

FREEDOM PLANET: ETERNAL FLAME

Author's note: Hey guys, this is Crimson here. I just want to say thanks for your support on peer reviewing and helping me out with positive energy with making this fanfic. This is actually the first one that I have ever done in this kind of caliber. I usually do this in my head if I'm being honest. But, I would like to give my special thanks to some special people.

Ruby: She was the one who made the dragon design for my OC, and is probably the main inspiration behind making this fanfic because of her own FP fanfic, Freedom Planet Trinity, which she basically drops after like a week due to her focus switching from topic to topic. (if you're reading this Ruby, I completely understand. My attention span runs low at times too.)

HyperTails12: Another one of my friends who has the same dragon ship brainrot as me. Also have similar ideas in this fanfic as well. Probably because we share a brain cell in that regard too.

Eclipse: I'm not going to reveal his identity for sensitive reasons, but he has been reading this fic from the start and helped me drive the story into something similar, but completely different at times.

And that is it for now with special thanks! So, just as a disclaimer before kicking things off. This fanfic is a fanmade story, I do not own any intellectual property of Freedom Planet as it is owned by GalaxyTrail. Shy is owned by HyperTails12, Aya is owned by Ruby (@/RubyRedWasTaken), Eclipse is owned by...Eclipse, and Crimson is owned by me.

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Prologue: Reawakening

Ruins...some of the forces of the royal Shuigang army were walking through one of the many abandoned bases of the warlord that invaded almost 3 years ago. The power was in reserve energy mode, clearly the place was abandoned. The small recon troops were slowly on guard and couldn't take any chances with an ambush. They reached a computer room and a singular pod. The pod had frost on it, but the troops had easy access to the computer. The computer booted up and files were corrupted...except for one.

EQUAL DRAGON WEAPON: PROJECT RED SUN.
SUBJECT: XD001
EXPERIMENT FORM: FIRE DRAGON
(WESTERN VARIANT: MODELED FROM ORIGINAL HOMEWORLD OF
SUBJECT)
MUTATION MODEL: COMPLETE
FLAME ENHANCEMENT: COMPLETE
MIND CONTROL: COMPLETELY INEFFECTIVE; SEALED DUE TO HIGH RISK
OF DANGER.

The troops reported back to the king of Shuigang, King Dail, via coms. "My king, we have found something in the base the warlord had set up from 2 years ago. It has been sealed for some time now. We have a file that is not damaged on the computer, he is not a part of his troops at all."

Hearing this information, he would think of what could happen...but he made a decision. "If you can, awaken him. I wish to speak to him please." King Dail replied, and the troops started the release protocol. The water inside drained and the orange dragon fell out when it opened. One of the guards held me up as he started to regain consciousness.

"Easy there...can you stand up?" one of them asked.

"Where...where am I? How long has it been...?" The young dragon asked, the first thing that came out of his mouth after he was awakened since he was conscious for the last time.

"It's alright, just walk with us. Can you remember your name?" The man asked.

"Crimson..." The dragon replied.

"Well then, let's get you somewhere you can recover." Another troop responded. As they walked out, the computer loaded one final bit of information from Crimson's file.

DNA BLUEPRINT BASED OFF: Sash Lilac.

Chapter 1: New World, New Start

The troops escorted the orange dragon inside the huge palace of Shuigang, emerald designs around the place and it gives a real eastern vibe...at least to Crimson. He felt like a fish out of water with everyone looking at him. The group stopped in front of the throne, where King Dail was. "We have brought him, My king." One of the troops said.

"Thank you, you all are dismissed." Dail replied, and they went back to whatever they were doing before. Dail got up and approached Crimson. "So, *he* made a dragon? I'm honestly glad that you are not on his side." There was a face of disgust that he showed, also some sadness and guilt. Seems like that **BASTARD** came to this world and tried to do something, but there was nothing from his forces out now. "I have the report from the base you were sealed in. You are not a threat to us, for now at least." He breathed a sigh of relief, hoping that was the case.

"Do you know where I am?" Crimson asked Dail.

"You're on Avalice, It looks like you're not originally from here, I'm guessing?" Dail questioned back. Hearing this, Crimson was reminded of that day, the last day on his planet. There was so much pain, death, and destruction that flashed in his mind over and over. After that episode he heard the voice of the King saying "Hey! Crimson!"

Crimson snapped out of the trance, he was shaken. "My world...my world is gone..."

"Gone? What do you mean "Gone?"" Dail questioned him.

"My world...was destroyed. By that man." Crimson shakily replied. This horrified Dail, if he would have done the same to this world if he had the chance.

"I see...Well then. I give my condolences to your heavy loss. You are welcome to be here as a refuge. I will let the other kingdoms know about this. Feel free to have a room to have as we plan on setting something up for you." Dail said

"Thank you." Crimson replied, and he made a bow. Going outside and looking at the stunning night sky. He never saw anything like this before in his world, it was breathtaking... "This is going to be a new start for me, and I want to protect this world...no matter the cost, even if I draw my last breath."

Chapter 2: Fabled Heart

It has been a few days since Crimson was accepted by King Dail to stay in a spare room in the palace. He really hasn't used to everything, everything felt like a long dream, but he honestly wished it was a dream. In his room, he heard a knock on the door. Opening the door, stood a panda woman with an arm cannon on her back.

"King Dail would like to speak to you. Follow me." She walked and the orange dragon followed her. She looked serious about her job, but knew that there was more than just her job sometimes. They made it to the throne room and she kneeled down. Crimson did the same to show respect.

"I brought him like you asked." The panda said.

"Thank you Aya." Dail replied, then turned to Crimson. "Crimson, we have received word from the Magister from Shang Tu. He would like to meet with you. He even made accommodations for you to stay in a more permanent residence if you so wish."

"Alright, that would be fine with me." Crimson accepted. He was curious about what this world would look like in other places.

"Good, we have already set up a transport vehicle for you. Aya would escort you over there. She personally requested it to be your escort." Dail said. Aya was blushing a tiny bit but she kept her composure.

"Come on, we don't have time to lose." Aya ordered. And we made it to the truck and set out to Shang Tu. On the way, there were beautiful waterfalls. It was blowing out everything that my world had to offer out of the water. And the architecture was also very stunning, it was breathtaking.

"Are you enjoying the view?" Aya asked.

"Yeah...I never saw anything on this scale from my world." Crimson answered.

"I saw the report on you the other day. Were you an experiment by him?" Aya asked again.

"...He destroyed my world, and killed everyone I loved in front of me. I tried to attack him, and I nearly died. I had a second wind and then I passed out. I drifted in and out of consciousness...until I finally woke up." Crimson solemnly answered. Aya contemplated his past, sharing a similar past somewhat.

"I give my condolences to you." Aya said.

It took a bit to get to Shang Tu, but we managed to get to the outskirts of the city. As we got to the palace entrance there was a big panda guy guarding the entrance.

“Hey there, everyone has been expecting you two.” He said.

“Sorry that we are a tad bit tardy, Gong.” Aya replied.

“Tardiness should not be excused, but I can let this slide, at least it’s not that troublesome wildcat...” Another panda said. Coming from inside, holding her ice spear on her side.

“H-hi Neera.” Aya said, blushing a bit. Nearly a total 180 from how she acted a while ago.

“Greetings Aya, it is very nice to see you again.” Neera replied. “Come inside, the rest are already here.”

They all went inside, and they reached the briefing room. It was a bit high tech, but it was still welcoming in a way. When we came in everyone in the room was looking at us. There was a Dog, a green wildcat who looked like a tomboy, a blue hooded figure with royal decorations, and a purple dragon.

When Crimson saw her look at him, he felt like time slowed down to a stand still, his heart was beating, and he had a huge blush on his face. The feeling was very intense, almost from both sides. Maybe...this will help pick up the pieces of what he lost long ago.

Chapter 3: Starting bonds

“Hey, dragon boy, are you gonna stop spacing out or what?” The green wildcat interrupted the moment of Crimson spacing out of his stunned expression. That seemed to do the trick. “What’s wrong, have you fallen in love with someone at first sight?” She teased with a grin.

Crimson, blushed at the thought of it, being caught red handed and it made him feel nervous. The purple dragon, who was a bit similar to him, pushed her friend away to get some space. “Don’t mind Carol, she can be hard to deal with at times... My name is Lilac. It’s really nice to meet you.” She offered a handshake to Crimson.

“My name’s Crimson, it’s really nice to meet you too.” Crimson blushed less and shook her hand. It was firm, but brief. There was a bond of trust between them from that point on.

“Crimson, you will be under the care of Sash Lilac until everything is sorted out. Dail informed us of your background and I already told everyone else about your predicament. Even some more details than the first extraction.” The Magister told the young dragon.

Crimson nodded in response, knowing that this may be a bit temporary for now, but it can get better soon. “Then, you are all free to leave.” The Magister dismissed everyone. Aya went back to Shugang, Gong and Neera went back to their posts, and now it’s Crimson, Lilac, and Carol together as a group.

“So...Can we get something to eat now? I am REALLY hungry for some sushi!” Carol said in excitement, obviously hungry partially from boredom.

“Carol! Sigh...fine. But Crimson is picking the place, since he is new here.” Lilac said, making Carol a bit disappointed but still in a good mood.

“I don’t like sushi that much, but if there is a ramen place, we can go there if you two would like?” Crimson suggested.

“It’s a shame that you don’t like sushi, but that is good enough. Race ya there!!” Carol said as she got on her motorbike and raced off.

“Carol... We wouldn’t let her get there before us. Come on, I’ll race you!” Lilac said before dragon boosting off.

“It’s on!” Crimson said, his body felt hot, like a fire was building up within him as he dashed forward, matching Lilac’s speed, but more consistently. He ducked, jumped, and dodged all of the obstacles in his way. It was like his reflexes and reaction time was significantly increased.

By the time Crimson got there, Lilac basically tied with him, Carol was the last one by 2 minutes. "Aw man! You two beated me again! I just tuned this bike earlier!" Carol pouted.

"Hey,, you weren't THAT late, so it's no big deal." Crimson reassured her, that got her mood up a bit.

"Oh yeah, if you think that's bad, she sleeps for HALF A DAY at times." Lilac exclaims, this knocking Carol down a peg.

"Yeah yeah...let's just eat now." Carol said, heading inside with Lilac and Crimson following suit. Inside the building was a mix of modern cafe and oriental style. It was a very unique take for Crimson, but it was normal for Lilac and Carol.

The three got their food and Lilac was thinking about what the Magister said before Crimson came. "Hey Crimson. I have a question?"

"Yeah? What's up?"

"You...are not a part of his army right?"

"I never had, and I never will be." Crimson said. "He actually destroyed my home planet. I tried to fight back but I was nearly killed. I don't know why he spared me and...made me into...*this*."

Lilac looked to the side... thinking about how she would say the next thing. "You were...from the file that was retrieved..."genetically altered from my dna." Not that you are a clone, you're your own person. But-"

"Genetically altered to match you in every category. Right?" Crimson completed her statement.

"Yeah...but, it said that from your home planet, you had dragons on there. Can you tell me more about them?" Lilac asked.

"Dragons from my planet...are basically myths. There's different versions from different parts of my world. I can explain later if you'd like." Crimson answered tiredly.

"Fair enough." Lilac said. She felt his emotional pain really easily. Having his own kind and home destroyed by the man that invaded nearly 3 years ago in the past made her hate him even more. But she casted that anger out for now.

They all finished eating and paid for the meal. "I'll show you to our treehouse, we're trying to set up a guest room for you, so you'll just sleep on the couch for now." Lilac said.

“Wouldn’t be the first time, wouldn’t be the last time.” Crimson said, as all 3 started to head to Dragon Valley to Lilac’s treehouse as the sun started to set.

Chapter 4: Longing for family

They made it to the treehouse and it was getting late, the moon was already showing the beautiful night sky. It was absolutely breathtaking. Crimson was still amazed at how it looked.

“Here it is! Home sweet home.” Lilac said while jumping up to the front porch. Carol followed suit after parking her motor bike and Crimson jumped up last. They walked inside and it was nice and tidy. Crimson loved how it looked and it feels like a new start.

“So...Anything you want to ask Crimson? What’s the best place to hang out? What’s the best sushi joint? *Is Lilac single?~*” Carol said, she had a cheeky grin on her face. She already was teasing Crimson and wasn’t going to stop anytime soon.

“Carol! We JUST met him! You can’t just ask him those questions out of the blue!” Lilac exclaimed, not really blushing, but more like didn’t want to start with this.

“She’s right, but I am not opposed to it.” Crimson said. “Do you two have any family or is it just you two?”

“It’s...a long story. And I don’t want to talk about it.” Lilac said, looking a bit down.

“I only got my sister, Cory. But we never got back together. I honestly wish I could just talk to her again.” Carol said.

“Sorry to ask...I didn’t know.” Crimson said.

“It’s alright. You’re fine. And you never talked about your sister Carol.” Lilac replied.

“Yeah, she is a mercenary. She basically inherited a massive airship called the Sigwada from our parents. I probably don’t even remember them.” Carol said.

“Well I think since my family is gone...I think I can start a new life here and you can be my family. Not by blood mind you.” Crimson said.

“I was already thinking of that. But I think it’s time for some sleep. And Carol, Don’t sleep for half a day this time.” Lilac said.

“No promises.” Carol retorted, with that same grin on her face.

“Alright, goodnight. See you in the morning.” Crimson said, before getting ready to sleep. And as he slept, it felt like the best sleep he had in ages. No nightmares in a pod drifting on and off, none of that. Knowing that had made him feel at peace and it was calm, scarily calm even to a point. But that doesn’t matter now...tomorrow is another day.

Chapter 5: A Sudden Offer

It was late at night, Crimson couldn't sleep, he kept having bad dreams. Often about his past home and that traumatic day. It had gotten so bad that he had to get out of the treehouse, leaving a note on the little table next to the sofa. It read: "I couldn't sleep at all, if you are reading this, I'll be back soon. Crimson." Crimson opened the door quietly and closed it quietly, heading out.

The sky was amazing, the stars shone perfectly down. It was breathtaking. Crimson started to walk around, that usually helps get his mind off of the stuff that's troubling him for the most part. However, from the shadows, someone was watching him, and stalked him further away from the treehouse.

About a mile and a half, Crimson took a rest. He looked at the scenery. It was perfect, basically like paradise. However, a tall figure loomed behind him, casting a shadow down on him under the moonlight.

"You're a Dragon, but not a Water, nor Earth dragon..." The figure spoke. This made Crimson jump in surprise.

"Who are you?! What do you want?" Crimson replied. He saw the figure that was in front of him. Purplish armor and...fish like features? But those eyes...they seem to glow with power.

"My name is Merga, and I am here to give you an offer." She said coldly, more like a calm but threatening kind of way. "I can sense you have latent potential...I want you to help me overthrow the Magister of Shang Tu."

"Why would I even do that?! That's insane!" Crimson yelled.

"His kind nearly killed my entire race and trapped me for centuries. That's why." Merga answered.

That answer was a bit justifiable...but there was missing context. So many different details that are missing. And Crimson knew he wasn't a bad guy from the looks of it. "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid that I will not take that offer!" Crimson said.

"Pity, I thought you and I were more alike." Merga said, before quickly getting past me and knocking Crimson out cold.

Sometime later, the dragon got back to reality, it was still dark out and he decided to head back to the treehouse. Lilac was waiting inside.

"I was wondering where you went, you were gone for an hour." Lilac said, in a somewhat worried and annoyed tone.

“Sorry, I couldn’t sleep...bad nightmares.” Crimson replied. “Still haven't gotten them gone yet.”

“It’s ok. I understand. Well, try to get some sleep. Ok?” Lilac asked.

“Alright. Goodnight.” Crimson said. And both of them went to sleep. But so many questions were swirling in Crimson’s mind. What happened to the Water and Earth dragons? Was the Magister involved? Who was Merga? He shook all of those thoughts off as he fell asleep.

Chapter 6: A New Adventure

Months had passed and there were attacks happening more and more. Lilac and Carol were out in Dragon Valley trying to not have any collateral damage around. Crimson was at the treehouse, defending it from any spare robots that happened to come by. They weren't too tough to deal with at all, not for a fire dragon at least.

"Man...these attacks are getting out of hand. I have to keep on guard so the treehouse is safe." Crimson said to himself. Just then, a giant ape robot appeared and was about to destroy the treehouse! Crimson was shocked, but managed to block the attack. He managed to deal a few strong hits to make it run away. Unfortunately, the treehouse had been damaged. Not too much that it's completely destroyed, but not livable for a few weeks. A month at max.

Soon after, Lilac and Carol would arrive back at the treehouse. Both of them were shocked at the amount of damage that it was in. Fortunately, if Carol were in charge to keep the treehouse safe, it wouldn't be much of a house at this point.

"Crimson, what happened to the house?!" Lilac asked loudly in shock.

"I tried my best to protect the house, but an ape robot snuck up and tried to wreck it down. Damage was minimized...but couldn't be avoided. I'm sorry." Crimson answered.

"Ay, it's alright! You held down the fort so we could beat up more bad guys! That's a win-win, am I right?" Carol said enthusiastically, with a grin on her face.

"Carol! *Sigh*.... Look, I'm glad that you minimized the potential damage Crimson, And it would take a few weeks to fix from the looks of it. If it were Carol...I believe it would be much longer to fix." Lilac would look at Carol.

"Well...we could ask Milla if we can stay at her place? I mean, I can help with my share of the necessities if needed." Crimson suggested. Lilac and Carol would look at each other and nod.

"That is an idea. Let's head over there now." Lilac said. All three of them went out and they made it to Milla's Lab. Lilac knocked on the door and they could hear glass breaking from inside.

"I'll be right there!" A young voice was heard, and from the front door stepped out a young, orange haired hound. "Oh! Hi Lilac, Hi Carol, Hi Crimson!" She said.

"Hey Milla, long time no see. Our Treehouse got a bit damaged and we need a place to stay for the time-"

"I brought snacks!" Carol interrupted Crimson.

"Wow...rude." Crimson remarked.

"Oh! That is fine! mi laboratorio es tu laboratorio!" Milla said.

"Eh...what?" Carol said.

"It means 'My laboratory is your laboratory' in another language. Huh...peculiar."
Crimson explained.

"That is right! Please come in, but please don't touch anything." Milla said.

The group headed inside the small lab. Crimson was interested in some of the stuff that Milla was working on, but still remained a safe distance to everything. Soon, there was another knock at the door.

"Coming!" Milla said as she was getting to the door. "Oh, Welcome Lady Neera! What brings you here today?"

"The Magister needs to speak with all of you over at Shang Tu. It's in regards to the recent attacks." Neera said.

"That's true...there have been more attacks popping up recently." Lilac said. "We'll be there with you."

"Good, let's not waste any more time then." Neera said before exiting.

The group of 5 all setted out to Shang Tu to meet with the Magister. But the next few days would be full of hardship and would change the world by the actions from the past...being shown to the light of the modern day...

Chapter 7: Midday Heist

The group of 5 were on their way to the Shang Tu palace, but along the way, there was a disturbance and scattered localized attacks in the city that needed to be dealt with. "Neera, permission to split up and deal with the small attack force?" Crimson asked. Safety was his concern for the people in the city recently and he needed to do something.

Neera, weighing her options, trusts Crimson enough to know what he is doing and it was helping the city anyway. "I'll allow it, just keep the damage to a minimum" She said. It was hard for her to trust anyone, that was mostly the reason she was cold and distant at times.

Crimson nodded and split up from the group. Destroying robots left and right to clear the potential destruction sources. Even as such to go into the water to deal with all of them. Crimson isn't a very good swimmer, but thanks to his fire abilities, he can maneuver with his fire reacting to the water to propel him forward.

He got up to a decently sized boat but was ambushed by a robot bird with a machine gun on its back. It started to fire and Crimson dodged the barrage of bullets. He damaged the machine gun, realizing that it was its weak point and tossed fireballs at it, doing some damage.

The bird, putting its head down between its legs, fired grenades at Crimson. The attacks hit, but that didn't slow Crimson down at all. With one flame claw, he destroyed the robot and the forces retreated for now. "Alright...time to head on out to the palace!" Crimson said to himself before moving on.

The palace of Shang Tu was still neat and pristine as usual, the group was all together, waiting for Crimson to arrive. "Sorry I'm late, I had to face another big robot..." Crimson said.

"You don't need to apologize. I was just informing your friends about your new task. Neera, would you explain?" The Magister asked.

"We have some leads about what has happened about the recent attacks. And we requested your friend's help." Neera said.

"Well, I do owe you guys a huge debt. So I'm going to help out as well." Crimson replied.

"Good, you may rest and gather supplies if needed." The Magister suggested.

The group nodded and they started to head out, but someone came across Crimson, a brown dragon that was about the same size as him. "So, they decided to bring along the science experiment." The dragon said.

“Hey, watch it pal. I’ll let it slide for now.” Crimson remarked. They had a glare before the earth dragon walked away with a “Hmfm” sound. *“There’s something about that guy I don’t like…”* Crimson thought to himself.

“Don’t mind Askal, he can be rough around the edges at times.” Gong said, trying to reassure Crimson.

“Thanks.” Crimson said. “I really appreciate-”

Before Crimson would finish, there was a sudden alert on the news: “Precious artifact stolen from Shang Tu Museum.”

“Those thieves stole Pangu!!!” Gong said out loud.

“Alright, I guess my first official mission is a go!!” Crimson said before rushing out. The rest were not too far behind.

“Pangu holds a significant part of our world’s history that we haven’t deciphered completely yet. We need to retrieve it at all costs.” the Magister said.

“Don’t worry, we can handle this!” Lilac replied. The group headed into the Museum and defeated the robots in the way. There was a beautiful garden exhibit, and even a trippy exhibit as well, but this was no time for sightseeing! All of a sudden, there was a part of a building that crashed around Crimson. And the same ape robot that attacked Lilac’s house appeared.

“Is that the robot that trashed part of our house?! Hold on Crimson, I’ll be right there!” Lilac said.

“No, stick with the mission. I’ll handle it.” Crimson replied. “Alright, I’m gonna deactivate ya!” Crimson rushed in to attack the giant ape robot.

The robot was mostly on the walls and can turn invisible, but gave away its location from the light reflecting on it. Crimson attacks the head with some powerful attacks, and after a few strong hits, the robot goes down without much problem. Then from the debris was a small monkey-like person who seemingly designed the robot all by himself.

“Wow, I can’t believe that a person so small was actually controlling that thing.” Crimson said, somewhat impressed.

“AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!! YOU DESTROYED MY FRIEND WE JUST WANTED TO PLAY!!! DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG IT’S GOING TO TAKE FOR ME TO FIX THE IR SENSOR!?” The small person was going on a tangent with how loud and energetic he was going.

Crimson stopped him in the middle of his tangent. "Alright, calm down. Breathe. In..." He started to Inhale, and the monkey followed, "And exhale." And they both calmed down. "Alright, look, I haven't damaged it too much, I only attacked the main control unit and the essential joints to it. Otherwise, it is mostly intact. I am still not happy with you almost destroying my friend's house, so consider this a fair warning. But for now, I'm going to chase that thief!" Crimson ran off to continue the pursuit.

The small lad who was still shocked about the situation shook his head to snap out of it and inspected his robot buddy. "Hmmm...he did target those areas, I honestly need to thank him for not hurting my buddy too badly..." He said, as he retreated on his hover-pad.

Chapter 8: Longtime Unspoken Family

Crimson made it up to the back of the airship fleet in the nick of time. Dealing with the small guy really pushed him behind schedule with completing the mission in a reasonable time. But he had to limit the damage as much as he could, and every second counts. He rushed forward to get to the head airship as fast as he could, riding and jumping on rockets to move on ahead.

“Crimson, status report!” Neera ordered on the intercom. “You were behind by a moderate margin.”

“I had to deal with the museum threat inside. It was most likely a distraction. I’m already continuing the chase as we speak.” Crimson answered. Rushing in, noticing flame jets and locked walls, he attacked the floating keys and made it through each section of the ships.

“Man...these guys really don’t let up that easy!” Crimson said as he made his way through the smaller troops. Only to be stopped by a green robot bird as it took a fencing stance, flames exhausting from its wing. “Alright tough guy, you want to play, let’s play!” Crimson challenged the robot.

Crimson rushed in to attack, but the robot jumped with incredible mobility! It did a few good hits in, but Crimson hit twice as hard! And made quick work on the robot before it was able to retreat!

“Score one point for the Fire Dragon!” Crimson cheered, finally managed to get to Pangu. “There it is! Now all that’s left is to grab it and bring it back!”

“I don’t think that’s under your jurisdiction.” A voice called out. Suddenly, a flying platform came up and a much older wildcat jumped on the panel and landed on the floor. She looked exactly like an older Carol. “That drone belongs to the Island of Parusa.” She said.

Carol managed to get to meet up with Crimson and was shocked to see the person in front of me. “Cory?! Is that you?!”

“Carol?! What are you doing here?!” She replied in a shocked expression.

“We’re trying to get Pangu back! So...since we’re family? Can we take it?” Carol asked.

“No Carol.” She said

“Pretty please?” Carol asked again.

“I said no, and I can do this all day now.” She again answered, with a tired tone.

Then her intercom got a message. "Captain Corazon, should I attack the intruders?" The person from the other end said, it was the monkey that Crimson had to deal with.

"No Aaa, that won't be necessary" Corazon said.

Then not too long after, Lilac and the others got onto the scene and were shocked to see Carol's sister for the first time. "By the order of the City of Shang Tu, You are under arrest!" Neera ordered, pulling out her ice spear.

"Well this is a Charlie-Foxtrot situation, if you want to arrest me, you have to catch me first." She smirked and made a salute before skydiving down to the ground.

"After her!" Neera ordered. Everyone followed her downward, except for Crimson. *"If Carol's sister is as sneaky and tactical as she is...She would have tricked them and come back up right about..."* Before Crimson finished that thought, Corazon got back up on the ship and was surprised, but intrigued that Crimson saw through her trick. But there was a solemn look on her face.

"You saw through my decoy, that was clever. But...I can't tell you why I'm doing this other than to protect Carol. So please...forgive me." Corazon said before stunning him with a paralysis shot and kicking him off the airship.

"A decoy...pretty clever, for a wildcat." Neera remarked. Crimson landed in a bush nearby and they all checked in on him. The effects were wearing off by now and he slowly got up.

"Are you ok Crimson?" Milla asked, holding him up so he could stand easier.

"I'm fine...just a bit tired." Crimson replied.

Lilac looked at Carol, a bit worried. "That was...your sister, wasn't it?"

"Yeah, that was my sister...but why would she do all of this?" Carol replied.

"Well, she is working with our potential enemy...so she will be on high alert for the time being." Neera said.

"I know Cory! She never does anything like this at all! Not at this scale." Carol protested.

"You mean she is a mercenary?" Neera asked

"Well, yes but-" Carol was about to say, but was interrupted.

"I believe Carol is telling the truth." Crimson defended Carol.

“Explain yourself.” Neera said.

“Alright...but turn off your coms. It’s more private that way.” Crimson said

They all turned off their coms as Crimson explained that Corazon had something to hide under the surface. Like she was forced to do something that if she refused, something more valuable from her would be taken. Neera would understand the situation more and be more cautious of it. Milla and Lilac would both nod that someone else was pulling the strings. While Carol, knowing what was being said to full context. Corazon was protecting *her*. Not fighting and instead tried to make a quick get away as soon as possible. With the conversation all leveled out, they turned on their coms again and brought Pangu back to the palace.

Meanwhile, behind closed doors...

“I’m sorry Lady Merga...I couldn’t get the Pangu drone.” Corazon said. “They brought it back to Shang Tu by now.”

“That is unfortunate...however, your skills are still needed for the time being. But don’t forget, I can’t guarantee the safety of you or your family the next time you fail me again...” Merga replied.

“Yes Ma’am.” Corazon answered. The communication screen was cut off. Corazon walked out of the room and looked outside, the sun setting in the distance. “Please...keep my sister safe.” She said silently, wishing Crimson to keep that promise that she made in her heart.

Chapter 9: Consoling Sorrows.

After the raid on the Shang Tu Museum, there was a respite of peace for the time being, Neera was planning on where to look for any leads of where could there be another attack that could pop up, Milla was making more potions that can help out with future missions, Lilac was training in the meantime at Gong's dojo, and Carol was at the local inn, a lot of things was on her mind, specifically her sister.

Crimson walked in and noticed her not feeling herself, even after the explanation he gave everyone. He pulled up a chair and sat down with her. "Trouble on your mind?" He said.

"Yeah...just trying to get around the fact that Cory tried to steal Pangu. I know she's a mercenary but this is definitely not like her." Carol said, looking down, trying to process everything.

"Wait...if she is your older sister, what happened to your parents?" Crimson asked.

Carol looked to the side, solemnly. "They...they're gone. From what Cory told me, they died in an undercover mission. Cory was older than me and she was handed the Sigwada and was made the captain. She left my life because her work was 'Too dangerous' For someone like me. I helped save the world from that guy, and I know you don't like him so I won't say his name." She answered.

"Well, not to put you down, she is right. You are too unpredictable and you often act before you think, putting yourself in danger." Crimson explained. "And with family, you don't know how much you truly lost until it's too late. And after that, you want to protect everything you have left. Even putting yourself at risk for them."

Carol would understand it a bit more, almost getting rid of those troubling thoughts. She got up and gave Crimson a hug. "Thanks dude, I really needed that." She thanked.. Crimson had a bit of a blush, but it was nothing. They both went to the palace and went into the HQ room.

"Hey Crimson, you think this can be used as a tv?" Carol asked.

"Who knows?" Crimson replied.

Carol turned on the panel and it played an ad for the Battlephere, a new facility that was advertising a battle royale that had robots all around, and the winner gets to face off with Captain Kalaw. And that ad made Carol have a wide, shocked face. So shocked that she was sliding off onto her bike to immediately go there.

"NO-nononononono!" Crimson exclaimed, holding Carol back so she didn't run off. She snapped back into her senses and got back in control. "This is what I was saying earlier."

Carol nodded, a bit embarrassed, but he was right. “This could be a fun experience, let’s wait for the others to come back and let them know about this.” she suggested.

Crimson nodded, and the next step was set! Investigate the Battlehere and gain Captain Kalaw’s support!

Chapter 10: Battlesphere Mania

As everyone was rewatching the Battlesphere ad, Neera was suggesting on recruiting the Captain into helping out with the situation. But in order to do that, everyone must participate in order to have that chance. "I am not the one to fight in these terms of sport, But if we need all the help we can get, then I will join in." She said to the present group.

"Same here. And I am glad that Crimson got a hold onto Carol before she impulsively left ahead." Lilac said, turning to him. "Thank you for that, by the way."

"You're welcome, And since this is a Battle Royale, only one of us gets to challenge him, so if us five are the last standing, we have to fight to continue forward." Crimson remarked.

"But...what if we don't want to fight? I don't want to hurt any of you too badly." Milla said, showing concern in her voice.

"Then you can opt out, but that's up to you." Crimson suggested.

Milla had grown since those 3 years, and doesn't want to back down since then. "No, I want to fight, I want to become stronger!" She exclaimed

"Then it's settled, We'll head out immediately. There's a shortcut to Shang Mu via Phoenix Highway and Zao Land. Robots are attacking those places as well." Neera explained.

The group all headed out, rushing out and destroying all of the robots running amuck. And somehow, they were more dangerous than last time. On the way, Crimson wanted to have a one on one conversation with Neera as they went forward.

"Hey, Neera, turn your coms off, I want to talk to you about something." Crimson asked.

"You better make this quick..." Neera sighed and turned off her coms.

"I feel...I feel that we have a mole in our group." Crimson told her.

"A mole?! What are you suggesting?!" Neera snapped back at him.

"Listen, remember my explanation with Corazon? Like she was being forced to do that heist?" Crimson explained.

"...Go on." Neera listened in.

"I believe whoever is behind this has a mole in our group to keep tabs on us. Like the saying goes 'Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.'" Crimson said.

This made Neera a bit shocked, but with that warning, at least she has a heads up of that possibility. "Thank you for letting me know about that information. And if their leader is working around that, it's best that we hide what we know about them." Neera said.

They got their coms back online and continued to get to the battlesphere lobby, it was absolutely huge. The group met up at the entrance and they all went up to the main stage. There was a preliminary course, filled with obstacles and robots. The entire group passed with flying colors. Next was the battle royale, and waves of enemies were swarming left and right, but the group of 5 managed to beat all of them until they were the only ones left.

"Looks like we have to fight each other!" Carol was excited.

"I'll try to hold back to not hurt you guys." Milla said.

"I will be the one to challenge him, It's my responsibility." Neera said.

"Alright Crimson...don't hold back on me!: Lilac asked him.

"I won't lose, I promise you that!" Crimson answered.

And with that, the 5 way battle started, sparks flew, Ice was thrown, the ground was burned and had craters around, the audience went wild with the spectacle that was unfolding. Milla was the first to go down, Neera followed suit along with Carol. It was only Lilac and Crimson still standing, on their last legs of strength.

"You're pretty tough hot shot, but I think it's time for me to take the win." Lilac teased.

"Oh yeah? How about one final clash, no holding back!" Crimson challenged.

"Fine by me." Lilac accepted the challenge.

They both charged up their respective boosts and clashed at each other, the shockwave was impressive, and they were on equal terms in strength. All that leaves with who will run out of stamina first! And it seems that Crimson would be the first to give out.

"What's wrong? You're losing steam, can't handle holding out?" Lilac teased a bit more. She never usually acts like this, but with Crimson, it was different. It's like he was the one who was similar to her, only personality was different. It reminded her about how she acted 3 years ago, but he knows he can't help everyone. That's what she learned then.

"I am not giving up...I need to continue pushing forward. I want to get stronger, to protect this world..." Crimson said, his boost became more heated, as his eyes had a flame to them. "And I need to push past my limits!"

It was at this moment, Crimson overpowered her and launched her away a fair distance. She caught herself at the last minute, but was too weak to stand. Crimson was deemed the winner of the battle royale.

This would be the time where Captain Kalaw would show up and he hid. The crowd roared in excitement. "You have done well Citizen! Your strength was magnificent and impressive! **HOWEVER!** I can't challenge you at the moment. There is an emergency meeting that I have to attend." Kalaw explained.

"That is fine, I just wanted to request your help on the huge robot problem that has been going on." Crimson asked

"I will pass that on to my team and they will consider it." Kalaw answered.

The award ceremony would start and it was hyped up as Mayor Zao revealed the GRAND PRIZE...six free coupons to eat at city hall. Carol was super bummed out, but Crimson accepted them with a smile on his face. But with that goal set and done, the team headed back to Shang Tu to relax.

Meanwhile...

"Those kids are no pushover...especially that fire dragon. I don't believe one even existed." Kalaw said.

"That is why I asked him to join us, it's a shame that he refused the offer, he would've been spared from sharing the fate that is coming to him..." Merga explained. "Keep playing your role Kalaw, and you will be the hero that you wanted to be."

"Yes Ma'am." Kalaw responded, the call was shut off. Kalaw had a bit of an internal conflict from seeing that last match of Crimson and Lilac. "That boy...He was clearly going to lose. But how did he win at that last minute? And...why do I feel like what I'm doing is wrong?" He asked himself. But he shook his head and he had to continue playing his part, whether he wanted to or not.

Chapter 11: Cold Trauma

The next day, the team had gotten a request from King Dail, saying that there has been a shortage of steel and weaponry in Shuigang, and wanted a team to go out to the palace to discuss more information. "Alright, I want to bring a small team here. Crimson and I would go out and meet with Dail, while the rest stay here and keep guard here in case there is a major emergency." Neera said.

"Don't worry Lady Neera, we can keep in charge here." Lilac replied.

And with that, the duo headed north, going through Tiger Falls. The robots are here again as well, but they weren't as dangerous as before. And before long, they made it to Shuigang. But when they first got to the entrance, Crimson saw a painter making a mural on the wall. It was a depiction of a brown dragon, the painter caught his gaze and spoke up. "So, I see this mural caught your fancy. This mural is showing the fallen princess of Shang Tu. Not much is known about it as some records have been lost to time." The painter said.

Neera would be behind Crimson. "Now's not the time to be observing." She said, but she also looked at the mural. "Oh, that's...the royal colors of Shang Tu."

"Yeah...The painter said this was the fallen princess." Crimson replied. "Come on, we need to meet King Dail."

The duo went up to the palace and to the throne room. There was King Dail, and his royal guard, Aya. Aya blushed and waved at Neera, she waved back in response. "Those communicators were useful...the sun hasn't even set yet." Dail said.

"You said that weapons and steel were being stolen, right?" Crimson asked.

"That's right, they're being led up north. And I don't want my troops to investigate until we know what we're dealing with." Dail answered.

"You think it might have been Spade?" Neera asked.

"If it was him, I would have beaten him up by now." Dail responded.

Crimson had a very bad feeling about the situation, like his blood ran cold, but at the same time, burned red hot. "I think I know who the culprit is...but let me go there and search on my own." Crimson said. "Neera, If anything happens, call Lilac and the rest."

Neera nodded in understanding, and Crimson started to head out, but he was met by Askal. "Askal, what are you doing here?" Crimson asked.

"The Magister sent me, figured you needed a hound with you." Askal said.

“Detective Milla is on the case!” Milla appeared behind him.

“...or two.” Askal continued.

“Alright. Then it’s set. Let’s head on out!” Crimson said.

The group headed north, and they started to find pieces of rubble all around, becoming more apparent as they continued on forward. “I’ll stay behind and check out the perimeter,” Milla said. “You two go on ahead.”

As the two dragons came up into the main debris, some alien robots reanimated and started to attack all of them. The two fought through them with relative ease. “What are these things?” Askal questioned.

“Remnants of an alien army...and judging by the size, it’s going to be a very big problem.” Crimson said, his anger and rage was building up. Just wanting to go ahead and get this done already. Askal felt the pain and anger coming from him, deep down, he felt the same way, but from another source.

Crimson went down to a scrap arena and from the rubble, a green drone was surfacing. **“PLEASE CONFIRM USER:”** The drone spoke in a monotone robotic voice.

“I can’t believe I’m going to say this...” “Subject XD001.” Crimson responded.

“USER: XD001. CONFIRMED. STATUS: TRAITOR.” The drone said. It had seen the footage of Crimson being released when the recon squad of Shuigang first found him.

“EXECUTING MURDER SEQUENCE NUMBER 2” The drone started to transform into a giant cube.

“Well...so much for cheesing the way in...” Crimson fought the drone and basically didn’t let up, not even once. The attacks were hard hitting and needed to be dealt with, but it didn’t come to a big conclusion when it teleported away, A giant crusher of spikes was being lowered down onto Crimson.

Then, a flurry of punches was heard and a section of wall broke. “Over here, hurry!” Askal said. Crimson jumped through to safety.

“Thanks...now, let’s continue onward...I got some business to still take care of...” Crimson said.

Askal followed, but from what he saw of Crimson, this wasn’t like him. He is more solely focused on taking this base down than being nice and casual at HQ. But he had to keep his part and not blow his cover.

“Crimson, give us a status report.” Neera said.

“I got some good news, and bad news. The bad news is that HIS army, or what's left of it is still on Avalice. The good news, that bastard is not here.” Crimson answered.

“You mean...his forces are still here?!” Lilac said worriedly.

“It looks like it. Crimson, continue deeper and see what you can find.” Neera said before shutting down the coms. Crimson's past will now affect the present, and if he can make it through is still a question yet to be solved.

Chapter 12: Hostile Relations

Crimson and Askal made their way into the Shade Armory, going through the base and its forces like a hot knife through butter. But Crimson was eerily silent the whole time, trying to hold onto his calm demeanor as he wanted to destroy this place from the ground up in flames. The drone tried to prevent them from progressing, but with a few attacks, it teleported away.

Within the deepest part of the complex, Syntax would be waiting, in its spider formation. Crimson didn't want to spend any time dealing with this nonsense and destroyed each one of the legs, and once it changed to use the body of the wrecking ball, Crimson actually managed to grab onto the drone like a pendulum and started to swing it around. And with the damage to it being a bit substantial, it shut off. Askal finally caught up with Crimson as he took the drone on his back. "Let's go now...the more I stay, the more it puts me in a bad mood." Crimson said.

As they leave, Crimson heard Milla was in trouble, and he went to investigate. She was in point blank range against Serpentine. "Fine then, in the name of Lord Brevon, I sentence you to de-" He was interrupted by a fireball that nearly missed. "Well well well, if it isn't our greatest weapon that dared to betray us!"

"Betray you? Please, I was NEVER on your side to BEGIN with." Crimson responded.

"Tell you what, since I am in a generous mood, I'll make a deal. You hand over the drone and I'll let you leave unharmed." Serpentine asked.

"Over my dead body..." Crimson responded.

"Fine then, PREPARE TO BE EXTERMINATED!!!" Serpentine yelled as he rushed in, Milla running with the drone away as Crimson fought with Serpentine. He blocked all of the plasma pistol shots with ease and made some huge hits in. Serpentine growled and aimed a rocket launcher at Crimson. "HOLD STILL SO I CAN DESTROY YOU ALREADY!!!" He yelled and fired the rocket. Crimson grabbed it and threw it back at him. Serpentine dodges at the nick of time. But Crimson rushed through the smoke and made a critical hit on him.

"I surrender..." Serpentine said. Crimson started to walk up towards him as Serpentine jumped up suddenly. "FOOLED YOU! SURPRISE ATTA-" He was about to do a sneak attack, but Crimson grabbed his tail and just beat him into the ground, flailing him around and making craters into the scrapyard. Crimson spun around, still holding onto him and started to go faster and faster. Until throwing him far away and at a very high velocity. "CCCUUUURRRRSSSEEE YYYYYOOOOooooouuuuuuu!!!....." He said as he was flung away. Crimson made a small grin, at least that was one thing he was glad to deal with today.

Back over to the palace at Shuigang, Everyone told Dail about what happened. Dail was visibly shaken up, still not recovered from the grief over his father's death. "I....wasn't strong enough." Dail said, on his knees.

“You weren't then, nobody was.” Crimson said. “But look at you now. You have matured and made an effort to move forward with that pain, just the same as I have. A king should never be on his knees for any reason.”

Dail got back up, feeling much more reassured. “You're right Crimson. Thank you. At least I have some closure now.”

“No problem.” Crimson said. “Now, let's get some rest for the time being.” The group started to head back to Shang Tu, to wait for anything new that might pop up.

Meanwhile

There was a knock on Mayor Zao's door. “Mayor Zao, you are needed in the conference room.” One of his assistants told him.

“I didn't know I had a meeting tonight...” Zao said to himself. When he got to the meeting room, there was only one person in the room. It was Merga, she looked behind her and at Zao menacingly. Zao was frozen in fear as a **+5 terrified** pop up from him, as the lights turned off. And when they turned back on, the meeting room was completely empty.

Chapter 13: Betrayal

“This is Maria Notte reporting live to announce that Mayor Zao has been kidnapped!” The bat reporter said on the news report, everyone was shocked and surprised about the situation. “This is very bad...” Milla said.

“Agreed, we needed to go over there now.” Neera said. However, before they get to plan, there was a transmitter call that was being brought in, Gong brought it on screen. And it was Mayor Zao, tied up and in chains.

“Hey guys, sorry for this call. I’m just hanging around, and when I mean that I mean **I’M COMPLETELY TERRIFIED!!!!**” Zao said before the display shifted to another figure, It was Merga.

“Why hello....Magister.” She said. “I believe you have something of mine. That drone that you call...’Pangu’ was it?”

“What do you want with it?!” Neera protested.

“That drone is a core component to reawaken Bakunawa.” She brought up a hologram of the giant mechanical dragon spaceship. Then she looked at Lilac. “Hatchling...you have yet to discover the truth that the magister has done to our kind...” She said, then turning to Crimson. “And you....it’s a pity that you couldn’t see the truth, even though you experienced a similar fate.”

“I know that there is a difference, and the answer is STILL NO!!” Crimson yelled in anger.

Merga predicted this notion “Bring me the drone and I will let all of you live, but you better hurry.” The video feed cuts off with Zao yelling for help offscreen.

“Magister, who was that?!” Lilac asked distraughtly.

“That was Merga. I actually had an encounter with her.” Crimson said. Everyone was shocked. “She asked me to become a part of this whole operation and I refused.”

“How are we going to save Zao safely?” Milla asked.

“We could trick her with that Syntax drone, it looks practically identical!” Carol said.

“Alright, we can attempt that.” Lilac said.

“Alright, a group of you needs to go out there.” Neera said. “I’ll stay behind-”

“I’ll stay behind Neera.” Crimson said.

Neera was shocked, and a bit offended. "What was that?" She said.

"Don't put all your eggs in one basket." Crimson replied. This made Neera a bit more calm.

"Alright, I'll trust you." Neera said. And the group set off to the Globe Opera where Zao was being held.

Now it was the Magister, Gong, Crimson, and Askal at the palace, and if it was the time to attack right here and now, it was the time. Askal went for an attack towards the Magister, but Crimson made a swift flaming kick to knock him away. "Crimson! What are you doing?!" Gong said.

"Askal is a mole. He's secretly working for Merga!" Crimson responded.

Askal chuckled to himself. "Very clever...you actually noticed." He said. "How long have you known that?"

"I could tell from when we first met, that's how." Crimson replied.

"Well then, I guess I'll just have to bury you first!" Askal said before rushing in to attack Crimson. Crimson responded with a counter attack of his own, making some distance.

"Gong, don't leave the Magister's side at any cost!" Crimson replied as Gong just nodded. The city was under attack by now, and Crimson's battle with Askal was a very close neck and neck fight. And after a while, Askal was under rubble, pinned down. Crimson charged up a fireball and shot it in the air as a flare. This was a sign for Lilac who was on her way back from the globe opera after Crimson's fight. The flare was a sign that the inside threat was taken care of. The rest saw it in the distance as well and knew the message.

Everyone got back to the palace and regrouped, but before they noticed, Askal had gotten back up and separated mostly everyone from the Magister via a stone wall.

Merga appeared and attacked the Magister, his hood was removed to show he was an earth dragon. "Now, I will end this tyranny right here." As Merga went for the final blow, both Crimson and Lilac broke through the stone wall and defended the Magister and managed to stagger Merga a bit. It was the first time she felt that sensation.

"We won't let anyone hurt any one of our friends!!" Crimson yelled out, That same fiery aura came up from Crimson, just like from the battlesphere.

Merga chuckled a bit to herself. "Alright then, I'll fight all of you then." Merga ordered her troops to clear the area as she fought everyone at once. And she was too powerful for anyone

to handle, Milla, Carol, Gong and Neera were out of commission in the fight. Merga even overpowered Lilac and she was defeated too! “Now it’s just you and me now...” She said to Crimson. “I will have my revenge, and nobody will stop me. You can’t even save him let alone the world.” She went over to take Crimson out of the fight with one final attack, and it hit hard.

Crimson was barely standing, but he was still holding on. Merga was a bit surprised. “You may be right on that part...but...as long as I am still standing...**I WILL NEVER GIVE UP!!!!**” Crimson’s fiery aura ignited bigger and he rushed in and made one powerful gut punch to Merga, one she actually felt. With that powerful punch, Crimson sent Merga flying towards a stone pillar in the palace, making her crash into it hard.

“We need to escape, Now!” Gong said as he made an escape route, bringing everyone along. Crimson followed not long after.

Merga was recovering from that hit, it merely knocked the wind out of her. Askal went up to her. “Shall I go after them?” He asked.

“No...If they come back here. I will kill them without hesitation.” Merga said. Askal nodded and went to join up with the rest of the group from the globe opera recovering.

“That boy...his aura flared up so suddenly.. Can it be that....he has that kind of potential? The aura of the sun itself?...” Merga thought to herself as she was recovering from that hit. And from this day onward...Shang Tu would never be the same.

Chapter 14: The Sins of the Past

The group managed to escape outside nearby to the back of the palace, hidden from the troops. Everyone was wounded, but still alright. Neera was visibly upset, semi-livid to be more accurate, but knew that this might have happened. If it wasn't for Crimson giving her that hunch, her mood would be MUCH worse, boiling even. "I can't believe it...I couldn't save my home." Neera said, on her knees in defeat.

Crimson offered her a hand. "We may have lost this fight, but we're not out of the fire just yet." He said. Neera held his hand and got up. At least she had someone that trusts her to never give up, no matter what.

"So...where are we going now? We can't go into dragon valley, or in Suigang." Carol said.

"Hold on..." Crimson reached in his pockets and pulled out the coupons he won in the Battlephere. "We can go to Zao's place." Crimson said.

"That sounds like the best plan for now." The magister said. The group headed out to Shang Mu and to the city hall, AKA. Zao's home. Crimson knocked on the door of the huge house.

"I'll be right there!" Zao said as he looked through the security window. "Ah, let me unlock the door for you." unlocking sounds were heard, and ending on a large grinding sound before Zao opens the door, a **+5 SECURITY** came from here. "It's good to see you, my friends! And..." He would look at the magister.

"He's the Magister, Long story short, Shang Tu got raided, and we mainly took the bait. That bait was you. And apologies for that phrasing." Crimson said.

"Ah, no worries. Please come in." Zao said. Everyone headed inside. And as everyone was mostly settled down, Lilac was lashing out verbally at the Magister.

"Why did you have to do that back then?!" Lilac yelled.

"It was a different time, we were at war." The Magister said.

"That doesn't give you an excuse!!!" Lilac Continued.

Crimson went in between the two of them. "ALRIGHT YOU TWO, THAT'S ENOUGH!" His tone, and his body language caught them both off guard. "The magister said that Merga was sealed up CENTURIES ago. THEREFORE, there might be a chance that there are still water dragons out there, and the Magister had NOTHING to do with the war!"

“Crimson, you have no right to butt into this, you don’t know how I feel about having my kind nearly extinct!” Lilac yelled at him.

“MY ENTIRE KIND, AND MY ORIGINAL HOME, IS FUCKING GONE!!!” Crimson screamed out. This caught the attention of everyone. **“EVERYTHING I KNOW, EVERYONE I HAD ONCE LOVED, THEY’RE DEAD!!!”** Crimson turned around, and he started to cry. “I-I’m sorry...that I lashed out at you. I need to take some time for myself.”

He walked away, But returned when dinner was served. He barely heard the conversation due to his worn out emotional state, but still ate all of his food. “Anyway...Sad to say, we can’t accommodate a room for each of you, so two of you have to share one.” Zao said.

“I’ll have Crimson sleep in my room.” Lilac said. Carol had a smug face on her, but quickly went away when Lilac gave a stern stare at her. Crimson had his head up and finally noticed what was going on.

The group headed out to each of their rooms. And now, Crimson and Lilac were alone. “I’m sorry for lashing out...I didn’t know that you had to go through all of that pain. That it was more devastating for you than it was for me.” Lilac said. She was really regretful of her words.

“It’s alright, I didn’t expect you to know.” Crimson reassured her. “But look on the bright side, I nearly replaced everything I had taken away from me. Well, now it’s being threatened to be taken again...but this time, I won’t go down without a fight.”

Lilac oddly felt...close to Crimson. Like she can understand him more, in a situational kind of way. They’ve been through so much, and yet, he was willing to risk his life for not just her, but everyone on Avalice.

“And uh...Can I tell you something?” Crimson asked.

“What is it?” Lilac responded.

“I...honestly have a huge crush on you.” Crimson said, blushing brightly.

“That’s...honestly very cute of you.” Lilac said. She went up to Crimson and softly kissed him on the lips. It was short and brief, but it nearly took Crimson’s breath away. “Now come on, let’s get some sleep, we really need it after tonight.”

The two dragons got in bed and started to go to sleep. Before finally dozing off, Lilac actually hugged Crimson from behind. He was really warm, like a personalized heater of gentle warmth. And with that...the pain from today slowly faded into the feeling of warmth.

Chapter 15: Tropical Excursion

The next morning came around, Lilac got up from bed, blushing as she found herself cuddling up to Crimson for most of the night. But she did admit to herself that he was really warm. It took a bit to get situated for a game plan, but Crimson got up right when Lilac was getting out of the room. "We have to discuss our next step in this situation with the others. Meet us in the Library." She said before heading out.

Crimson rejoined after a while and they were researching the history of Avalice. "Strange...there is little information about the place of Parusa." Crimson said to himself. Then it hit him. "Parusa! That's it!" He called everyone over to let them know what was going on.

"You found any clues Crimson?" Neera asked.

"Yes, actually. In these books, there was hardly any information about Parusa, presumably a water dragon region." Crimson explained.

"That's the same place that Cory said when she tried to take Pangu right?" Carol said. She stayed with the group after realizing the situation Cory would be in regarding with her, but still wanting to at least talk some sense into her if needed.

"Correct, but we don't even know where it might even be..." Crimson answered.

"It's an Island south of Dragon Valley, but it's across the ocean." Neera said

"Wait...how did you know that Lady Neera?" Lilac asked.

"Normally I wouldn't say anything under confidentiality but...a green water dragon told me about it. I can't give out her name, because she is under a secure safety protection program, along with another in the same situation as her who wishes to remain anonymous." Neera said.

"Well...at least I'm not the last of my kind, like Crimson said." Lilac said.

Zao walked in the library. "If you need transport over there, you can use my airship if you'd like." He said.

"You sure that would be alright with you Mr Zao?" Milla asked.

"Well, you four DID save my life after all." Zao said.

"Can we leave immediately?" Neera asked.

"It'll take an hour tops." Zao said.

Everyone nodded and after an hour everyone set off for Parusa. Midway through the flight, Everyone got a message in their coms. "Hey there, long time no see." The voice said.

The group except Crimson has a more annoyed mood shift. "Hello Spade, what do you want?" Lilac said.

"I managed to pick up on some intel around this area. My brother told me to help you guys out." He said. "I'm over at Goldies, I'll talk once everyone is gathered here."

The call ended and they went forward to Parusa on foot, running along the water at break-neck speeds. This was a brand new scenery for everyone. Beautiful waters, the Island in the distance with...a volcano?! And a floating SKY ISLAND?! They may have lost the first time, but everyone had more determination than ever to push onwards.

Once on shore, everyone decided to split up, except Crimson and Carol. They decided to check out the small museum. Carol read out the different moon phases that the water dragons had strong ties to. "Hey Crimson, look at this." She brought him over and pointed out the Lilith moon description, symbolizing it as a time for lovers.....rawr~."I bet you and Lilac would love that time of year, huh?" She said with a smug grin.

Crimson just pulled her tail hard, She yelped in pain, Angry, but she did deserved it and moved on. On the top floor, they found a time capsule. They played it and it was a video log of the fallen princess of Shang Tu. Her name was Cordelia, and the log stated that she was going to go to Parusa to make a peace offering, but it was rather short, meant for a video journal of some kind.

The Magister called Crimson's Com. "Did you find anything useful?" He asked.

"Yeah...a video log from Cordelia, the fallen Princess." Crimson answered.

"Interesting..." He said.

Zao actually interrupted and managed to butt in. "I actually have some of the missing files....I believe I have 12...making it 13 in total!" Zao said. "But I need time to find them all...but once I do, I'll send them to you!"

"Alright, thanks.". Crimson said..Now there was the mystery of the fallen princess, and something that the group needed to learn about. Maybe it can help solve the secrets of the dragon war...

Chapter 16: An Unlikely Truce!

Everyone went to the hidden briefing room over at Goldies, Spade was waiting for everyone to arrive so he could tell everyone about the situation at hand. "Ah, it's good to see everyone after so long." Spade said, before looking over at Crimson. "So, you're the guy my brother was talking about earlier. You look pretty tough."

"I'll take that as a compliment." Crimson said.

"What do you have in terms of intel?" Neera asked.

"I have some sources that Merga's forces are on this island...and for some reason Serpentine as well." Spade said. "I highly suggest we take down Serpentine first."

"That is the best course of action." Crimson said. "There was one other ability that Syntax has that nobody knows about."

"And what might that be?" Lilac asked Crimson.

"It's called Code Black. It corrupts, overwrites, and transfigures any mechanical object or being into a soldier under the user. It was one of the ways that BASTARD destroyed my home planet's forces." Crimson said.

Spade would bring up the map of the island. "Well we have found a conflict in the jungle not too far from here. And as a matter of fact, the volcano is about to erupt as well..."

Milla's ears perked up. "I can make a potion to safely create a path so the volcano doesn't explode! I can go with Crimson to investigate and gather ingredients!"

"Alright, sounds like a plan, let's go!" Crimson said, as he and Milla rushed off to the jungle where the conflict was taking place.

When they arrived, Aaa and Serpentine were basically having an argument.

"I FOUND IT FIRST YOU BIG MEANIE!!!"

"Gah! Your voice is so annoying!!!"

"NO YOUR VOICE IS ANNOYING, AND I HAVE AN ARMY!!!"

"No, YOUR voice is annoying, AND I CAN SHOOT MISSILES!!!"

Crimson sighed. "Great...this is already not going to go well..." He said to himself as Milla was behind him.

Dodging both forces for quite a bit, Aaa would notice Crimson and actually approach him. "Oh hey!! It's you! Look at what I just got!" He showed off the drone that he took. "This is going to be the core of the BFF 4000!"

"Look, I know what that thing is capable of, and you using that is a 100% bad idea." Crimson said to him.

"Why not?!" Aaa said.

"That snake man's boss actually designed that thing, and he is basically a thousand times as bad as that snake guy." Crimson responded.

"So really REALLY bad then?" Aaa clarified his question.

"*Really bad*," Crimson said. "He basically caused havoc three years ago."

"Oh THAT'S why there was a huge shortage of supplies back then..." Aaa said to himself, Serpentine managed to take Syntax back from under his nose. He appropriately screamed when that happened.

"WELCOME BACK, GENERAL SERPENTINE." Syntax responded.

"Good, now that the drone is back under my control...I guess I will destroy the three of you with this. The two of you haven't seen the impact of this...but the traitor will have to witness this all over again. Syntax, initiate CODE BLACK!" Serpentine ordered.

And with a dark pulse like effect, Aaa's robots were rewritten to follow Serpentine's orders. Aaa was so shocked by the effect, Crimson was not kidding. "TCHYAAAA HAHAHAHA!!! NOW, IT'S TIME TO ELIMINATE THE WAR DOG, THE MONKEY WRENCH, AND THAT FAILURE OF A WEAPON ONCE AND FOR ALL!!!" Serpentine yelled out from inside his mech.

"Say...Truce on this fight?" Aaa suggested.

"Agreed." Milla and Crimson said together.

The three, newly formed allies run and try to destroy the army while also trying to escape. "We need to gather the three parts of the mech that are scattered to fight that thing." Aaa said.

"Alright, leave it to us!" Crimson said, He and Milla ran into different directions and got all 3 of the parts of the mech separately. And then are grouped together on top of the mech parts.

“Alright bad guy...It’s time for you to pay!” Aaa was hyped for a mech on mech showdown.

“ACTIVATE!!!” Aaa and Crimson said at the same time. *And* nothing happened.

“Milla, it only works if you say it with us.” Crimson said to her.

“OH! Sorry!” She apologizes.

“ACTIVATE!!!” All three said at once. And this time, the mech was fully assembled.

“Let’s beat this guy!!!” Aaa said, as the mech was mowing down the corrupted army. Serpentine rushed forward and shot projectiles at it. It got hit many times, but it dealt enough damage for durability.

However, the mech Aaa had wasn’t fully prepared and broke down, and was eventually destroyed. Milla and Aaa came out of the wreckage as Serpentine charged up a massive attack with his mech’s two arm cannons. “TIME TO BE ERADICATED!!! TCHYYYYAAAAA AHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!”

Before the blast was fired, arm cannons were sliced clean off. “WHAT THE?!?!” Serpentine questioned how that even happened. But when he found out, he saw Crimson, holding up the Mech’s sword on his own. His aura started to glow just like back in the battlesphere and against Merga. This time, he looked to have draconic wings made up of flame to keep him aloft. “That’s... THAT’S IMPOSSIBLE!!!” Serpentine yelled.

Crimson made one final diagonal slash to destroy the mech, not hitting him, nor the drone. Then he took said stone from the mech and sent the top part of the mech skyward with a hard kick, a distant “CURRRSSEEE YYYOOOOUUUUU!!!!....” would be heard from Serpentine. Crimson would land on solid ground, a bit tired.

“THAT WAS SO COOL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” Aaa was hyped up! “You know, I really don’t believe you are bad guys after all! But...that doesn’t change that fact we’re on opposite sides...”

“That’s fine...If you’re willing to help us from the sidelines, that is fine with us.” Crimson said. “Milla, you got the ingredients?”

“Yes, I have everything I need.” Milla answered.

“Alright, let’s head on back.” Crimson said, getting ready to leave.

“Wait!” Aaa said. “What’s your name?”

Crimson looked at Aaa and made a smile. "The name is Crimson!" He and Milla ran back to their new base. Aaa had a smile on his face too, he won't forget this moment at all.

Chapter 17: Volcanic Disruption

Back at Goldies, Crimson and Milla kinda walked in on Lilac storming out in anger. Worried, Crimson tried to reach out to her, but Milla stopped him before he made a step. "I'll take care of her, You meet up with Spade." Milla said. With a nod Crimson would walk down to the HQ and meet up with him.

"What was that all about?" Crimson asked.

"It's a long story...but to put it simply, I basically took her before she hatched..." Spade answered.

Before Spade would continue, Crimson made a strong left hook on his face. It was painful, but he held back. "The hell was that for?!"

"Kinda figured you deserved that. Anyways...what's our next goal?" Crimson asked. The ground started to shake as the volcano was being more active.

"That is." Spade said calmly. "Milla had already made the potion base, but needed one more ingredient. It will be placed before it erupts."

"So you're asking me to go on ahead because I am magma-proof?" Crimson asked.

"I mean, you ARE a fire dragon. Right?" Spade said, doing a smug shrug.

"You have a point..." Crimson said.

"Oh, before you go, I got a message from Zao. He managed to get all of the messages from Cordelia. He's transporting them now, just need to wait for a bit more." Spade said.

Crimson nodded and he ran to the volcano. It took a while but he went into an opening to the lava cavern. Being a fire dragon has its perks, being immune to intense heat is essential to this.

He made it to the summit of the volcano, and it was a flat plane of land, the only obstacle that stood in his way was Askal. "You should have turned back..." He said.

"If you know what your kind has done, why are you doing this?" Crimson asked.

"Because the crimes the Magister has committed are unforgivable. This is the only way!" Askal said.

"But what about you?" Crimson said, Askal froze a bit. "If every Earth Dragon deserves this kind of punishment, why are you considered to be exempt from it?"

“Because I am revealing the truth about this world!” Askal yelled, getting more angry.

“The truth that she wants you to see...” Crimson said. And that was the straw that broke the camel’s back.

“That’s it!!!” Askal made two stone walls on the side to make an arena. “This will be your grave!” Askal yelled. He rushed in and made in for the first attack, Crimson blocked the first attacks and countered, doing some solid blows. But as the fight progressed, Askal had gotten more ruthless. And even using his geomancy abilities to make a storm of stones.

“This ends now!” Askal said and he rushed in and does a flurry of punches and sent Crimson flying and sent him downward to the magma, and a stone to keep him submerged.

“I’m sorry it had to come to this, but you had to know your place...” Askal started to walk away, but the volcano was about to erupt. Then a huge pillar of lava shot out from the volcano as it erupted, but it didn’t fall down. “What the...no...that’s impossible!”

The lava was starting to be absorbed and shrink down. It was Crimson! He was absorbing the lava to increase his strength. Askal scowled and rushed in to attack, but Crimson made a gut punch to take his breath away. Then made his own barrage of attacks before sending him on the ground.

Askal was defeated, Crimson was standing over him. “Just finish me off already...end it...”

Crimson looked at him, he didn’t want to kill him, so he just gave him a recovery potion that Milla made. Askal was surprised by the gesture, he basically tried to kill him, without any kind of mercy, and yet he spared his life. “Why...Why did you spare me?”

Crimson looked back at him. “Because, I’m not a weapon for killing...I’m far from it. What happened at Shang Tu has already changed the world. What Merga is doing walks the wrong path.” He turned forward. “It’s not too late for you to prevent this from going too far.” Crimson walked away, the volcano situation had been dealt with, not the way that was originally intended, but was dealt with.

Askal got up, and thought to himself. Was this the right thing to do? Did all of this fighting mean anything? Or all that it did was continue this cycle of hatred and violence? After some thought...he decided on who to trust. And walked out of the area, following Crimson’s path downward.

Chapter 18: The Truth of the Past.

Crimson would walk back into the small village of Parusa that was the base as Neera walked up to him. "So, how was the mission? Were you successful in stopping the volcano?" She asked. Her spear planted on the ground.

"Yes, it wasn't in the way we initially planned, but it was successful." Crimson answered. He was a bit beat up, clearly he was injured, but not too badly. It could have been the magma he absorbed that healed his wounds during that fight with Askal.

"That is good to hear-" Neera said before she saw someone approaching that made her eyes burn with anger. It was Askal, healed slightly but was in no fighting condition. "Why are YOU here!"

"I came back because...I was a damn fool..." Askal said. He was weak and was reserving his energy to just get here. "I know that what I did was unforgivable...but Crimson...he spared my life after he beat me. I had no chance against him...just like when Merga faced me."

Neera was still fuming with anger, going to approach him, but Crimson put his hand out to stop her. "You can deal with his punishment AFTER we deal with Merga. She is by far the bigger threat." He said.

Neera wanted to freeze Crimson right on the spot. But in the end, he was right. Somehow, he had the touch of helping people with their ideals and purpose in these times. But Askal compared him with Merga? Sure he was strong enough to overpower her for a split second, but was it possible? "Fine...I'll take him to rest up." Neera said, before looking at Askal. "You BETTER not backstab us again! You hear me?!"

Askal nodded and was escorted by Neera to get rested. Shortly after, Lilac came up to Crimson, holding many of the video logs. "Hey, these came just before you got back. You want to watch them with me?" She asked.

Crimson nodded and they headed to the museum. Going upstairs to the top floor and watching the rest of the time capsules. Besides the oldest, the newest, there were 13 logs from Cordelia. It explains her plan to make peace between the earth dragons and water dragons, how it went south, and her relationship with Merga. And to the two dragons watching the logs, Merga and Cordelia were in a romantic relationship. This actually changes the purpose of Merga's goal not because of sole revenge, but grief of her loved one being forcefully taken from her.

"So...she loved Princess Cordelia? I never would have known it." Lilac said, looking at Crimson. "What do you think about the situation?"

"I think it is a natural, although very extreme, reaction to grief. However...I get a feeling that she isn't fully gone." Crimson said.

"What do you mean?" Lilac questioned further.

"Back in Shuigang, I mentioned that a mural of Cordelia was made near the entrance, right? So, she may still be around." Crimson said.

"So, what are we going to do?" Lilac asked again.

"We wait until the time is right to tell her about that." Crimson answered.

"You're right. We should wait on it." Lilac said.

There was a call on both of their Coms, it was Spade. "Apologize for your little 'date session,' but we got our next plan of action ready. Head over to Goldies when possible."

The two dragons blushed as they were embarrassed, and a bit agitated, but they nodded to each other as they headed back.

Meanwhile, Merga would soon hear word of Askal leaving her side. She was angry, but losing one pawn won't put her into a disadvantage just yet. She herself was more than capable to take them all on at once. The only two problems in her way were Lilac and Crimson, those two have immense amounts of potential within them.

"It doesn't matter if that Half-Breed of an earth dragon betrays me...as long as Bakunawa reawakens...revenge is mine for the taking."

Chapter 19: Boastaling Winds

Back at the hideout, everyone was watching the news of Captain Kalaw showboating again. "Fear not Citizens! I, Captain Kalaw, will find these terrorists and bring them to JUSTICE!!!"

"Does he realize that *he* is one in this case?" Carol Said.

"I believe he's using that persona as a way to deal with some sort of insecurity." Crimson said as he was walking in with Lilac.

"Ah, perfect timing you two. We actually have a new goal now." Spade said.

"What is it now?" Lilac asked. Askal got up, still recovering as he had some intel that Neera interrogated from him. Let's just say even when cooperative after the betrayal, she didn't go easy.

"There's different signal towers around the island triangulating the coordinates for Bakunawa. One of the highest ones is the Thunder Tower on the floating island due north of here.." Askal explained.

Lilac hearing the word 'Thunder' literally was a trigger for her. "Oh, *NO WAY* I am doing that!" She exclaimed.

Milla remembered what she looked like from the Thermal Base Incident. "I second that feeling...It felt like it was a rough time."

"I third that, even if I didn't see it, I heard it. And I wished I never heard her agonizing screams again..." Crimson added. Everyone looked at him with a strange look. "What? What are you looking at me for?"

"Crimson...Why *are* you a dragon in the first place?" Carol asked.

"I have the information, Lady Aya of Shuigang had informed me about what she found after another search after they found Crimson. It had appeared that Crimson was made as a biological weapon using Sash Lilac's DNA, using it as a blueprint or a guide so to speak. There were also some records of his homeland as well. It seemed that Dragons once inhabited his world as well." Neera explained. "But I will tell you all about it at a later point."

Lilac was very shocked that Crimson, the only person that could relate to her and what she had been going through, was made to be a weapon against Avalice. But, he still wants to protect it at the same time. Many thoughts ran through her head, as she was trying to piece everything together.

But before she said anything, Crimson hugged her, reassuringly. "I don't have the words to explain everything...so just trust me, ok? Crimson said, with honesty in his voice, that even if he doesn't have the answer to which side he is truly on, he is still himself and not a pawn.

Lilac hugged back slightly and they broke apart. "We actually found some more information too. But two people need to head over there."

Carol stepped forward. "I'll go with Crimson." She said, "I have a feeling that Cory is going to be up there. I know that I'm putting my life on the line to stop her, but if that is what I need to do to get her back, then I'm taking that chance!"

Everyone was shocked on this new side of Carol, even if it's mostly for family terms. Crimson nodded in agreement. "Alright then, let's go!" He said before the duo headed out to the sky island and the thunder tower.

The sun was about to set as the dragon and wildcat was about to reach the sky island, starting their trek at midday. Then from out of nowhere, a giant gust of wind pushed them back. "STOP RIGHT THERE FIENDS!!!" Captain Kalaw made his entrance with a camera recording it. "YOU TERRORISTS SHALL NOT PASS THIS POINT!"

"We're not terrorists! You guys ar-" Carol said as Crimson covered her mouth.

"If you want a fight, I'm going to give it to you, Captain. I'm going to give you the fight everyone deserves." Crimson said as he moved towards him.

"VERY WELL, I ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE!" Kalaw said before rushing in and the fight began. Kalaw made some air cutter attacks, Crimson barely able to dodge them as it scratched him on his arms and legs.

"He's using air in the suit to make pressurized attacks, I need to be careful..." Crimson thought before going in to make several good hits. Even the armor is strong as he tanks them.

The Audience at home was watching this serious fight, some wanted Kalaw to win, other's wanted Crimson to win. But it wasn't just a battle of strength, it was also a battle of Ideals. Kalaw wanted to know how someone like him can continue to fight after a defeat against Merga back in Shang Tu.

Crimson, after getting Kalaw off of the floating platform, managed to spike him downwards. "huff...huff...I guess, that was it huh?" Crimson spoke. However, Kalaw manages to fly back up and break the entire platform in half on the way.

"I AM NOT GIVING UP!! FEEL THE FIRE OF MY BURNING JUSTICE!!" Kalaw said as he had made the arena circle around like a vortex. It looks like he's pulling out all of the stops on

this one. Crimson couldn't even get close to him due to the wind pressure. Suddenly Kalaw got hit by Carol's Jump Disc and she knocked him away toward Crimson.

"Now Crimson!!!" Carol yelled, Crimson nodded and he made a burning axe kick on Kalaw, sending him back on the platform, the wind pressure was stabilized as Crimson landed back on the ground.

Kalaw, who was getting back up but not able to fight, looked at Crimson. "Why...Why do you go forward? Even after the loss at Merga's hands?" Kalaw asked.

Crimson looked at him, he was a bit beaten up as well. "I'll answer if you answer my question, why did you side with Merga?"

Kalaw looked at the ground, and back at him. "Because I wanted to be a hero. Not a faker in that DAMN Battlephere. An ACTUAL hero! Merga Told me that I could be due to everything that the earth dragons had done!!" He yelled.

Crimson walked towards him and slapped his face, as a sign of a damn reality check. "The reason I continue to move onward is because I have people that I need to protect. The Magister, Lady Neera, and everyone else on this planet I owe my life to because they gave me the chance to live again. My entire kind, and my entire home planet is completely destroyed. And Kalaw, you are a hero. You inspire people to move onward despite the pain and hardship that they're feeling. You just lost sight of that ideal light of a hero because you didn't believe in it"

Crimson's words reached out to Kalaw and the audience as well, it wasn't just a speech towards him, but to everyone else as well, all over the world. "And if you can't believe in yourself, Believe in the me that Believes in you, And if you can't do that, then Believe in the you that can believe in yourself. I know it isn't logical in any sense of the words, but you have to kick logic to the curb and do the impossible! Who gives a damn about the consequences of tomorrow if today we are free!? **JUST WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK I AM!?!?"**

That last question Crimson said, that gave Kalaw the answer that he has been looking for, 'What makes a hero?' Kalaw made a chuckle, which turned into a burst of laughter. "You're right...Who cares about how I look to others. After all, if I make one person's day, that is good enough for me. I want to say...thank you." Kalaw said and went off towards Parusa. "I'LL REJOIN YOUR FRIENDS AND FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT FROM NOW ON!!"

Carol looked over at Crimson. "His ratings are gonna tank, aren't it?"

"Yeah, but it doesn't matter, He needed to find the light he lost. And I helped him find it. Now come on, let's get to the thunder tower!" Crimson said as he continued onward, Carol nodded and filled him upwards.

Chapter 20: From Storming Sky to Sunny Sea

The night was coming up on the horizon as Crimson and Carol made it to the base of the Thunder Tower. It was very tall, about 10-15 stories high; that was, if it is, the tallest point on Avalice. "So...all we have to do is to go inside, climb this tower, and destroy the Locator Signal?" Carol said, as they are making their way to the entrance.

"That's the plan. I hope you're not afraid of heights." Crimson said.

"Just because I'm a cat doesn't mean that I'm afraid of heights!" Carol blurted out.

"I was joking. Come on, we don't have all night. Merga would have found the remains any day now." Crimson said as they climbed up the tower.

The tower looked old, but modern at the same time. Gates were locked with electric locks that prevented them from getting up to the higher floors. Using clever uses of Carol's jump disc and some nearby cannon balls, the gates were pretty easy to get past. At the very top of the tower, a flying mechanical bird ambushed them. "I guess they were waiting for us to show up here. Alright, ready Crimson?" Carol got into a fighting stance.

"I'm ready!" Crimson said as he made an attack towards the flying robot and it got damaged a bit, but not fully to be handicapped. It flew back to encircle the tower, Carol chased it on the rail and threw her jump disc at the robot. It successfully hit and acted like a buzzsaw, damaging it multiple times. Carol then jumped onto the jump disc and proceeded in doing a combo to damage it enough to take it out of commission.

"Nobody can beat this kung-fu Kitty!" Carol said, gloating on her victory. She looked around and found the search signal. "Crimson, I found it!" She called over to him.

Crimson destroyed the signal in a single stomp. Then dusted himself off. "Well then, that's one more objective done..." He said, making his way back to the entrance leading into the tower. That was until the Sigwada and Corazon made it to the scene.

"Carol, I said to not interfere with this. I'm doing this to protect you!" Corazon said to her.

"I know Cory, but this isn't right! None of this is! I know you know that too!" Carol yelled to her sister. "I feel the kind of predicament you're in! That's why I want to stop Merga, even if it means getting past you if I have to!"

Corazon felt the impact of her words just now, she shed a tear in silence but stayed strong in that demeanor. "Well then, I guess this is what needs to be done." She throws a knockout gas grenade, Crimson holding his breath to not pass out, Carol.....not so much.

"Why do I feel.....funny...." Carol said before passing out. Falling on the floor.

Corazon looked at Crimson, with a solemn expression which turned into a small smile. "Thank you for taking care of her...but this meeting is over." She snapped her fingers and a figure from the shadows appeared from behind him and knocked Crimson out cold. "Thank you, Eclipse. That was a perfect stealth knockout."

The jet black wildcat stepped out of the shadows. "What should we do about these two?" He asked.

"Send my sister back to the main island of Parusa, I'll deal with the Fire dragon." Corazon ordered. Eclipse nodded and took Carol away through the shadows.

Hours seemed to pass, Crimson seemed to wake up to the feeling of ocean waves. It turns out, he was in the middle of the FREAKING OCEAN!!! "NNnnnnnggg...Damn...Wait...WHERE AM I?!?!" Crimson blurted out.

He saw a note on a chest, it was from Corazon. "Sorry to knock you out so suddenly, I was intending to use this prank on my sister, but seeing as you managed to be more responsible, I instead did it to you, Fire boy." from Corazon.

"Damn, coms don't work out here..." Crimson said as he waited for anyone to at least show up. And after a while, someone did, and it was a very last resort kind of person.

"Well, well, well, if it isn't the FAILURE of a bioweapon in the flesh!" Serpentine Said as he stopped to see Crimson, not to rescue him, but mainly to mock him.

"Serpentine, What the hell do you want this time?" Crimson asked.

"I am on my way back to that island that you LAUNCHED ME OUT OF BY THE WAY!!!" Serpentine exclaimed. "I could bring you back, only if you rejoin me and to our Lord's army."

"You basically want to get a hot ticket out of this rock, don't you?" Crimson said. He basically knew what he truly wanted.

"...You are right, but that's not the point! Do you want to hop on or not?!" Serpentine yelled again.

"Fine, I'll hop on!" Crimson boarded Serpentine's ship and they sailed off. It was going to take a while, so they needed something to do in the meantime.

After a bit of silence, Crimson spoke up. "Do you even like that oversized roach?" He asked.

"How DARE YOU Call him an oversized roach!!! I'll kill you right now if you do it again!" Serpentine threatened him.

“Woah! Chill! It’s only us two, you can be honest with me.” Crimson tried to deescalate the situation.

Serpentine, knowing this might as well be the only time he can freely speak his mind, took a sigh. “No, I don’t. He basically threatened my entire kind if we didn’t give what he wanted. Kinda like how your kind was given the same offer.”

“Well, do you even like doing this?” Crimson asked further.

“Hell no! I put up this crazed maniac persona to hide my true feelings on the matter! Even after what happened 3 years ago here, I still had to have that mentality!” Serpentine opened up more.

“Why is that? If I may ask?” Crimson said.

“It’s...Because of Syntax. That drone isn’t the only one. He has a legion of them that is under his command. And only listens to his orders. I have main access to give orders, but he sets the main protocols.when able, it’s allowed to act on its own. It is even transmitting everything it sees directly back to him.” Serpentine explained. “Everything that he touches becomes a pawn in his own sick, twisted game. You, me, that war dog, every life he has affected.”

“You know, I could make some arrangements to make this a sanctuary for you, to make this place a safe haven.” Crimson suggested.

“That’s not going to be possible.” Serpentine said.

“That’s not gonna stop me from Trying!” Crimson said.

Just then, his com got a signal, it was Neera. “Crimson, there you are! Where are you?!”

“I’m alright, I’m heading back to the main island, And I have made an unlikely alliance with Serpentine.” Crimson said.

“ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR **FUCKING** MIND?!?!?!” Neera literally exploded in anger.

“LOOK, IF IT WASN’T FOR HIS HELP, I WOULD BE STRANDED IN THE **MIDDLE OF THE FUCKING OCEAN!!!** I HAD **NO** CHOICE!!!” Crimson yelled back at her.

Neera would be fuming with anger, but sighed. “You better come here ASAP. And Serpentine, DON’T do anything against us, or I **WILL** put your head on a pike!!!” She yelled before the com shut off.

“Sheesh...she really IS scary.” Serpentine said.

“Yeah, she has really bad trust issues...” Crimson said as the two unlikely allies continued forward to the main island.

Chapter 21: Starship Bakunawa

Crimson and Serpentine made it into shore and were about to head into the bunker at Goldies. Crimson looked at Serpentine cautiously. "Don't do anything stupid." He said sternly. Serpentine nodded as he followed Crimson downstairs.

The two of them met up with everyone who pretty much had Spade tied up and unable to move. "Uh....hey guys." Spade said with a cocky, yet worried smile.

"Let me guess, He tried to take the drone that BELONGS to ME!" Serpentine said loudly. Crimson held him off so no potential problems were set off.

"Yeah, He tried to sneak off with it. Askal pummeled him to the ground before he could go too far." Lilac said. The room was a bit hostile towards Serpentine. Serpentine couldn't defend himself because of Syntax listening in on everything.

"Lilac showed everyone about Merga having a girlfriend! This is going to be-" Carol said before being interrupted by Neera freezing her tongue. "Ooowwuuhh! Nught ferr!"

"While you were gone, Merga contacted us, she wanted to speak to you and Lilac, alone." Neera said.

"That's definitely going to be a trap." Milla said.

"I know that may be the case, So, I think we may need a plan." Crimson said. The entire group discussed it before they set it into motion.

Deep underwater, in a localized air pocket, Crimson and Lilac met up with Merga. "So, you finally arrived." Merga turned around to face them.

"What do you want, Merga?" Lilac asked her.

"I want to give you two a chance to join me. Leave with me with Bakunawa, start a brand new life with no strife, and I won't harm anyone else." Merga set up an ultimatum.

"I will never join you, I have my friends that I need to protect." Lilac said.

Merga turned her look onto Crimson. "What about you? We are in similar situations after all?"

Crimson looked into himself, he had already made his choice. "I refuse, even though the earth dragons have done horrible things to your kind, the ones I know are FAR from that at

heart. And trust me, my original homeworld had the exact same kind of people that made your kind nearly extinct.”

Merga made a simple sigh, but inside, she felt her resolve weaken. Crimson's homeworld...had the same type of problem that her kind had to suffer? If that was the case, he would have joined her from the start! But, why? Why was he different?! “It's a shame really...” She tossed an object at them.

“What's this?” Lilac asked, inspecting it.

“A ruse.” Merga said.

Crimson saw that it was an explosive and had to get her away from the blast. “LILAC, GET BACK!!” He pulled her away and he took the front force of the explosion. He was damaged but just then...

“SURPRISE ATTAC-” Serpentine yelled before getting swatted away like a fly. “DAAAAAMMMNNNNIIITTTTT!!!!”

The rest of the first group, Milla, Carol, and Neera, all showed up for a late ambush. “It's over Merga! Give us that Drone!” Neera said.

“I'm afraid that it's a bit late for that.” Merga snapped her fingers and in the distance, Bakunawa awakened once again. Merga dashes away to get inside to finally take off.

“EVERYONE, RUN!!!” Lilac said as the group ran toward the surface. Bakunawa fires its extraction lazer and DAMN it was huge! Everyone made it to the surface and got up to Zao's Airship with the Help of Askal, Kalaw, and even Aaa.

They couldn't get to Bakunawa in the upper atmosphere even if they tried, nothing could travel up there. Then they witnessed Merga trying the lazer at the moon, to no effect. “Pfft she isn't using that extraction lazer at the correct distance!” Serpentine said, back in his chaotic evil persona.

“But why is she trying to destroy the moon?” Carol asked.

“...The gravitational pull between Avalice and the moon would be entirely destroyed...” Crimson said.

“What do you mean?” Lilac said.

“The gravitational pull between Avalice and the moon affects the tides, if there is no moon, there will be no tides, and if there is no tides, the entire world would flood!” Milla said.

“Yeah, and if there is any debris left, it may fall back down and may hit any land mass like a giant meteor...” Crimson added.

“So how are we going to get up there?” Neera asked.

“Leave that to me!” Aaa spoke up. “I was able to make a spacecraft to set up there in no time! Only problem is that It can’t take all of us up there except for one way forward, or backward.”

Carol would have a stern look at the monkey kid, who was the person who partially destroyed Lilac’s house. “You do have a lot to make up for the trouble you caused.”

“I’ll have my ship as a second vessel for the approach.” Serpentine added.

“Then it’s settled, make any last second preparations at Shang Tu.” Neera said as they headed over to the mainland.

At a remote location, A hooded figure saw the now reawakened Bakunawa rise to the atmosphere and fired the lazer at the moon. They looked in shock and fear that history might repeat itself once again.

“I need to get into contact with her...as soon as I possibly can.” The person spoke as she headed back into her hideout. “I pray to the stones that my voice would reach out to Merga somehow...” The person removed her hood once they got inside. They had flowing black hair, and brown, shimmering skin. Even if she couldn’t go outside and risk being noticed, The still youthful Princess of Shang Tu, Cordelia, needed to help stop this threat that she couldn’t prevent in the first place.

Chapter 22: Full Force Assault.

It took about an hour until everyone got ready to face Merga, Aaa's Mech has been transformed into a space cruiser and Serpentine has his own ship ready for take off. Neera looked at the group, allies and enemies alike sharing a common goal. "Alright everyone, we only have one chance to stop Merga. We have everything that we need and it's only a straight shot to her." She said. Carol knew that there would be one problem in the way, and that was Corazon.

"It's not, there's still my sis..." Carol said, still a bit sad about her still siding with Merga. Crimson reassured her by patting her on the back, which made her a bit better.

Neera understood the situation and planned ahead of it. "I made two teams, Lilac, Carol, Milla, Crimson, and I would be the spearhead and break through the defenses. Aaa, Askal..., Kalaw, Serpentine, you will be the backup in case things go wrong." She explained the plan to everyone.

Everyone nodded and the plan to stop Merga was initiated! In two ships, they flew up to the upper atmosphere to Bakunawa, But they were met with it's external defense systems shooting at them! Aaa's ship managed to quickly destroy them with ease. "HAHAHA!!! THIS IS JUST LIKE IN THOSE SPACE SHOOTER GAMES!!!" He yelled on the coms.

"Calm down dude, this isn't a game. Once you get shot down, it's game over, permanently." Crimson warned him. That managed to make him more focused. It wasn't long until they rushed into the opening and Team A went ahead to infiltrate the massive ship. Serpentine somehow managed to sneak away from Team B without them noticing in the meantime.

Everyone was making good progress until Corazon stopped them. Pointing a gun towards the group. "I told you to stay out of this." She had a firm stance, but was hesitant.

Carol was emotionally shaken up, tears welled up in her eyes. "Cory, can't you see what she's doing?! She's trying to destroy the entire planet!" She pleaded,

"I know that! But..." Corazon's voice was starting to shake a bit. Her hand was wavering...

"If you really want to stop me, then shoot me down." Carol said, tears running down her face.

"Carol...what are you-" Corazon said in shock.

"If you're really serious about doing this, then do it. I won't be mad at you if you did." Carol said in acceptance.

Corazon's hand was shaking, if she didn't shoot, Merga would kill Carol, it was a lose lose situation. But in the end...she dropped the gun and got on her knees. "I can't do it...I can't kill the only family I have." Corazon said, crying.

Carol was about to run towards her, but an invisible force was about to strike her from behind. Corazon noticed it and tried to scream Carol's name out before a sound of an energy blade ripped through flesh. However, at the last second, a black Wildcat managed to stop the blade before it managed to touch Carol. It was Eclipse, the energy blade had pierced his left hand, holding it in place as his right was right at Merga's throat. His eyes were a deep purple, and his energy flowed with purple lightning. He was livid, knowing that Merga was going to kill Carol, and my extension, hurt his captain, HIS loved one and the only family that he has left out of his exilement.

"I won't let you touch a single HAIR ON HER!!!" Eclipse said as he headbutted Merga on the face, still invisible. That managed to push her back, knowing she may be outnumbered, she managed to escape as stealthily as she entered the room. Everyone was checking up on Eclipse.

"Why? Why would you do that?!" Corazon asked him.

"Because...I don't want to see you hurt, senorita. Neither physically, or emotionally." Eclipse explained. He was getting bandaged up his deep wound.

"There's a potion supply in a rest spot on the back of the ship, I made plenty of healing potions to stop the bleeding." Milla said.

"I'm coming with him." Corazon said, helping him up.

Carol tried to step up to protest, but went back. She needed to stop Merga, this time, it was personal.

Corazon looked back at Carol. "You have matured sis. Only slightly." She teased her. Then looking back to Crimson. "Thank you for looking after her."

"It's no problem. You take care of him, alright?" Crimson said, nodding to Eclipse.

As the older Wildcats went to the rest spot, the group headed onward further towards the head of the ship. But, soon another betrayal would arise not so suddenly...

Chapter 23: Expect the Unexpected.

As the main group made it to the middle of Bakunawa, it was quite a breeze. The enemies were tough, but no big threats were in the way of them and Merga. All except one that decided to steal the spotlight once again. "Attention everyone! The Mining procedure will be executed as originally planned!" Serpentine said as Syntax used Code Black on the enemies, converting them over to his side.

Neera scowled as she saw him starting to betray the group, but this was no time to think. The new objective was to stop Serpentine at all costs. "TCHYA HAHAAAAHA!!! IS THAT THE BEST YOU CAN DO?!"

As the group went along to face him. Serpentine opened the window of his giant mech. "Well, well, well, if it isn't my 'comrades' Still trying to face off against me?" he said, looking down at everyone.

"I knew we shouldn't have trusted you!" Carol said, knowing this would happen.

"Well then, since you're all going to die, I would like to give you knowledge about the wardog that is with you. She came from the same planet as Brevon." Serpentine explained.

Everyone was shocked, the events 3 years ago at the dreadnought, it wasn't a hostage situation...it was **PLANNED**. From the very beginning. "And the "fire dragon", He was made as a doomsday weapon in case anything went south during an invasion, burning and destroying anything in his way with complete obedience!!!" Serpentine went on.

Milla stepped up. "I don;t care what you say about me OR Crimson! He showed me that despite all of that, I'm still Myself!" She barked back at him.

"Very well, PREPARE TO BE MUTILATED!!!" Serpentine said before setting his mech into battle mode. Everyone tried to attack the weapons first, first the missiles, then the claws. Carol had taken a bit of damage but all that is left is the head. "Damnit, not even my dragon boost can make it break!" Lilac said.

Serpentine made his maniacal laugh once more. "This glass is unbreakable! Nothing you can do can even try to pierce it!" He said, still gloating on his victory. Then he noticed Crimson charging up what appears to be a condensed fireball, that was getting hotter and hotter.

"If it is unbreakable....Then it can melt within seconds!!!" Crimson said as he threw the fire ball like it was a heavy iron ball. Serpentine dodged it by using the escape door, making it vulnerable. However, the fireball didn't dissipate as it kept on going to where the cannon was and it made Critical damage to it, causing it to be inoperational.

Merga was shocked when she found out that the canon was taken out that easily by someone like Crimson. She made the plan to try to eliminate him like she did with Carol.

Meanwhile, Serpentine tried to run but was cornered. Milla was the last to intercept him as he got blasted away by three back to back phantom cube attacks. "BUT I HAD ALL OF THE CARDS!!!!!!!!!!!" He said before being launched off.

"TOO BAD WE'RE PLAYING UNO!" Crimson yelled out in response.

"That felt really good." Milla said, having a bit of closure.

Everyone was about to continue on forward until Lilac noticed a distorted, invisible figure was about to kill Crimson. "CRIMSON, LOOK OUT!!!" She got him out of the way and she took the attack, damaging her side. Merga, knowing that her attempt had failed, fled the scene. "If you continue on, this is what will happen to your friends. TURN. BACK. NOW." Her voice echoed in the room.

Crimson went to Lilac, who was majorly injured. "LILAC, W-WHY DID YOU DO THAT?!" He yelled. The sheer distraught in his voice was clear as day to everyone.

"Because...I wanted you to be safe...and to at least help you keep your promise....to protect this planet..." Lilac said weakly.

"Hold on Lilac!" Milla said, pulling out a very potent healing potion. Lilac grabbed it and drank it. It was going to be a short while for her wound to be fully healed.

Crimson felt anger, and pure rage...Neera put a hand on his shoulder, as a sign of comfort. "The cannon core has most likely been fully damaged by your attack. We will take care of Lilac for the time being, go and stop Merga. I trust you to do so without fail." Neera said to him.

Crimson got up and had a determined look on his face. "Thanks...this cycle of hate and bloodshed ends here and now..." He said as he rushed onward towards Merga. However, during the intense moment, Syntax seemingly vanished during the chaos. Serpentine noticed it as he managed to catch that moment.

"This is the endgame now...I need to make my choice here and now on which side I want to be on. And I decided that long ago..." He said before slithering away into hiding for the right time.

Chapter 24: Clash of Ideals

As Crimson was making his way up to where Merga was, he got a signal from his communicator. It was the Magister. He accepted the transmission and answered it. "What is it?" Crimson spoke, still very heated from the near assassination of himself that Lilac saved him from.

"I would like to at least have one more chance to reason with Merga, in a peaceful manner." The Magister said, this was a dire situation after all.

Crimson sighed heavily. "It's been centuries late for that, and besides...the only way she'll get the point across is by me beating it into her, physically or verbally." He said. The Magister heard the tone of anger in his voice.

"I hope you're right..." The magister said before ending the conversation there.

Crimson walked into the main room where Merga and Pangu were. Merga can see the anger and rage in Crimson's eyes, just like hers did when her people got slaughtered. "Even if I tried to kill you...and that hatchling saved you at the last minute, you still try to stop me from having my revenge?" She said, threateningly.

"This isn't about revenge...this is just a cycle of hatred...I won't let it continue like this any more Merga!" Crimson's aura spiked as it became like a solid flame around him.

"Well then...I guess it's time to finally end this. Show me what you can do, fire dragon!" Merga equipped her wings and went into her Blue Moon armor. She flooded the room with water and made sharp currents swirl around him.

Crimson bobbed and weaved around the currents and he made a powerful burst of flame! It pretty much evaporated the water all at once. "I'm not here to play any games!!!" He said as he rushed in and seemingly past her in the steam, completely off guard. And with one powerful swing, he completely broke and shattered the wings Merga had on her.

Merga recovered from the attack mostly unscathed. From their first encounter, Crimson barely had enough strength to even match her. But now, things are completely different. It felt like she was on the back foot. "...I won't...I WON'T BACK DOWN FROM THE LIKES OF YOU!!!" Merga yelled as she rushed in, completely serious about winning this fight.

It was an all out slugfest, both dragons gave it their all to settle their ideals, one sought to protect, the other to destroy. And after a while, both of them were exhausted, but still were in fighting shape.

“How many times will this cycle end?! Death, trauma, hatred, revenge. Death. Trauma. Hatred. Revenge. TELL ME MERGA! HOW MANY TIMES DO EVERYONE HAS TO DO THIS SAME CYCLE BEFORE IT EVEN BREAKS ONCE!!!” Crimson yelled as he walked up to her.

Merga, still clinging onto her ideals, managed to speak up. “I’m not done, I will have my revenge...I WILL NOT STOP UNTIL I-”

Merga was interrupted by Crimson punching her in the face hard. **‘WHEN. WILL. YOU. FUCKING. LISTEN. AT. LEAST. ONCE. IN. YOUR. GOD. DAMN. LIFE!!!!’** He kept punching with each word he screamed out, ending in a strong uppercut landing her on her back.

Merga, finally defeated, layed on the ground. And accepting her fate at the hands of Crimson. “Go ahead...finish me off...” She said tiredly.

Crimson looked at her, then turned around. “No...I’m not going to.”

Merga was shocked, she was granted...Mercy from a foe in battle? “Why?...Why spare me? After everything I’ve done?...”

“Everyone deserves a chance to live. My world was completely destroyed. My home, my history, my kind, fully eradicated. The people of Avalice gave me a new chance to live, the Magister included. He even offered a peaceful end to this madness, but I figured that it wouldn’t turn out that way.” Crimson said to her.

Upon realizing this, Merga looked back on everything she had done, and still, the Magister had offered her an olive branch of peace at every turn. Perhaps...time really did change so much after all.

“Incoming transmission” Pangu from the back of the arena said as it brought up a hologram message. The figure was definitely Cordelia, no two ways about it, although it was very staticy and words couldn’t make it through. Merga, got up in awe, seeing that possibly, the person she loved the most was somehow still alive. And just as brief as the other ones, it ended.

“No, I need to hear it one more time! I need to see her again!!!” Merga yelled out, that hope in her heart that seemed to be lost had sparked once more.

Crimson noticed it wasn’t like the other time capsule entries. “Merga...that was a live message.” He said to her.

“What?...What do you mean? That she’s...?” Merga was shocked about the possible revelation.

“Alive? That’s almost a confirmed fact now, given that.” Crimson said.

Now they are on good terms, and that happy event has passed and gone...The view was turned into static and a green eye was looking at the two of them. They looked at it and Merga was not happy about it. Meanwhile Crimson, looking at the thing that haunted him since he was unconscious, froze in fear as he started to remember what happened on that horrible day all those years ago...

Chapter 25: The Day the World Died

It was a peaceful day, the sun was shining, the air was crisp. All in all, just another day. But...everything changed when the emergency broadcast system came up and it warned everyone about a widespread alien invasion. Everyone started to panic, one by one, military leaders from around the world were killed off. A young man, throughout the chaos in one of the more populated cities that was being attacked, went to see his family, hoping and praying that they were safe. "Come on...I have to get there as soon as I can. My legs feel like they're giving out, but I NEED to get there!" He said as he ran as fast and as hard as he could.

Everything in his family's neighborhood was basically wrecked. And when he got to his home, it was wrecked just like rest. A pit fell into the young man's stomach as he hurried along inside. And inside the main living room, were the bloody remains of his mother and father. Holes were punctured into them, straight through with burn marks...he was calm, but also panicking. He rushed over to check up on his little sister, she was also dead. The amount of survivor's guilt he had, the anger, and hatred. Whoever started this invasion was going to pay, dearly.

From what he could scavenge, he grabbed a glock pistol, several mags of ammo, and a sword, just an ordinary one that wasn't special. Just as his stuff was put together, some of the troops found him and started to attack him with laser fire. The young man dodged and hid behind cover, and when the time was right, shot at them, straight to the dome on both of them. Two shots, two kills, with no prior experience other than arcade games.

The young man inspected the bodies of the two troops and found a communicator on one of them. It started to buzz in with a message. "ATTENTION GROUND TROOPS, REPORT BACK TO THE DREADNAUGHT FOR DEPARTURE! WE HAVE OBTAINED WHAT WE NEED FROM THIS PLANET!" A crazed voice said over the com. Thank goodness it was only one way audio.

Now, with a plan and a location, the sole survivor of his city's onslaught got on his bike and rode off to where the ship was, at the heart of the city. He peddled faster and harder, seeing the buildings either partially or completely destroyed, even up in flames too. The bodies of everyone were scattered around when the slaughter started.

At one point, there was a huge gap across where the bridge was. There was no way that he could get across. But he found a makeshift ramp to the side. An idea struck inside his mind and he made some distance. He started to pedal hard and fast as he approached it, and even went faster than he ever has done. He ramped forward across the gap, but it seemed to be short. Quick on his feet, the young man jumped from his bike and managed to roll on the grass as he landed to the other side.

Can't afford to waste anymore time, he continued on to approach the ship. The troops surrounded him very quickly. Nowhere to run, or hide. But still able to fight if needed.

“TCHYAAAAA HAHAAAAHA! Look what we have here, a survivor of this pathetic rock!” The vice spoke, revealing a snake in armor.

“What are you, an oversized garden snake?” the young man remarked.

“GARDEN SNAKE?!?! I AM GENERAL SERPENTINE!! YOU ARE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED! BY THE NAME OF LORD BREVON, I HEREBY SENTENCE YOU TO-” The snake spoke. A drone was behind him as he yelled.

“That’s enough, Serpentine. Let me teach him a lesson.” A menacing voice called out, and made his entrance. A tall imposing, green alien figure. Made it into the arena.

The young man’s feeling of anger and hatred grew by the second as he looked at the man. “Are you the person that caused all of this?” He said coldly.

The figure chuckled. “And what if I am?”

The young man, holding his pistol, pointed straight at him. “My name...is Matthew Griffin. You killed my family, my friends, and everyone in this city! Prepare to die!” His voice was filled with rage.

The alien man made a smirk. “I’d like to see you try...” He said and quickly used his energy pistol to shoot Matt’s out of his hand. Disarmed, he pulled out his sword and rushed at him. The figure rushed in and made a clean hit across his chest, not aiming for the head as his trademark kill. The mutagen seeped through his body as it was most likely a fatal blow meant to kill him quickly to relish him failing in a futile attempt to save his planet.

As his vision started to fade to black, he could feel his heartbeat. Pumping, and Pumping, as he could see something that he could only see. A dim light. At first, it seemed like what you see when experiencing death for the first time. However, as his heartbeat bumped faster, the light began to illuminate the darkness, revealing a small flame. That anger, the rage was manifested within him into this flame. But, it wasn’t either of them, that was a spark to ignite it. This flame was the manifestation of his desire to protect.

As Matt was thinking about what he lost, that made the flame grow bigger, hotter, and brighter. And with his heart pumping as fast as it could go, he managed to get back into consciousness and replanted his feet on the ground, tightened the grip on his sword, and made a swing against the warlord’s back, yelling intensely as he made a rebound after that fatal attack. It was a clean hit across, not enough to majorly wound him, but definitely a wound to heal from.

Everyone was shocked, nobody has even SURVIVED that attack, let alone make a counter to it. The drone teleported behind Matt and managed to stun him and put him in a bind.

The alien man looked at him with anger, but turned into intrigue. "Syntax, bring him with us...He'll be useful in the future." he said.

"YES, MY LORD." Syntax responded, as Matt was driven into subconscious. The next thing before secluded into a deep sleep, was his planet being fully destroyed as it blew up in front of his eyes. Can't move, can't speak, only watch as his world was annihilated.

"...son!.....rimson!.....CRIMSON!!!" Lilac yelled over the intercom, snapping Crimson back into reality from his PTSD episode. "Crimson! Can you Hear me?!"

"Y-yeah! I can!" Crimson responded.

"We need your help! Me and the girls Can't handle Syntax! It keeps regenerating itself!" Lilac said.

"I'm on my way!" Crimson said. As he was about to rush to them, Merga put a hand on his shoulder.

"Let me come with you, this is still my fault this happened, I saw the terror in your eyes as you were in fear, I want to keep this world alive so not only I can be happy, so you are as well." Merga said.

Crimson nodded. "Alright, Let's do this Merga!" He said before rushing off with her to intercept Syntax at the core.

Chapter 26: New World Dawn

Wasting no time, Crimson and Merga were quickly heading their way to where the fusion core was. Knowing that the final hour was quickly approaching, Merga would look at Crimson, asking a question. "Hatch...no...Crimson. Do you think that I was a hypocrite? For taking revenge on the earth dragons from slaughtering my kind, even though I was in love with one?" Merga asked him.

Crimson, looking back at her with a concerned face on her. "Yes, you were. But your emotions were justified in that regard. But I understand how you felt." He replied. And soon they made it to where the others are and Crimson and Merga used a combination attack to destroy Syntax's ability to regenerate, and majorly wound it as a plus.

"Sorry to keep you waiting." Crimson said, as the 6 of them faced off against the Fused Syntax core. The attacks were much faster and more dangerous. Giant lasers as it teleports around, energy spheres that Milla helped deflect, and everyone had their part in it. But the room went dark, and Syntax made a physical hologram of the man who tormented this world, and made everyone's lives hell.

The hologram was about to make an attack directly at Crimson. Crimson, in return, stood guard. And as they rushed in to attack, Crimson broke through the hologram, lighting up the room with his flames, and making a huge slash to Syntax, making it go down.

"Is it over?..." Milla said, before Bakunawa rumbled as it was falling down. A giant piece of debris was about to land on Lilac, before she realized it. "LOOK OUT!!!" Crimson pushed her away as the group was separated from him.

"Crimson!" Lilac screamed his name as he saved her.

"Go! Get out of here while you still can!! I'll destroy Syntax for good! I hear it making a distress signal!" Crimson said, everyone wanted to protest his self sacrifice, but Merga held them back.

"You promise that you'll return alive?" Merga questioned him.

"I made a promise to protect this planet, I will promise I will see the sunrise with all of you." Crimson replied.

Everyone puts their trust into Crimson and they make their way to their escape. Eclipse helped everyone make it to the pod to go back to the surface. Lilac looked back one last time, wishing that he'd make it out alive.

Crimson, who was completely done with Syntax's actions, looked at it in anger. "Now, I believe that it's time to burn one of my remnants of the past, and start the path to building my new life."

Syntax, who was barely functional, managed to have enough power to do something unbelievable. "ACTIVATING EVOLUTION PROTOCOL." Syntax said before shooting a condensed version of the planet cracker beam onto Bakunawa itself. On the surface, it showed that Bakunawa itself was being absorbed by its beam within the inside, The Magister, Mayor Zao, and King Dail witnessed it from the sky.

Crimson, who was standing his ground and covering his eyes from the light, looked onward to see the shell of the core, something coming out from it, like a shell. It was another dragon, Scales looked like flesh and blood, but completely synthetic material. "So...this is what it feels like to have a physical body." The figure said as the smoke cleared, revealing almost a mirrored copy of Crimson, except in black and gold trimmed, green hair and scales, and menacing green eyes.

"Syntax...What...What are you?" Crimson asked the figure.

The synthetic dragon looked at him and made a grin. "I am now the weapon that my master wanted from you, since you were so disobedient. And since you casted aside your role as a tool of mass destruction...I have casted the name of "Syntax" away to make room for a new name fitting for this form." The dragon's aura flared up in a black and green color. "My new name...shall be Verde."

The platform they were standing on was quickly falling down towards the planet, some of the debris were falling as well. The air was breathable, but thin. "After I am done with you, This planet can go straight to hell, JUST LIKE YOURS!" Verde said, wanting to finish this off at once.

"No...I won't let that happen. I have come so far to protect this world, and I won't let it be taken by the likes of you, or the bastard you call a master." Crimson said as the sun started to shine from behind the planet, his aura flared up, but it was something different. It was a mix of his flames that he used internally to fight with, and the desire to protect from when his homeworld was destroyed, mixing in to create a golden flame that shined like the sun itself.

Everyone on the surface would see it, the golden glow of light from the sky that gives off a radiance of hope. However two figures would see the figure that was making the aura. Merga would see what would seem to be a large reptilian beast, a different kind of dragon than she knows. And Lilac would see another humanoid figure standing there, someone that wasn't a dragon at all.

Crimson, his flames evolved with his newfound resolve to end this darkness once and for all, stands against the version of himself made to be nothing but a weapon. "I'm letting this world live, and nothing is going to stop me." He said, looking dead at Verde.

“Well then, give me your best shot!!!” Verde yelled as they clashed in one final battle. Their power, speed, abilities, and tactics were the exact same. It was a sheer spectacle of a fight in the sky, flames and sparks were flying as everyone watched in hope and worry. Blow for blow, punch for punch, the two dragons fought with everything that they had.

However, then they made it to the stratosphere, both were worn out, but Verde wasn't going to end it there. “I...had enough of this!!!” He said as his power rose up, “I am ending this now!!!!” He started to charge up the most powerful dragon boost he could make.

“Yeah, I agree...” Crimson would charge up his own dragon boost as powerful as he could make it. And then the two clashed as the impact and the power was felt all over the planet.

Lilac, Carol, Milla, Neera, and everyone else around the planet would look up to see the final struggle. The former princess, Cordelia, would look on to see the new light. It wasn't Merga doing this, but someone else entirely. Fighting this threat for the entire planet on their own.

Crimson was running low on strength, Verde noticed it and started to gloat. “What's wrong? Running out of steam? Once I am done with you, I will kill everyone you love, one by one, and I will save that pathetic purple dragon for last as you see her last moments before finishing you off myself!! AND THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO STOP ME!!! HAHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!” Verde laughed maniacally, as he put more and more energy into his boost.

However, there was one thing Verde never took into account. Serpentine had a jetpack and was some distance from the fight. He was charging up a powerful bolt of energy, using both of his arms from his suit to make it work. And once he had a clear shot, he fired the bolt straight through Verde, damaging his core. Verde looked at Serpentine's direction, seeing the exhausted look he had after being launched away. “SERPENTINE, YOU TRAITOR!” Verde yelled.

“CRIMSON, FINISH HIM OFF!!!” Serpentine yelled at him. Crimson, getting a second wind, pushed his limits and roared as he charged against Verde. His flames burned hotter than it ever had, and took the shape of a huge, western looking dragon's head as it completely decimated Verde, he was able to quickly change the distress signal from minimal to lethal before completely being burnt away and destroyed. leaving nothing behind.

Crimson, after using up all of his strength, started to fall downwards towards the planet. Serpentine catches him as he glides down to the surface, now finally free to be himself at least, and ready to atone for all of the crimes he has committed. The battle is over, as the sun started to rise on the planet as the new dawn was brought upon this world.

Epilogue

Serpentine managed to land down to safety outside the border of Shang Tu, where guards were quick to approach him. "Hold on! I'm not here to fight. I'm here to bring him to safety, and turn myself in..." Serpentine said, his tone and attitude was much more remorseful now, seeming that he could be his true self now.

Neera broke through the guards and approached Serpentine. "Despite you bringing him back, you will be accused of ALL charges of today, and 3 years ago!" Neera said, pointing her ice spear at him.

"Neera...let him explain..." Crimson said tiredly. "Let him tell you everything that he felt...and everything that he witnessed to act this way." Crimson passed out from exhaustion, the power he made was something extraordinary and literally burned out. The guards managed to get Crimson somewhere to recover, and Serpentine into a secure place for questioning.

After what seemed like hours, but felt like days, Crimson finally started to wake up, the first person he saw who was with him from when he was put in, was Lilac. She hugged him tightly as she cried on his shoulder. "I thought I lost you..." She said, her voice was muffled. She nearly lost one of the only people that knew how she truly felt.

Crimson put a hand behind her head, petting her a bit. "It's alright, I did make a promise to protect this world after all. I owe everyone that much." He said. And before he knew it, Lilac kissed him deeply on the lips. It was sudden, but it was a gentle warmth that he embraced.

Lilac pulled away, blushing a bit. "Sorry, I didn't know what went over me."

"It's alright, it's natural to feel that way." Crimson said, with a smile. "What happened to the others?"

"Carol, Milla, and Neera are all relaxing at a restaurant. I stayed behind to look after you. Cory, Askal, Aaa, and Kalaw were sentenced to 6 month community service." Lilac said. "Eclipse, who is the second in command of the Sigwada, and Cory's boyfriend. Self-exiled himself. Cory told him that he won't truly be exiled, and can always call us when he needs them. The reason was because he was still unfit to protect Cory. But...I believe he was scared that he wouldn't be able to. Serpentine had been sentenced to 25 months and 2 years in prison as a plea deal."

"What about Merga?" Crimson asked.

"Merga has been sentenced to community service until all of the damage to both Shang Tu and Shang Mu is completely restored. She honestly requested death as a punishment, but she was shocked that the Magister gave her another chance to live despite trying to destroy

everyone.” Lilac said. “And...the Magister is stepping down as the leader of Shang Tu. Neera would be in charge for the time being.”

“That at least is a step towards a good future.” Crimson said.

A guard duck walked into the room. “*Quack!* Someone requested to see the two of you.” The guard spoke.

“Really? Come on Crimson, let’s go see who it is.” Lilac said, helping Crimson up as they headed out of the palace and to the dragon fountain where a person in a hooded cloak was sitting at the side.

“So, you two must be the dragons that saved this planet from Merga, and the unexpected threat.” The figure spoke.

“Who are you exactly?” Crimson asked them.

“My apologies, we have not properly met, have we?” The hooded figure removed her cloak and revealed her face. “I am Cordelia, the former Princess of Shang Tu.”

The pair of dragons were shocked to see her actually alive all of this time, moreso Lilac than Crimson. “You’re alive?!” Lilac said, flabbergasted.

“That is correct. I just wanted to grant my thanks for everything that you had done for this planet. And apologize for what my people have done.” Cordelia said, bowing respectfully.

“It’s alright, We can’t change the past, but we can salvage what we have now and work towards a brighter future, that is what makes this the present. To live our life day by day.” Crimson said.

Cordelia made a little laugh. “You two remind me of Merga and I. Although the roles have been flipped.” She said, that made Lilac blush a bit, hearing from this.

“Speaking of which, you met up with Merga, right?” Crimson asked.

“I did, she actually hugged me and deeply apologized for everything that she had done. I accepted it as a sign of good graces.” Cordelia said.

“Speaking of which, how did Merga get sealed away anyway?” Lilac said.

“It was a sealing ritual used by the water dragons. Knowing that a full blown war was going to happen, the earth dragons and the remaining water dragons made a truce and were able to seal her away. She questioned why I was a part of it, and I told her that this world

needed to have interconnected trust within itself, and until that day comes, we would reunite. I thought that day would never happen until 3 years ago.” Cordelia said.

“And you self exiled yourself after it?” Crimson said.

“That was correct. I knew that water dragons have strong ties to the moon but, you’re different. A fire dragon who’s flames shine as bright as the sun itself.” Cordelia noted.

“Yeah, I guess you’re right. Kinda symbolic too.” Crimson said.

“We’re supposed to meet up with our friends once Crimson woke up anyways.” Lilac said.

“Then I apologize for keeping you back for so long.” Cordelia said and bowed to them. Crimson and Lilac did the same, and they made it off to regroup with their friends, their hands firmly held together as they ran.

Some time later...in space, A fleet was busy, trying to track down any remnant’s of Brevon’s traces from 6 years ago...the Chasers haven’t fully stopped the threat of him and needed to find him and end his tyranny once and for all. “Commander! We have intercepted a distress signal! It has the same codec and ID as one of Brevon’s drones!” Someone called out.

The young, but mature commander took notice and was at full alert. “Bring it up on screen. I want to see it.” He asked, at first, moments before the drone evolved, He noticed Lilac, Carol, Milla, Neera, and two other figures. The orange dragon pushed them to safety. “That thing is still there? And the threat level was minimal?...” The commander said before another distress signal was caught, and it was the orange dragon, now at the climax of the fight destroying Verde for good. Only this time, the threat level was lethal.

“What should we do, commander? The signal was 3 light years away.” The assistant looked at him. Wondering what their next plan of action would be.

If that drone sent a distress signal, then Brevon would have also got it. There was no way when he got it and was on his way to finish what he started. The commander grabbed a communicator and was ready to give the command.

“Attention everyone, this is Commander Torque. Initiate light speed engines and set coordinates to Planet Avalice.” Torque said. And soon, started the 3 year travel back, to finish off what was started long ago.

To be continued...