

THE KINGDOM OF ASH

Fantasy

Chapter One

The Fire on the Hill

The first dragon appeared at midnight.

Elian was the only person in the village who saw it.

It crossed the moon like a shadow, its wings silent above the northern hills. Then the mountain flashed orange, and a column of fire rose into the sky.

By sunrise, the king's soldiers had arrived.

They asked the villagers what they had seen. Everyone said nothing.

Elian wanted to speak, but his grandmother's warning stopped him.

Never tell the king about the mark on your hand.

He had spent his entire life believing the mark was a scar. Now it was glowing.

"Where did you get that?" a soldier asked.

Elian pulled his sleeve down. "It's nothing."

The soldier reached for his sword.

Behind them, the mountain thundered.

This time, everyone heard it.