

Delicious smells filled the room as Rozaliya stood over a pan with a pair of tongs. The frying thin slices of beef alone could make your mouth water, but their marinade of soy sauce, sesame oil, garlic, ginger, brown sugar pear, and a red pepper paste were added in and left overnight to really flavor the meat for the humans. Still learning, she wasn't sure if leaving it overnight was alright in most cases, but the recipes she read on her phone said it could be done anywhere from two hours to overnight as long as it was occasionally flipped. The rice was already cooked and on the side awaiting the meaty topper, the investment of a rice cooker had become wonderful as she was learning to make different foods. She also had a warm hot chocolate on the counter that was occasionally sipped, the weather was becoming colder and she liked warming herself on the inside when Radice was resting.

Which reminded her to check on the dragons, making sure they were all behaving as she cooked and Radice napped. He had another long work week, and after the errand of collecting food and going to his work place for something he came home and crashed for a nap before meal time. She didn't mind, knowing he needed it but often wouldn't indulge if she made plans to take him out somewhere or wanted to go somewhere.

The dragons were behaving well enough, the easiest being her newest dragon who had learned many words, but still didn't want to tell her their name. Her feathery hair was starting to fluff out more, and she was looking out and using the stove and oven combo to stand up, bouncing on her wobbly legs. "What are you doing there? Are you dancing?" Getting an answer of baby babbles, she just laughed lightly as she picked her up, kissing her chubby cheeks. "You want to help, momma? The food needs to be flipped, can you do that with the crab hand?" Clicking the tongs, the baby thought about it before reaching out to hold.

It was a slow process, but Roza was patient as she watched the baby slowly flip every piece, happily waving the tongs before a small celebration was had and the baby returned to the floor. Though she loved being helpful, now was not the time. It did summon Hanana to investigate though, curious about what was going on.

"What are you making, Roozoo?" His speech had improved from conversations with everyone, but not perfect.

"Beef bulgogi, I need to grab some spring onions. Why don't you go take Lino with you and pick some? She has the fingers and you can practice talking to...." Trying to think of the name, she didn't often talk to the herbs as the dragons wanted to take care of something on their own, and herbs were a great start for them.

"Simon Spike."

"Yes, why don't you take Lino to talk to Simon. We need some of him for dinner." Nodding, Hanana croaked and was off to fetch Lino, landing on the baby before hopping off again, getting some very gentle kisses from the baby before he was away again. They were very good dragons, most of the time.

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Valoroso looked grumpy as ever, his feathered crest moving up and down with anger as he watched the evil baby dragon get spoiled. How come she got to use the crab claw? Were Valoroso's sharp talons not good enough for flipping? Were they not good enough to hold the crab claw? The floor had some dark black marks where he had had similar angry thoughts before. As time passed, he only grew more and more angry with the child. At the same time, the baby seemed to grow more kind. She tried to kiss him with its slobbery lips like she did with all the others, and once she even tried to share a fish with him. She was trying to lower his guard. There was something nefarious going on. Maybe she was a light dragon that enchanted the entire family, excluding him, who had the strongest will of all. He would save the family, even if no one else knew the trouble they were in. He would start by flipping the meat instead of her. They would see how she wasn't needed as long as Valoroso was around. "Let me flip the meat," he said aloud, his voice much better than before. His She'ar sounded passable and he had even started practicing Abrendese words. What could the baby do? Babble.

Lino was busy talking to the freshly planted lettuce in the back garden. They would weather well through the winter and even become sweeter as the cold set in. She hadn't named them yet, but she was channeling her magic into each one, helping them grow accustomed to the new soils. They were sure to be friends. She heard Hanana before she saw him. The characteristic hop and soft happy noises followed him wherever he went. He had yet to fly, but he sometimes fluttered them, and now the fluttering was quite excited. She made a guess as to why he was out here. "Are you helping Roza with dinner? Where is the plant we need?" Many of the plants had their locations adjusted as the nights grew chillier. She would let the little dragon locate the plant himself, to help hone his Jungle magic.

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Returning to cooking, singing softly to herself as the meat fried, Roze looked down as she heard the rather clean but still learning voice of the trouble child who was actually improving in both her own language and the one Radice spoke the most at work. She too was learning that language, and would switch back and forth when she was confident. Leaning down, she gently pet him as he demanded to help. "Well they don't need to be flipped, but you can help me take them out if you like? You need to use the crab claw though, just so none of the sauce makes you messy." When he agreed, Roza picked him up carefully and drew the plate of meat closer as she let him hold the crab claw. "Just pick them up and put them on the plate." She cooed sweetly, treating him the same as everyone else now that he was calm and not trying to burn a hole in everything with his feet.

Outback with Hanana, he watched as the small lettuce bulb that was just planted started to flower a little, croaking softly until asked about what he needed for what his rider was making. Right! He needed to get spring onions for the food. He meant well, but thoughts often vanished from his bumpy head and returned only with reminders or enough passing time. "Roozoo needs Simon Spike, for the meat!" He did happen to know where it was, hopping right over and sitting on the planter box that was near the door. Proud that he could find it so easily, even though most of their garden was inside due to weather changes. The skies were more stormy and Roza didn't feel comfortable leaving delicate plants outside, wanting them to survive. "Hello Simon!

We need some you for food, okay?" He talked at the plants, getting some wiggles before the spring onions sprouted a bit and Hanana gave more happy and proud noises. Hopping around the soil, he sat on the edge to let Lino cut the spring onions, knowing after he had to go back inside with them.

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Lino obliged, growing some sharp claws from her fingers to delicately slice the spring onions, allowing the pieces to float freely in the air as she made them. She had no idea what cut Roza would need, so they were just a simple chop. Once she was done, she shook them until any sign of dirt was removed, then moved them closer to Hanana. "Can you carry these, Hana? We should hurry inside before it starts to rain. Tell me what else we need and I'll carry that in."

Valoroso eagerly grabbed the claw with his two bird-like feet. It took both feet, but he managed to make the crab claws snap. Unfortunately, he didn't have the dexterity to grab onto the meat, let alone flip it. It was either fully shut or fully open. He huffed and a bit of smoke blew out of his nostrils, but he was careful not to burn Roza, since she was so important to his Rider. "The baby tricked you. The flipping was an illusion." He bit the claw with his mouth and tried a bit more to maneuver it, managing to catch a millimeter of meat. He eagerly tugged on it, dragging it right onto the floor. He squawked in surprise, stared at it for a bit, then wiggled out of Roza's arms. "The crab claw doesn't work," he said sadly. "Now the food is going to burn until we find a new one. Lino, Linoooo." he called for the dragon, hoping she would be able to fix the crab claw, carrying it away with him. It didn't occur to him that Roza might need that crab claw right away.

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Watching as Lino cut the spring onions, he waited patiently until they were offered to him and then grabbed and was off. He was getting more dexterous with his front legs, but still wobbled when walking on two legs. "Just Simon! In time!" It was all Roza asked for, so apparently she had everything else she needed already.

Roza, still patient as ever, let Valoroso try and try, until he seemed to have given up and claimed it as an illusion. He just didn't have the same dexterity as her four armed dragon, but did give it a good shot before the other option was the crab claw didn't work. "Just because it is harder for you to do doesn't mean it's a illusion," About to take the tongs away, Valoroso had other ideas and was off to look for Lino. Leaving her to just sigh as she grabbed the second pair and used those. She didn't like making many dishes, but he was right in the fact of if left on it would burn.

So off they came and the pan was empty and replaced with new slices of meat by the time Hanana returned with the spring onions to top the meal. "Oh, thank you, go back to playing now. I think the baby wants to play." Looking over to the four armed dragon, she was crawling directly at Hanana and Hanana was more than happy for this game of impromptu tag.

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Lino couldn't see the problem with the tongs, so Valoroso was off to wake up Radice. They were still dripping with juice as the dragon raced up the stairs and leapt into the bed. He was a bit older now, so he could almost bounce him out of bed by jumping if he tried, and he did try. He pranced around the bed until Radice finally grumbled and pet him like someone turning off an

alarm clock. Once he was awake, Valoroso dropped the tongs on him. "Roza needs you to fix the crab claw."

He sighed, already having an idea of the real problem with these tongs. He clipped them open and closed in front of a stunned Valoroso. "They work just fine."

Valoroso puffed up and arched his back in anger. "No! That can't be true. I couldn't use them."

Radice wiggled his thumb at the dragon. "You need one of these to use it properly." The dragon looked at his claws, horrified that he didn't have one of those thumbs, now that he knew to check. As he went into despair, Radice rolled out of bed and put on some of his new casual wear. He smelled something lovely cooking downstairs and wanted to investigate as soon as possible. He shuffled down the stairs, leaving Valoroso to languish, and crept quietly into the kitchen. Lino saw him walking through and said nothing; She twitched her tail and focused on making sure the youngest and surprisingly strong hatchling didn't play too rough with Hanana. Radice snuck up behind Roza, waited until she was safely leaned away from the cooking food, and then wrapped his arms around her waist in a hug from behind. "What are you making out here?" he said playfully.

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Back and forth the banana dragon and the four armed baby played, tiring both out for nap time that never came soon enough when the two riders wanted to have some alone time. She would check on them, but her dragons got along well with each other despite there being a language gap at times. With Valoroso off and more then likely waking Radice, she supposed it was late enough she wouldn't stop him. It wasn't supposed to be an exciting day with her phone app saying it was going to rain, it was cloudy but no rain came yet.

Debating what else they could do after meal time, her mind was elsewhere as Radice had the perfect time to sneak up on her. Her eyes focused on the glazed meat that was piling high on a plate as Radice wrapped his arms around her. Squeaking, she leaned back into him as she calmed back down.

"Good morning, darling. I thought I'd try to make brunch before you got us, it's beef bulgogi." Holding one of the slices up to him to try. It wasn't one of the fresh out of the pan ones, but still warm from being under the fresh ones. "How did you sleep? Hopefully Valor didn't wake you up too early."

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Radice bit off a piece of meat carefully, savoring the taste that Roza worked so hard to make. "Tastes like sesame chicken," he said with a smile. He had only tried the dish once or twice, so he was eager to eat the rest. Valoroso felt his Rider's giddiness and his frustration diminished. He recovered enough to slink out of the bedroom and back downstairs. The meat he had dropped was still there on the floor, so he gobbled it up while everyone else was distracted. He could finish cooking it with his fiery breath as he scarfed it down. Radice released Roza and stood alongside her, pretending not to see the hatchling cleaning the floor. "I slept long enough."

Any longer and I'd start getting tired again. Looks like I woke up just in time, so Valoroso did a very good job of waking me." A flash of pride flooded through him, and with that, the Valoroso had fully recovered. "Can I help you with any of it?"

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"It's sort of similar, slightly different amounts of similar ingredients." Roza confirmed, at least sort of knowing about the vague topic of cooking for her love interest. She had been trying in her freetime, even if some of her attempts fell short and needed to quickly be disposed of before Radice got home. "If you want to start chopping the spring onions, it's the last thing left." She offered, but as she made the suggestion a pure white child with red eyes came crawling at Radice and gently used his leg to stand up and bounce.

"Dada!" She called for him, making grabby hands at him until she was picked up.

"Oh baby! Learning so many new words!" Roza cooed, leaning against Radice to praise the young one for more words being learned. Dinner was momentarily forgotten about in favor of this new moment.

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Radice grinned ear to ear and scooped her up. "Oh! What a good word! Your Dada is so proud of you!" He hugged the hatchling close and gave her a light squeeze. "You're such a good speaker, learning to talk so fast!" To be honest, she was learning slowly. That's what made the positive reinforcement that much more important. "What other words do you know?" He held her so she could sit on top of his arm and gently bounced her a bit, as he would a human child. Like Roza, his attention was drawn away from food for a moment.

Valoroso's feathers and even spines flared up and his fire burned hotter as the child took up all the attention in the house. When even his display of anger didn't give him the attention he wanted, he tried something he had secretly been practicing for a while--shapeshifting. He could adjust his body a tiny bit using dark magic, though the results were still a bit goopy sometimes. He lifted up his front right foot and carefully shifted it into something with thumbs. He was still limited by the thing he started with, so the toes simply fused to make a chameleon-like foot. It could pinch, and that's what counted. It was clearly a thumb! "Look, Ray! I have a thumb now."

It was no use. The Rider was too entranced by this other dastardly dragon. Valoroso puffed out a bit of smoke. Well, fine. If they were so happy to have the fake-baby, then they had no need of a prodigy that could make a thumb on demand. He made whining growls and angry chirps as he headed towards the backdoor. Lino watched him quietly, not saying a word, but that wasn't what Valoroso wanted. He wanted Radice--or maybe Roza--to look at him and be proud. When he received neither despite his very insistent angry noises on the way to the door, he decided they had had their chance. He was leaving this place. He opened the sliding door with his new dexterous foot and then slammed it behind him. He was an independent dragon now!