any more. The other conversations were too loud.

Roland's attention suddenly dropped when he felt his companion's foreleg on his leg. The female looked at him a little sadly and smacked her mouth several times. “Oh right, you're certainly hungry too!” It ran through his head.  
  
He motioned Daniel over to him. “May she also have something from the table?” He asked him uncertainly and pointed with one hand to the female. Daniel looked a little puzzled at the boy, but then smiled. “Just give me a moment.” He said calmly, walking out of the room with hasty steps. Roland watched him until he disappeared into the door. A short time later he came back with a silver bowl.  
  
The female watched him closely. Especially the shiny bowl he brought with him. She stood on all fours and excitedly waved her tail back and forth as she sniffed the air curiously. Daniel knelt down and placed the bowl on the floor next to Roland's chair. He made eye contact with the dragoness and smiled at her as he looked into her deep blue eyes. Their light turquoise gleam flashed in them when she saw the thick chunks of meat in them. “Enjoy your meal.” He said calmly and then let go of the bowl. Then he got up again.  
  
The female immediately eat the contents and greedily swallowed the meat. She licked the rim of the bowl clean and gave a full, happy “Chirp”. The dragoness licked her lips and lay down again next to Roland's chair, where she purred quietly and happily.  
  
“Do you already have a name for her?” Daniel asked him from the side. Roland was surprised by his question and looked a bit lost down at the female. “I haven't thought of that yet.” He said, raising his eyebrows in surprise. He frowned and thought intensely about possible names. But nothing seemed to fit. “No.” Said Roland indignantly. “I can't think of anything now.”

“Call HER Lizardy, or Scalenose!” It sounded annoyed from the other half of the table. Roland looked at Rebecca angrily and condescendingly, but did not respond to her words. Daniel put a hand on Roland's shoulder and gave him a warm look. “How about Kyndle?” He asked him. “Kyndle?” The boy replied in surprise. “Why Kyndle?”  
  
“There is this story.” Daniel began calmly. “About a woman named Kyndle.” He said with a somewhat sad tone. “A legend, if you like. A beautiful sorceress with sapphire blue eyes and this magnificent turquoise shade around the iris. Just like your companion here.” Roland saw Daniel's eyes get slightly wet. It seemed to him more than just a legend. Daniel exhaled heavily once and wiped a tear from his eyes. “Her look just reminded me of her again.” He looked at the dragoness for a long time and then turned back to Roland. “It's just a thought. You can let it go through your head once.” He said afterwards and lifted the clean licked bowl from the floor. He then disappeared into the back of the room.  
  
Roland didn't notice much of the rest of the dinner. He thought hard about the name. “Kyndle?” He muttered under his breath. He was pulled out of thoughts when something nudged his leg. The female put both forelegs on his thigh and looked at him from below with big, wet eyes.  
  
He returned her look with a slight smile. “Kyndle?” He said again. She started purring and gently snorted at him when she heard the name again. He felt it in her reaction that she liked it. Roland put a hand on her cheek and gave her a little kiss on the nose. “Then your name is Kyndle now.” He whispered to her. She snorted at him once and cooed contentedly.  
  
Rebecca looked jealously at Roland and his dragoness. She started pounding her plate vigorously. “Great!” She muttered angrily to herself.  
  
  
The initially somewhat tense dinner was otherwise rather quiet and calm. Daniel had just cleared the last plate from the table when Catherine took the word.  
  
“So, Roland.” She began. “Let me now officially welcome you here in Ironwing.” She smiled at him with a warm look. Roland sighed to himself, since his mother always looked at him that way. It was so unfamiliar to see that smile on someone else. He shook off the moment and looked intently at the many new faces.  
  
Catherine started introducing people in turn. “You already know Captain Koris.” She began, pointing to the man on her right. Koris got up again and repeated his gesture from earlier. “Welcome.” He added. “This is Conrad.” Catherine said. Meanwhile, she had got up and was standing behind the chair to the right of Koris on which Conrad was sitting. He held his hands in front of his face and made a low “Hmpf”. “He is my oldest son, but not the most talkative.” She added with a big grin on her face. Roland looked a little nervous at Conrad. He had a dark brown short hairstyle and there was almost no facial expression on his face. Besides, he hadn't noticed that Conrad was sitting at the table earlier. A stack of books lay beside him. “If you can get him off his books, he'll be a little more talkative.” She added with a smile.  
  
Catherine went on. “Here we have Daniel, Sasha, Timothy and Loretta.” She enumerated, as she walked behind the fours. “They take care of the property and have the management of the service staff.” Roland's eyes stopped at Timmy. He thought again of his reaction to Kyndle from earlier. What was that all about? Everyone nodded to Roland with a smile. Only Tim had a slightly dreamy look on his face and a big grin on his lips.  
  
“This is my daughter Rebecca.” Catherine continued. “She is sometimes a little difficult when it comes to new acquaintances.” Rebecca glared at Roland and stuck out her tongue for a moment. Roland shook his head once and looked back angrily. “But that should definitely go away after a certain period of getting used to it.” Added the woman, tapping the girl sharply on the head, which quickly made her tongue disappear again.  
  
“That was it for the moment. You will get to know the rest of Ironwing's residents sooner or later.” She said, walking up to Roland. She stood behind his chair and held on to the backrest as she turned to the other people. “So, and this is, as everyone knows already, Roland.” She announced. “He is the son of my sister Claire.” She was briefly connected and exhaled once. “He'll have a home with us from now on.” She continued. Rebecca crossed her arms angrily at her words and gave Roland another angry look. Roland didn't catch the eye. He looked a little lost on the table as the word home repeated in his head several times.  
  
Suddenly he felt a warm hand on his cheek. Catherine knelt in front of Roland's chair and looked into his watery eyes. He saw that smile again, the smile he had only seen from his mother. “I know, you had an arduous journey and I won't even try to replace her.” She said quietly to him. Great tears appeared in her eyes when he returned the wet eye contact. “But please, let me try to close this gap.” Roland hesitantly put his hand on hers and felt the pleasant warmth on his face. Catherine exhaled strongly and looked at him hopefully. Both closed their eyes and put their foreheads on each other while she took him in the arm.  
  
For a brief moment the room was completely silent.  
  
Catherine slowly got up again. She rubbed her eyes and breathed in relief. Before she could say another word, however, something tugged on her dress and drew her attention to the ground. She looked down in amazement and saw a little female dragon looking at her with wide eyes and making a requesting “Meep”. Catherine knelt down and stroked her forehead lightly. “Of course we also warmly welcome you.” She looked at the hatchling with a questioning look. “With which name should we actually call you?”

“Kyndle!” It came from Roland, as if fired by a crossbow. Daniel couldn't help but smile when he heard the name. “So, Kyndle? Good.” Catherine replied. The female cooed happily and half closed her eyes. The woman got up and looked at Roland. “Alright.” She started again, smiling at him. “I think that was enough excitement for today. Daniel will accompany you back to your room so that you can rest.” She beckoned Daniel to her. “You have a lot to do tomorrow and should be fit for it.” Roland still thought. “I'm not that tired.” But hardly spoken in his thoughts, he started to yawn.  
  
Daniel left the room with him and Roland looked back at the new faces. “Good night.” Catherine said with a warm tone as she said goodbye to him with a smile. Roland returned her smile. “Good night.” He said quietly. He tried hard not to add the word mother, because at that moment she had exactly the same facial expression as his mother. Roland closed his eyes briefly and then went through the door to Daniel, who was already waiting for him at the foot of the stairs, followed by an orange-red female dragon.  
  
  
He was back in the big room now. The sun was still shining, flooding the room with its red and gold sheen. Roland examined the four walls more closely. Starting with the big bed in the corner. At the other end of the room was a closet with mirrored doors. There was a table with a single chair across of the entrance. Behind it was a window front from which some of the panes could be opened. A glazed door led to the narrow terrace outside and invited to a wonderful view over the magnificent garden of the property.  
  
The boy strode across the carpet in the middle of the room. He paused briefly on the symbol and looked thoughtfully at the back of his right hand. Then he went on to the balcony door and slowly opened it. A warm gust of air came towards him as he opened the door. Kyndle hopped elegantly on the narrow terrace and sniffed the ground curiously.  
  
Roland smirked outside while watching her. Kyndle leaned into one of the flower boxes that were set up on the railing and smelled eagerly of the numerous flowers. But she pulled her head back in fright and inhaled hectically several times. With a cute sneeze, a small flame stuck out of her nostrils and scorched the beautiful red petals in front of her. She shook her head and looked at the smoking ash in the flower trough, followed by a sad “Chirp”.  
  
Roland watched the whole thing from a safe distance and couldn't help but laugh. Kyndle looked at him slightly annoyed and snorted hard in his direction. “I'm sorry.” Roland apologized with a slight grin on his face and walked up to her. He knelt down to her and patted her head. “Hard to believe that a big, intimidating dragon starts out so cute and small.” He whispered to her with a warm look. She looked at him with her eyes half open and purred softly, happily sticking the tip of her tongue out of her mouth.  
  
Roland sat on the ground in front of the railing and looked at the horizon. The sun rose just above the edge and sent its beautiful reddish glow across the sky. Kyndle snuggled up next to him and purred softly as she leaned against his shoulder. He took her in his arms and put his head against hers. The female closed one of her wings around him, pressed him a little more against her body. He felt her heart beat and heard the gentle vibrations of her purring. Roland had a deep feeling of security in this warm hug. He felt at home. Together they watched the peaceful sunset in their new home.