THE MAGE'S SIN

DRAGONERA: THE DARK ONE CHRONICLES BOOK 3

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PROLOGUE

An unearthly roar echoed throughout the once pristine halls of the famed academy. Bodies, both human and non-human, littered the floor, painting a horrific, bloody scene. This place, once a safe haven for those with "The Gift" had been twisted into utter chaos.

A young man, possibly in his late teens, ran through the halls carrying a long staff in his right hand. Behind him he heard another loud, unholy roar. The sound sent shivers down his spine; it was the sound of some inexplicable nightmare, more terrifying than his darkest imaginings. It was the sound of whatever had been unleashed in the school.

It didn't take a genius to figure out this was no ordinary school, but one for those connected to the energies of the world. Some might call it a school of trickery and illusions, but the truth was far simpler. It taught an art normal people took for granted these days, an art long since relegated to the pages of fantasy books. An art holding a mighty, but invisible, sway over the modern world: magic, the most ancient form of power the world has ever known. Though much of the world had long since forgotten it, there were a chosen few who had devoted their lives

to uncovering its secrets. The fleeing man was one of those chosen few.

The young man glanced back over his shoulder as the unholy roar finished. A pair of formless shadows rushed towards him, with a strange mix of hisses and growls emitting from the shadows as they struck out at him!

Fortunately this young man was not defenseless. As the shadows lunged he stood his ground and turned to face them, spinning his staff! After the fifth spin, the young man struck out with a mighty "thwack" knocking several teeth from the charging beast! The second shadow leapt into the air above its fallen comrade, a mighty roar erupting from its gaping maw, teeth glistening with saliva.

But the shadow made a fatal flaw in assuming the young man had nothing else up his sleeve. As the creature descended on him, he pointed his staff in its direction and began to mumble under his breath. With a great flash a blast of blue lightning erupted from the tip of his staff, piercing through his attacker's maw!

The result was instantaneous. A surge of lightning tore through the shadow, causing its body to dissolve in a shower of crackling sparks. A lifeless pile of ash landed at the young man's feet. With a sigh he rested his staff on his shoulder.

"I love using that spell."

Before he could celebrate his victory, an even louder roar came from deep within the academy. This wasn't a warning roar though, it was a signal. The man groaned as he turned and began to run once again. He cursed himself for momentarily forgetting that killing one of the shadows would draw the attention of the others.

As he started running the shadows gave chase. They were like an unstoppable sea of hellish insects, crawling across the walls and ceiling in pursuit of their prey. Each one hissing as they chased the young man. The hissing sounds were mixed with the

loud clanking of their claws scratching against the metal of the hall.

There was no time for the young mage to think. Given how many shadows were chasing him, he stood no chance of defeating the alone. If there was any hope for survival he needed to get to the safe zone where the other students, and the Grand Mage, had retreated.

Thankfully, luck was on his side. The door to the safe zone was just ahead, but he couldn't go there while being followed by a hoard of shadow creatures. He glanced over his shoulder. He might not have been able to destroy them or stop them entirely, but he could sure as hell slow them down.

The young man skidded to a halt and turned on a dime to face the shadows. As they grew closer and closer he held out his staff and began chanting under his breath. The more he chanted the brighter his staff glowed, pulsating with power. With a final word the young man rammed the bottom of his staff into the floor.

A giant sheet of ice rose up between him and the shadows. Any of the beasts unfortunate enough to touch the frigid wall were frozen on the spot! This bought him the chance he needed to get away. He pulled his staff out of the floor and rushed off towards the door. He didn't have long before his wall would begin to melt.

The ice bought him just the time he needed. The safe zone, within his reach, greeted him with warm light and an immediate peace of mind. He stepped through the door, taking deep breathes as the holy magic keeping the door safe sealed behind him, just as the ice melted.

Though they could not get into the room, the shadows tried to tear down the barrier of light standing between them and their targets. Each time they touched the barrier they let out an evil hiss before slowly backing off.

"Thank all that is holy…" The young man said with a tired gasp. "I was certain that I was going to die in that hall."

He took a few seconds to catch his breath. Even for one gifted with incredible power like magic, it took a lot of mental power and physical strength to escape destructive monsters like the shadows. Once he'd managed to relax and settle his breathing, he turned to face several other students. Many of them were injured from the attack; some of them looked as if they were close to death itself.

"How many survivors ?" He asked as he turned to a young woman.

"About thirty of us in this corridor, Head Student." She replied. "At least fifteen of us have been injured, and those who aren't are too terrified to go back out there."

"Dammit... And where's the Grand Mage?"

"He's in his quarters trying to figure a way to get us out of this mess."

The young man gave a scornful sigh as he shook his head. This was not the time to hide in private quarters. Their school, no, their very home was in danger of not only being destroyed, but their existence was at risk of being revealed to the world. The shadows, and the horror controlling them, were too dangerous for them to just sit by and do nothing.

"How many of the survivors are still capable of fighting back?"

"Not many, the strongest students are busy using healing magic to save the lives of the dying."

The young man let out a frustrated groan and slammed the end of his staff into the ground. As if their situation wasn't already bad enough. He needed the most powerful students to even stand a chance against the monsters, but he understood that their talents were needed to save the wounded. Without their help, he was going to have to settle for whomever was left he could get his hands on.

"Get anyone who isn't busy with healing to reinforce the barrier. If that falls, we won't have anything to protect us from

the monsters. No matter what happens, we must maintain this safe zone. Am I clear?"

"Yes Head Student!"

The student ran off to find help. As she left, the young man sighed as he tightened his grip around the staff. How did things get so bad? Where did it all go wrong? Their magic arts had never before failed to help them defend their home, even against previous demonic attacks.

But now, well, things looked hopeless. If there was any chance for them to overcome the shadows, it would have to come from outside of the academy.

But...who could possibly aid them, when they'd hidden their existence from the rest of the world?

ONE YEAR

Before High School Aiden Russel was a lanky kid with one true friend. He was quiet, just keeping to himself, reading fantasy and daydreaming. That awkward boy was gone, burned away by his experiences over the last year.

For Aiden it has been a full year since his adventures at Skyward Camp. That lanky boy paled in comparison to the fifteen-year old attending Wolf Pack High School. A year spent in training since the harpy incident brought huge improvements, both physically and mentally. Not even his old nemesis Eric would recognize him now.

While he wasn't any taller, Aiden was much more muscular than he had been in middle school. Though the training he went through under Garrett was indeed tough, Aiden could not argue with the results. His arms had transformed from noodles to toned, solid muscles. And the improvements did not stop with just his arms. Aiden's calves and thighs had become a solid foundation for the teen's more powerful frame.

Even Aiden's parents were surprised at the sudden change in their son's physical condition. His mother, when she began to

notice the changes, could have sworn that some stranger had replaced the son she knew and loved. His father, though also surprised at the sudden change, was proud to see his son taking physical fitness more seriously.

Their surprise didn't bug him too much, at least - at first. It had gotten old after awhile, though. Now Aiden rolled his eyes in annoyance whenever someone looked surprised at his appearance. He'd gotten used to muttering to himself, asking if they'd never seen someone start to exercise before.

The last year didn't just bring an improvement to his body. Aiden's magic training took him from being a slow amateur to a much more controlled rookie. Those were Seamus' words, not his own. Aiden was far more confident in using magic. Now he could cast spells without running out of mana after just a few simple incantations.

Swordsmanship, though, had quickly become his true forte. Theresa worked Aiden to the bone nearly every single day. It came with a lot of bruises, light cuts, and a LOT of falling down, but, he was slowly reaching the point of keeping up with Theresa without making himself look like a complete fool. Theresa had even mentioned how proud she was of the progress he was making.

The past year wasn't all sunshine and rainbows though, it also brought hardship to Aiden's life. After summer came and went Aiden began his new high school life as a freshman. He quickly learned that his rose colored glasses view of high school, based on what he'd seen on television and the movies, was nothing like the real thing. The schedules were tighter, the classes longer and tougher, and the social interactions were...confusing and unfair. It seemed like you were assigned to a category that was either popular or unpopular on day one, and no matter how hard you tried, you couldn't break through to the other side.

It didn't help that, along with harder courses, came lengthier, and more time consuming, homework. Aiden wasn't lazy, but the

amount of busy work his teachers loved to assign, multiple classes each assigning "just one hour" of homework, quickly piled up. To make matters worse, after having his eyes opened to the fantastic other world that everyone else was blind to, normal, everyday life just seemed dull and tedious. Every minute spent solving equations or conjugating verbs made him long for the clash of steel or the feeling of magic erupting from his fingertips.

But, he still didn't know why all this happening. Why did his life turn around so suddenly? Why was it that he, a normal kid, had ended up with the sword of the ancient King of All Dragons? Every time he tried to prod his father for answers, he always got the same response: he'd been abroad and saw the figurine in a shop. That was it, just a simple, boring answer. His father seemed to never remember the name of the shop, or just where he had found it. That, or he refused to say. With his dad you could never tell.

Regardless of how his father discovered the artifact, Aiden spent the entire summer training with the blade, becoming familiar with its powers. Theresa's training had been so intense, in just a few months time he'd learned to summon the blade by sheer force of will, without even needing the "Ladbe" incantation.

He still had trouble mastering one attack, the mysterious, unstoppable power he had manifested during the battle to protect the Harpy's Den from Dimitri and Raven. He could still feel the words of the attack echoing in his mind. It helped deliver a decisive finish to Raven and Dimitri's plans: The Draconic Firestorm. Aiden remembered the fiery vortex with the head of a great dragon he somehow summoned last year. He brought it up with Theresa one time during practice and her reaction caught him off guard. She was impressed, confused, and worried that he had somehow used what she called "Warfang's Ultimate Attack." When Theresa asked him how he summoned the attack, Aiden answered truthfully.

He had no flipping idea.

While he didn't mean to be rude, it was the truth. All Aiden remembered was that when he was using the attack he was angry and he felt useless in a battle because others had to come save him. His anger streamed into the blade, somehow summoning the great fiery dragon from within. Ever since that day, he'd not been able to summon the Draconic Firestorm.

Garrett scoffed at the idea of Aiden being able to summon the attack again. As far as he was concerned, Aiden had done nothing: Warfang simply recognized its power was needed. That the whelp had managed the mighty attack was nothing more than a fluke. Aiden had grown used to listening to the mighty dragon's disparaging comments. He'd finally learned to do what Theresa and Seamus did, simply ignore Garrett.

Seamus, on the other hand, was fascinated by how Aiden summoned the blade's immense power. Whenever his partner's words began to cut into Aiden's confidence, he was quick to remind his student how proud he was of him. No human could survive the might of the Firestorm, at least not by chance. Aiden tried to explain that the spell had come forth on its own, that his body had simply been acting without his input, but Seamus waved off his concerns, insisting that it was a sign of Aiden's "true potential." Whatever that meant. Aiden didn't even bother to ask.

After what seemed like an eternity, the last day of Aiden's freshmen year arrived. His last few weeks were an onslaught of final exams, so much so that Theresa had agreed to call off their training as she found herself buried in studies too. Compared to middle school, his high school exams felt like an ordeal, some great gauntlet of challenges that pushed his mental faculties to the breaking point. Not one, but three days of nonstop writing, calculating, and racking his brain, all building up to the final day. After a grueling four hours of testing, his first year of high school was finally over.

As the last bell rang, Aiden sighed and ran a hand through his hair. He was finally free and able to catch up with Theresa and Liza, whom he hadn't seen much of over the last week. The three didn't share many classes, but they were lucky enough to have three together.

He and Liza managed to catch up with each other first, since Theresa's final exam was in a different room. Knowing Theresa, though, the pair were certain she was already power walking her way to where they agreed to meet up.

"I thought those exams would never end. My brain feels like it was just stretched across every single state." Aiden said with a groan as he fell into step beside Liza.

"You and me both, Aiden." Liza said. "Some of those topics, I swear I think the teachers just made up on the spot to get us to freak out during the exam."

Aiden gave a dry laugh. He hadn't thought of it that way, but to hear Liza say it, he could believe it was true. She had a funny way of voicing her thoughts a bit more bluntly than the rest of them. It was an endearing trait, though sometimes Aiden felt she tried a bit too hard.

Much like Aiden, Liza's year of training had done wonders for her physical fitness. She had always been the more athletic of the two, and the dragon's training had only emphasized her fit form. She'd grown taller, her already strong legs even more well-defined. Her arms may not have grown quite as impressive as his, but Aiden knew first hand not to underestimate her strength. She'd chosen to keep her hair short, though nowadays it seemed more untamed.

Aiden yawned and rested his hands behind his head, glancing at Liza's legs absentmindedly. He'd learned, during their training, that as strong as he'd become, he just couldn't keep up with her when it came speed. Her somewhat clumsy fighting style from last year had evolved into a lightning-quick hit and run tech-

nique, tearing at her opponent with agile strikes that seemed to come out of nowhere. That, combined with her seemingly endless stamina, made her use of Gitanel something of a wonder to behold.

"Aiden! Liza!" A new voice called out to them.

The two of them turned to the voice, both of them grinning despite their fatigue. Their new friend, Hannah, waved and hurried toward them, clutching a book to her chest. Hannah, or as she was more correctly known, Aello, was the newest addition to their bizarre entourage. While on the outside she seemed like a somewhat-shy, but occasionally snarky, girl, she was actually the youngest princess of the long-forgotten Harpy race.

In spite of the rather perilous journey that led her to them, Aello had adjusted to the Human world with far greater ease than the two expected. That being said, her first few days had been filled with a hefty degree of awkward questions and confusion. The most notorious being the existence of different locker rooms for boys and girls. Coming from an all-female race, Aello was understandably curious about the need for them to change in separate rooms.

Her antics didn't begin with school, though. Before she enrolled she would often sneak into Aiden's room when he was away and play his video games. She'd quickly become obsessed with the games, though she didn't quite grasp the concept of save files. One time, she sheepishly admitted to saving over one of Aiden's files that had over two hundred hours logged. Once he'd recovered from his disbelief, thinking about the countless late nights he'd spent gathering every last collectible and filling out every last bestiary entry, he refused to speak to her for several weeks.

While Aello adapted to the human world by rummaging through her friends' rooms and, eventually going to school, her Guardians, Mia and Gabriella, occupied their time watching over

their princess, and by getting their first human jobs to pay for an apartment for the trio. Mia, ever the optimist, was more than content with her waitressing job, but her partner was infinitely impatient with the "rude, obnoxious, lazy" humans she had to deal with while working for a call center. When Aello offered to get a job to help them, the two unanimously refused, giving her a million reasons why they were happy to suffer such indignities to provide for their princess.

The two guardians were, shockingly, not the only harpies constantly hovering around the adventurous princess. Much to the utter shock of her three friends, Aello's older sisters seemed to frequently appear when they least expected them. Aiden couldn't hide his shock the first time he saw the pair working as substitute teachers at their school.

Aiden dreaded the days when he'd find Ocypete substituting for the gym teacher. She was a merciless instructor, pushing even her little sister to her absolute limits with harsh exercises and even harsher activities. Any day he saw her decked out in a gray track suit, her long hair tied into an immaculate bun by one of her many, many guardians, Aiden knew he was going to be sore for the rest of the week. It had reached the point where he found himself longing for Garrett's strength training over Ocypete and gym. He had come to notice that, for some reason, Ocypete, or whichever Guardian was accompanying her, would have a different cell phone every time she appeared. When he asked Aello about it, she just laughed and explained that Ocypete would frequently get too emotional or excited when she texted her and would end up destroying her phone.

Celaeno, by contrast, was interesting as an art teacher. True to her title as the "odd princess" Celaeno would show up in mismatched clothes that she claimed were "all the rage in France about forty years ago." Truthfully, Aiden found her classes insightful. The Harpy Princess knew everything about artistic

style and history, able to name hundreds of famous and non-famous artists and the impact they had on the evolution of their craft. Then she would try to draw something herself. For all her artistic knowledge, Celaeno could spend an entire class trying to draw a stick figure and somehow still end up with, well not a stick figure. When anyone questioned her clear lack of any artistic ability, she'd just laugh and reply that intent mattered more than execution.

Aello's big sisters weren't the only ones that came to the school to keep an eye on the princess. Her guardians had also taken up spots as students as well. With how many harpies, in the guise of humans, who seemed to flock around Aello, it had led many of the students to believe she was either exceedingly popular, or some kind of foreign royalty. While their suspicions weren't entirely wrong, Aello frequently grumbled about how much she wished the attention would stop. This feeling only got worse the first time someone tried to ask her out on a date and was met with a rather colorful rejection in the form of a very irate Gabriella.

"Hey Elly." Liza said as Aello pouted at the nickname they had chosen for her. "Where are your stalkers?"

"Probably trying to find me," Aello complained. She sighed and glared off to the side, pursing her lips, "I can never lose them for very long, no matter how many windows I climb through..."

Aiden gave a short laugh, flashing her a grin.

"To be fair, they are your guardians. And it is their sworn duty to protect you at all costs." Aello rolled her shoulders, a gesture she used when she couldn't flap her wings, and gave him a short glare.

"Oh yeah, and what's Theresa's excuse for babying you?" She asked with a mocking tone. Aiden coughed, turning his head to hide the slight blush on his cheeks.

"I have no idea what you're talking about."

"Anyway!" Liza interrupted them, drawing the word out as long as she could, "How'd your finals go, Elly?"

"Terrible!" Aello whined as she held her book closer to her. "I mean I'd heard that humans were terrible, but why in the world did they come up with this kind of torture for their kids? How in the world am I supposed to remember all of your countries?!"

"With a lot of studying," Aiden groaned. At the same time, Liza piped up saying, "A lot of praying!" The two traded a glance, then the trio turned, hearing a soft chuckle from behind Aiden.

"Honestly, you guys make it out to be way worse than it really is," Theresa laughed as she walked up to the group, "Sure, sure, some of the tests are tricky, but at least you only have one species to worry about studying."

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, some of us aren't 'gifted' with ancient draconic knowledge," Liza retorted, throwing an arm around Aello's shoulders, "Some of us are flutter brains," she said, sticking her tongue out. Aello snorted and dissolved into a giggle fit.

"I think I detect a hint of jealousy," Theresa replied.

Liza rolled her eyes and mumbled in annoyance as the four of them walked towards the buses together. The hallways were filled with students that desperately wanted to get away from the school and begin their summer vacations. Aiden couldn't argue them, though his idea of a summer vacation was completely different from theirs due to how his life had changed so much.

As they approached the buses Aello's guardians caught up to them in the nick of time. The young harpy princess groaned a bit as they took up defensive spots around her to keep her protected from anyone they thought were too rude or were making any kind of threat towards her. Aiden almost let a small chuckle escape his lips but stopped when Liza gave him a small glare.

After all he was in the same kind of boat as Aello was when it came to Theresa watching his every single step.

"Should we meet at the local spot today?" Theresa asked.

"Well, it is kinda the first day of summer." Liza said, "We should enjoy it for what it is and relax for a bit. Training every day without a break can get pretty overwhelming after all."

"Training is also important, like studying." Theresa folded her arms. "The less you train the less you'll remember."

"Can't we enjoy our freedom for a day first?" Aello pouted. "I spent like nine months in this school wanting to do other things. I want to have at least one day of relaxation before we start training in that place you call a forest."

"If you can even call it that." Mia grumbled.

"All right, let's take it back a bit here." Aiden said, cutting off any chance of an argument. "All three of you have good points. It is summer vacation and we've been working so hard during the weekends with training and holidays that we need some time to relax. But at the same time we shouldn't become lazy."

He smiled.

"So how about we find a way to balance it out?"

Both Theresa and Liza nodded in agreement. Aello smiled. You could count on Aiden to stop an argument from breaking out. While he knew both Theresa and Liza would have preferred to do what they wanted, Aiden's suggestion was the best option. Besides, it was the first day of summer vacation tomorrow. Today was just a prelude to that summer.

As their group walked towards the buses, Aiden couldn't help but watch the student body. Like middle school the social hierarchy, as he liked to call it, was the same. The popular kids were at the top and the not so popular kids were often chastised or made fun of for being completely different from the 'status quo' the popular kids believed in.

If there was one thing Aiden hated about high school, and society as a whole, was how often those with power abused that power, hurting those who didn't have the ability to fight back. He had started calling out those popular students during his first

year of high school - if they tried to use their status as an excuse to hurt someone. Most of the time they turned their attention on him and tried to put him down, but there were a couple of times where they actually backed off when he called them out. As long as the behavior stopped Aiden was satisfied.

Aiden now had a bit of a reputation among the popular students in high school as someone that stood up to them when no one else would. Theresa, a part of that popular circle, always laughed whenever she heard that Aiden started something with one of the popular students. She laughed even harder when one of the popular male students swore that if he tried it with them they would hit him.

The perks of being trained by a dragon, or in this case three of them, had changed the playing field if one of the popular boys tried to start anything with Aiden. After spending a year being trained Aiden was faster, stronger and quicker than most of the class. He almost went all out one time when Eric was being a jerk to someone who had a disability that made it hard for them to get around. The only reason he didn't go into a full on fight was because Theresa warned him that if he hit a normal human being with a single strong punch he could kill them.

Aiden clenched his fists in annoyance as he watched the popular football players gather together as they headed towards their cars. Theresa, sensing Aiden's frustration and annoyance, grabbed hold of his arm firmly. It was how she kept him from flying off the handle, attacking someone if they angered him or insulted those he was close to. He glanced atTheresa, watching her face. A small smile was on her lips.

"They're not worth it." She said. "They never are."

Aiden sighed and unclenched his fists. Theresa was right. Besides, Aiden would get very little satisfaction beating a bunch of meat heads like the football players.

"Remind me again how you always keep me from losing it?"

"I'm your best friend and teacher. I know a thing or two about keeping you calm."

Aiden laughed as he, Theresa, and Liza arrived at the buses. The first bus was Liza's, who before getting on the bus turned to Aiden and Liza one last time. Aello and her guardians hopped onto it as well. Their apartment was close to Liza's house. Liza rolled her eyes at their antics before turning back to them.

"I'll bring Aello and the others with me to the training grounds tomorrow. I'll be sure to keep them from flying."

"Sounds good to me." Theresa said. "Just make certain no one follows you either."

"Always Theresa." Liza stuck her tongue out before heading onto her bus.

This left Aiden and Theresa alone as they headed towards their own bus. Aiden frowned.

"Honestly Theresa? I'm a little concerned about the three harpies joining the training grounds. Remember the last time that Aello's guardians were with us? They ended up starting an argument with a bunch of gossip girls at the freaking mall."

Theresa sighed.

"It's been a year since Aello joined our little group, Aiden." She spoke in a soft tone. "While she has adjusted well to the way humans live, her guardians are still trying to find their place in this confusing world. Try to imagine yourself in their place if you had to leave everything you've ever known behind to follow someone you were devoted to. It's the Guardian's way of life."

Aiden frowned at Theresa's answer. Aello, the youngest princess of the Harpy Queen Lilith, joined their group after Aiden and his friends saved the den from being overrun by Dimitri and Raven's demonic forces. Despite this rough start to her new life away from the flock, Aello had managed to adjust to the outside world quite well.

While their relationship with her wasn't exactly perfect, she made a great addition to their group. The relationships that

Theresa and Aiden worried about when it came to Aello were her relationships with Seamus and Garrett. Aello got along better with Seamus. Made sense since the largest dragon didn't want anything to do with her.

The person that grew the closest to Aello though was Liza, and that greatly annoyed Aello's guardians. She spent every moment she could with the harpy princess when there was no school or when they were training. The two of them seemed to get along better than Theresa ever thought they would. While Aiden was busy continuing his training with the dragons, Liza spent her time teaching Aello about the outside world and how humans reacted to certain emotions.

Even with all she had learned, Aello was still new to the way the world worked and often asked lots of questions. Though the group answered as best they could, the princess would often ask the same question again. Sometimes it seemed no answer was truly good enough for her!

Nonetheless the young princess was a valuable member of the team, especially with her signature weapon, a lance that transformed into a chain like whip. Her skills were invaluable and she helped Theresa demonstrate powerful, and graceful, sword techniques Aiden was just beginning to learn. While she was not as graceful as her sister, Celaeno when using weapons, she was fast enough to keep up with Theresa when demonstrating a new technique, and that was no small feat.

"You're right; she has grown over the last year. Her guardians have been trying their best to adjust as well." Aiden admitted. "But do you think she'll ever truly get used to the way things are done here? It took me at least fifteen times to explain to her what a cell phone does."

Theresa smiled as she and Aiden walked onto the bus.

"I've told you before, Aiden, don't underestimate others. I'm sure you'll find Aello is a lot stronger than you think she is." Aiden knew that if he tried to push the issue Theresa would just

ignore him. It was best he just let it go for now and enjoy the long bus ride home. Summer vacation was finally about to begin.

The bus ride home was uneventful. Traffic was crowded; the bus driver took too long to drop off students. Aiden did what he usually did when the bus ride took that long - sleep, and sometimes dream. Lately though his dreams were becoming cryptic and foreboding.

The first time it happened, he dreamt about the other two dragons. This time a strange shapeless darkness appeared before him. In front of that darkness were several lights holding long poles of some kind….

This voice was a guiding force that set everything up for him to follow. A predetermined path that Aiden couldn't simply ignore. The newest message left to him concerned him though. A threat? What kind of threat? Why did the voice have to be so cryptic?

"A threat is coming." The voice from his dreams said, *"A threat that will reveal to the entire world the hidden secrets they are not yet ready to know."*

"Aiden, Aiden wake up." Theresa's voice called out to him in his dreams.

He grumbled as Theresa shook his shoulder. The shaking was enough to wake him up. The white dragoness smiled at him.

"If it was up to you, you wouldn't be sleeping the day away wouldn't you?"

"Oi, it's not my fault that the school decides to have some bull crap early hours…"

Theresa rolled her eyes as the bus came to a complete stop.

"Well we're back now, so you might as well get up and head for home." She smiled. "And Aiden? Do try to go to bed at a reasonable hour tonight."

"Funny lady."

The two of them smiled as they stood up and got off the bus. Aiden had a feeling that tomorrow would be an eventful day,

even though in the back of his mind, he felt something was wrong, and he was worried about what the future might bring.

He was right to feel that way. Even a full year of training was not enough to prepare Aiden for what he and his friends were going to face. An adventure that would forever change his outlook on life itself.