

WARNING: Contains mentions of character death, gore, horror, dragons being eaten, zombies and self-harm.

Also contains some spoilers for Wings of Fire Legends: Darkstalker.

It is recommended that the reader is 13+ as these topics may frighten younger viewers. Read at your own risk, you have been warned.

Some differences between the original book and the AU (some quick notes – full AU Lore underneath notes on next page):

- Animus magic can accomplish great things, but at a terrible cost to the caster. It slowly eats away at their sanity, darkens their soul and often cause physical pain. The severity and speed of this varies for each dragon and can depend largely on how many spells are made, how big they are, if they are used to harm another living being and the general mental state and personality of the dragon.
- While animus magic is still largely done with verbal enchantments on objects, more powerful animus dragons can not only do this with their minds, but are also capable of releasing large blasts of psychic energy to move or destroy things (especially when experiencing strong negative emotions)
- The war between the IceWings and the NightWings is NOT caused by Arctic and Foeslayer running away together, but instead by Queen Diamonds desire to rule over the whole continent.
- Unlike in the book, Arctic genuinely loves his family, especially his kids. Despite how he is suffering from the toll his powers have taken on him, he still tries to be the best father he can be.
- Darkstalker and Whiteout hatch together a few nights BEFORE the brightest night and neither are born with mind reading or future telling powers. However, BOTH of them inherit Arctic's animus powers. But due to Arctic explaining how his powers affected him and hearing the worrying stories about mad Queen Diamond, both kids promise to never use their powers.
- CLEARSIGHT hatches on the brightest night (under all 3 full moons) and her already overwhelming visions are so much stronger and more numerous that combined with a mind reading ability that she doesn't know how to turn off, she is slowly going mad. (The other future-seeing NightWings still only receive the occasional vision or snippet of the future and most can't track all the 'pathways' like in the book. They usually only see visions of extremely important/dangerous events, though mostly only ones relating to their own tribe)
- Darkstalker has zero interest in becoming powerful or ruling anyone. Instead, he is interested in learning about medicine to help others, especially his father.
- Darkstalker never makes his scroll.
- Albatross's massacre still happens except Indigo does die defending Fathom.

- After her death, Fathom has frequent nightmares about that night and often when he is awake, he thinks he sees her ghost and is being haunted by her. (Indigo's ghost isn't actually real, just a hallucination but Fathom doesn't realise this)
- Fathom never goes to the Night Kingdom and meets Darkstalker (at least not as himself)

The Cursed Legends AU LORE (it's *really* long but I hope it's interesting):

THE NIGHTWING AND ICEWING WAR

The NightWing prophets of Queen Vigilance's court have foretold of the bloody rise of mad animus tyrant, Queen Diamond of the IceWings. While not able to track the full timeline or pathways to the events, multiple future-seeing NightWings have confirmed alarming visions of Queen Diamond attempting to conquer all of Pyrrhia, using her army and her animus powers to slaughter anyone who gets in her way. After getting confirmation from the SandWings that there has been threats and unusual activity seen across their border with the IceWings, Queen Vigilance holds a peace conference on neutral territory with all the Pyrrhia Queens and their trusted court members, to see if these futures were preventable.

During the week-long peace talk, Prince Arctic of the IceWings meets Foeslayer, the newest and youngest member of Queen Vigilance's court.

Arctic is a kind, nervous soul who is fascinated by the other tribes and their cultures and often attends any ambassador meetings or festivals that welcome all tribes. He is beloved by the lower ranking IceWings and also by various dragons from other tribes. He has been known to donate small gems to orphanages, both IceWing and not, when not being watched by his mother, and always tries to put aside some time to visit the dragonets inside, offering them words of comfort, stories and jokes.

After her mother passed, Foeslayer took her place on Queen Vigilance's court to honour her memory and serve her tribe the best she could. Despite having no powers, Foeslayer's quick thinking and excellent strategy skills make her a valued member of the court.

The two become friends and share jokes, meals and stories with each other in the spaces between the royal meetings.

During the meetings however, Queen Diamond makes a bold statement that the other queens should surrender their rule and their tribes to her, and when they did, no harm would come to them or their tribemates. The 6 queens are outraged by this, and Queen Diamond tells them she will 'generously' give them 1 week after the end of the peace talks to make their decision before she amasses her army to crush any resistance.

While some of the queens believe Diamond's threats to be empty, as she could not possibly be declaring war on 6 different tribes, Queen Vigilance knows better. As the queens prepare to depart and return home, Foeslayer and Arctic have one final fear filled conversation, in which Foeslayer warns him of the terrible visions her tribe has seen. Arctic confirms that his

mother has been displaying startlingly violent behaviour recently and has already been amassing maps of the other territories. He also tells her how Diamond became queen and his recent life in the Ice Kingdom.

As usual, the animus IceWings were only to make 1 enchanted item that would benefit the whole tribe. But rather than enchanting an item, Princess Diamond challenged her mother to a duel for the throne and used animus magic to kill her, claiming that *SHE* was the gift to the Kingdom. She then enchanted a small crystal ball which she used to spy on her subjects. Queen Diamond took great delight in punishing and executing criminals and prisoners or anyone who she felt showed even a hint of disloyalty. She had no interest in helping the poorer, less fortunate members of her tribe and instead enjoyed instilling fear in the hearts of her subjects. But her hunger grew and soon she had turned her eyes to the other tribes. Diamond had always relished violence and the fear of others, but her behaviour had been rapidly growing worse, and hushed whispers had spread in the castle that perhaps she had been using her animus abilities far more than she should and this was affecting her sanity. While many IceWings are against her conquering plans, because of her reputation and unstoppable powers, they are too afraid to stand up to her or refuse.

Arctic himself had yet to make his own animus gift to his tribe and his dread grew with everyday that passed, thinking about what would happen when he did. Back home in the Ice Kingdom, Arctic eavesdrops on a private conversation between Queen Diamond and King Snowstorm in which Snowstorm is horrified that Diamond threatened all the tribes with war. Having recently become increasingly concerned with Diamond's rise in violence, he makes the mistake of confronting her about it. Enraged that her husband would dare question her decisions, she uses her animus powers to rip out his tongue so he could never again challenge her.

Sickened and mortified by what he had seen, Arctic flees to his room where he comes to a terrifying realisation: if Queen Diamond would do that to her own husband, what would she do to *him* if he ever displeased her? For the first time in his life, Arctic uses his animus powers to enchant his earring to always protect him from all of Queen Diamond's spells (both current and future ones) and to only be able to be removed willingly by Arctic himself (so that the earring could never be broken, forcibly removed by another dragon or simply lost)

After this, Arctic goes out of his way to avoid Diamond where possible. After hearing that the other queens have refused to surrender, Arctic begins to fear for them too. Queen Diamond has not only become more violent and bloodthirsty, she had also become more paranoid about whether her dragons would turn on her, or if any of her heirs would challenge her for the throne.

Queen Diamond hosts a huge banquet at her castle where she invites all the royal IceWings, along with any guards, high ranking IceWings and castle staff that have recently displeased her or she has suspected of treachery. Due to the large number of guests, Arctic is able to slip away unnoticed right at the start, having no interest in the event and wanting to be as far away from his mother as he could be, and flies outside to a cliff where he can survey the kingdom below in the peace of the night to collect his thoughts.

Once the other guests have all arrived, the food served and the doors closed, Queen Diamond declares that the feast may begin. Some dragons eagerly eat the food while others simply begin by sipping their drinks or are too excited by the gossip the dragons next to them are sharing. The royals are slightly tense after hearing what happened to Snowstorm, but the

other dragons are blissfully unaware of the incident. At first the scene is pleasant, almost normal despite the recent conflict with the other tribes. That is until the first guest starts coughing. What starts as a hacking cough, thought to be food stick in their throat, turns into full on seizing and frothing at the mouth until finally they die. The guests are shocked, then the deafening silence is broken by Queen Diamond's laughter and as more guests begin coughing the horrifying truth sets in. The food has been poisoned.

As the guests who had eaten or drunk from the banquet begin dying, the few IceWings that hadn't yet eaten rush to the doors to escape, only to find that they have been magically sealed shut. Queen Diamond grabs the large knife from the table that had been to cut the huge cake, and loudly declares that all who stand against her will die, before enchanting the blade to kill the remaining IceWings. Unlike Albatross, this massacre was premeditated and was not a result of her powers getting out of control. With all the 'traitors' dead before her, Diamond stands for a moment, thrilled that she has eliminated any threat to her reign, as having killed King Snowstorm in secret earlier that day, all heirs and royal relatives were now dead. That is until she finally notices that Prince Arctic is not among the bodies.

While Arctic himself would not be able to claim the throne, he was capable of one day having a daughter who could. Not only that, but Arctic was the only other animus in the tribe, and therefore now her biggest threat. She enchants the knife to hunt down Arctic and kill him, but is confused when it doesn't move. She tries rewording her enchantment several times and enchanting other sharp objects, all of which do nothing. She pulls out her crystal ball to show his location but it shows nothing and she comes to the realisation that Arctic must have done an enchantment that protects him from her magic.

Infuriated, Diamond throws open the doors and storms through her castle calling for her most loyal guards to hunt down Prince Arctic who she accuses of committing high treason and is to be brought to her to kill personally. With pure luck, Arctic returns to the castle just after the guards and Diamond have left to look for him. On his way to his room he walks past the banquet room, confused to hear it quiet so early when the smell hits him. He looks into the room and is horrified to find the bodies of his family and various guards and staff he had known since he hatched. Realising that he would have joined them had he attended the party and knowing that his mother was likely hunting him right now, he decides to flee the kingdom in search of Foeslayer the NightWing, his new friend who would surely help him.

Upon reaching the outskirts of the kingdom, Arctic is caught by a squadron of guards who tackle him to the ground and inform him he is to be executed for treason. With spears pointed at him and one guard about to wrap chains around his wings, mouth and ankles, Arctic's terror explodes out of him in a large psychic shockwave, his animus powers wild and out of control for only a moment. But the moment is enough, as all 10 guards lie dead in the snow. Some had been impaled by their own weapons; one had been strangled by the chains and the others had either had their necks snapped by the impact or their hearts stopped.

Arctic is horrified by what has happened as he never wanted to hurt anyone, the world swaying black around him as his head throbs and a sharp pain pokes at his chest. While he originally thinks this is because of his guilt and horror, he later realises it is also a result of using his magic. Despite living in the frozen Ice Kingdom his whole life, for the first time in his life he felt truly cold. Dizzy and exhausted he continues his journey south to the Night kingdom where he collapses in front of the castle.

He is brought inside to a spare room and when he awakens, he finds Foeslayer next to him with a bowl of water. Queen Vigilance arrives and calls him to a council meeting where Arctic tearfully recounts the horrific events at the castle. The NightWings are horrified to hear what Queen Diamond has been doing and know that their visions are creeping closer. Foeslayer begs Queen Vigilance to let Arctic stay in the Night Kingdom as he has nowhere else to go and desperately needs their help.

Vigilance agrees on the conditions that Arctic swear loyalty to the NightWings and only ever uses his animus powers in their best interest, the same going for any children he may have. Knowing that Arctic is the only living royal IceWing left, she also asks that should the NightWings be able to kill Queen Diamond in the future and Arctic temporarily take over as IceWing King, that he remains an ally to the NightWings. Arctic agrees to all conditions and is left in the care of Foeslayer.

Known for his kind reputation, despite not being a NightWing, Arctic is welcomed by the tribe with open wings. Foeslayer and Arctic begin to develop feelings for each other, and fearing that Queen Diamond will harm her if she ever finds out about her, Arctic gift her an earring with the same enchantment as his to protect her from any of Diamond's spells. After doing the enchantment, Arctic's pain spreads to other parts of his body and he realises with mounting dread that it is indeed a result of his powers. He promises Foeslayer that this will be the last time he ever uses his powers, but there proves to be an exception when Foeslayer later announces she is expecting dragonets, so Arctic prepares earrings for them too.

DARKSTALKER AND CLEARSIGHT

Despite the frequent nightmares, various pain in his muscles and occasional headaches, Arctic is thrilled to find out he is going to be a father and works hard to be the best father he can be. A week before the Brightest Night (when all 3 moons are full) their 2 dragonets hatch, meaning neither will be able to read minds or see the future. Arctic names their daughter Whiteout, after an old school friend who had died of an illness years ago. Foeslayer chooses the name Darkstalker for their son, as she believes he will 'chase away the darkness' which proves to be true as he grows up with a kind cheerful dragonet with a huge interest in learning about medicine to help other dragons, especially his father.

Arctic puts on their earrings as soon as they hatch, to ensure their safety. He also does one final spell on a stick to make it glow when pointed at an animus dragon. To check it works, he points it at himself (which glows) and then at Foeslayer (it doesn't glow) before mustering the courage to point it at his children and to both of their parent's alarm, the stick glows when pointed at both of them.

Arctic breaks the stick so no other NightWings will come across it and find out the truth. Arctic and Foeslayer originally decide to keep their animus abilities a secret from them, but after multiple conversations they realise that it will probably be safer if they *do* tell them, rather than either dragonet accidentally doing a spell without realising or having to grow up being feared by the other NightWings or feeling betrayed by their parents keeping this a secret from them. When the dragonets are 2 and are old enough to understand about the war with the IceWings, Arctic and Foeslayer also explain about animus magic to Darkstalker

and Whiteout, along with the awful effects it has on the caster and asks both of them to never use their powers or tell others about them.

Both dragonets agree, with Darkstalker especially sad to find out that using animus magic is the cause of his father's pain and nightmares. Despite the agreement, he asks his father if he can use his animus magic to make something to stop Arctic's pain. While Arctic is grateful and touched by the suggestion, he tells Darkstalker that he shouldn't risk it in case something goes wrong or Darkstalker himself ends up in pain as while Arctic's pain varies each day, he has grown used to it and is able to manage it, but he would never wish the same fate upon his son. Understanding his concerns, Darkstalker accepts Arctic declining his offer and agrees to never use his powers, instead making his life goal to becoming the best doctor the NightWings have ever seen much to the joy of his proud family.

Despite looking different from the other NightWings, both Darkstalker and Whiteout make lots of friends at school. While Whiteout's different way of thinking makes it harder for her to learn things, the other students support her rather than make fun of her. She meets Thoughtful in their first week of school and he becomes her best friend. Darkstalker and Whiteout's kind, lovable natures make them a joy to be around. While Whiteout struggles to get good grades, she is still supported by her loving family who are always proud of her, no matter her scores. Darkstalker meanwhile excels in most of his classes, and works especially hard in the new medicine class he's started taking, hoping that one day he will be able to create his own medicine that can help his father.

Arctic loves watching his children grow up. On a good day when his pain is less, he enjoys going on short walks with them, or taking them to the park or sweet store with Foeslayer. On worse days, he still enjoys being at home with them, drawing or coming up with new games to play, and is always eager to hear about their stories from their school days.

The war with the IceWings has lasted several years now. While technically Queen Diamond could have ended it with a few spells to kill the other queens and her opponents, she is both unsure if such large spells would kill her too and finds it far more 'fun' to simply get dragons to fight each other. Queen Diamond has often been reported to be seen fighting alongside her army instead of staying in her own castle like the other queens, letting her bloodlust and thrill of the kill drive her. While she rarely uses animus magic in the combat, she is still a ferocious enemy, made even more fearsome when her opponents realise that no weapon seems to harm her and she appears to have made herself invincible to harm. Despite having 2 animus dragons, the SeaWings have decided to stay underwater, surfacing only to trade supplies and news with the SkyWings. SandWing animus, Jerboa, has fled the Sand Kingdom after her queen tried to force her to use her animus powers against Diamond, and has not been seen since. The MudWing council have been debating if it would just be safer to give in to Queen Diamond. The fighting has ultimately been left to the NightWings, SandWings and any dragons brave enough to join them, as many tribes believed that since the NightWings have their own powers, they should easily be able to take down Diamond, or are far too scared to go up against a mad animus queen.

At age 6, Darkstalker begins to hear rumours about the 'mad NightWing dragonet,' who has never been to school, barely left her house and is supposedly being driven mad by her own powers. Saddened to hear of another dragon suffering because of their powers, especially a dragonet, Darkstalker goes to visit her. Her parents are wary at first as they have had dragonets come by the house before to mock them, but Darkstalker explains that he is interested in learning about medicine and wants to see if he can help.

Clearsight hatched 1 week after Darkstalker, when all 3 moons were full and should have received the 'blessing' of being a strong future-seer and mind reader. Except her powers are more like a curse as the sheer strength and amount of visions she receives combined with the ever-present thoughts of others that she doesn't know how to control, has been driving her mad since she hatched. She can see infinite futures from important world affecting events to the smallest thing like a dragon deciding what they want to eat for lunch. With infinite choices and timelines of ever-changing events swirling constantly through her head, she is barely conscious of where she is.

She was named 'Clearsight' when she hatched as her parents knew she would be a powerful future-seer, but it soon became apparent something was deeply wrong, as she was almost constantly thrashing, holding her head or crying out in pain. At just 3 days old, her parents took her to a doctor with mind reading abilities to find out what was wrong. Upon peering into her mind for only a moment, the doctor was shocked by the sheer amount of visions Clearsight was receiving, and was only able to give her some medicine to help ease her headaches. Queen Vigilance was interested in her as she believed she would be useful in guiding them down the right path to kill Queen Diamond, but after several of her court prophets confirmed that the visions were far too vast, fast, confusing and complex to find out anything, Queen Vigilance takes pity on the poor dragonet and declares that she be given free food and medicine for life, is excused from going to school and that other dragons should stay away from her to reduce the impact of Clearsight's mind reading abilities on her mind. Her parents now see her name as one of hope, that someday her visions will somehow simply stop, and her 'sight will be clear' so she can live a normal life. They live in a small house on the outskirts of the kingdom where there are less dragons' thoughts for her to hear, so that at least one of her powers will not harm her.

At age 6, Clearsight is a quivering mess. Barely conscious of where she is or what's really happening in the present, her only comfort is feeling the warmth of her parents sitting by her side. While her mind reading ability doesn't follow her into her sleep, her dreams are often plagued with visions of the future, and a peaceful dreamless sleep is rare. Her parents always ensure she has enough water and often have to feed her themselves, but despite always being given enough food and nutrients, Clearsight is very skinny as the strain of her powers have started taking a toll on her physical body as well as her mind. Fearing that she would choke on solid food, they mostly feed her various soups.

Darkstalker is appalled to see her in such a state. Her parents have clearly done their best to support her, but sadly even the doctors admitted there isn't anything to be done. Still Darkstalker goes to sit with her and quietly tells her his name, while making his voice and thoughts as quiet and soothing as possible. Clearsight is vaguely aware of someone beside her, someone who she feels might be important to her life, but she is unable to speak, and can only respond with a small whimper.

Darkstalker spends the next week bringing her medicine and sitting quietly next to her after school. Arctic had heard about Clearsight and had wanted to visit her too, but believed that he would end up making things worse for her as not only would she be hearing an extra set of thoughts, but he was worried that his pain would accidentally get projected onto her. He is still fully on board with helping Darkstalker and Whiteout make her an owl plushie as a gift though. Made with caring hands and kind hearts, the owl plushie provides a small relief and something soft to hold onto other than her blankets and pillows. Darkstalker brings her the same medicine that Arctic takes for his pain, and it does seem to help her somewhat, but it

still doesn't stop her visions, so Darkstalker spends his mornings thinking of how he can help her when it hits him.

He *can* help her, but it means breaking the most important promise, using his powers. He knows Arctic didn't want him to risk himself doing magic for his sake so Darkstalker had reluctantly respected those wishes as Arctic had told him he was able to get through the pain. But Clearsight had nothing that could truly help her. His mind made up, the next day he buys a moonstone bracelet and when he is alone, carefully enchants it to stop Clearsight from seeing any visions of the future or hearing anyone else's thoughts. When he arrives at her house, he informs her parents he has brought Clearsight some stronger medicine with some extra ingredients added to help her, and a bracelet as a gift. He gives her the medicine to drink first and then puts the bracelet on her wrist.

Clearsight jolts upright and blinks in confusion, her glassy eyes becoming clearer and more focused and she tries to make sense of things. She is in her room with her parents and the NightWing dragonet who had recently started visiting her. And for the first time since she had hatched there were no visions flashing past her eyes or extra voices pounding in her head, she was simply sitting in a quiet room. Clearsight's parents realise that the medicine must have finally worked and Clearsight was free of her visions and tearfully hug her while repeating their thanks over and over to Darkstalker.

While Clearsight knows the meaning of words, she has never actually been able to speak beyond whimpers and yelps of pain, so when she does try to speak, her voice is quiet, hoarse and broken. She is also as wobbly on her feet as a newborn and her parents have to help her learn how to walk. They had tried to take her outside when she was younger believing the fresh air might help clear her head, but had discovered that most of the time being outdoors made things worse; the bright sunlight hurt her eyes and her visions got worse the fuller the moon was, so the only time they dared take her outside was on nights when the moons were so slim they were barely visible. But now they would be able to take her outside, but slowly.

Unused to the quiet and being able to move freely, Clearsight is nervous. But between her parents and Darkstalker's gentle support and patience, she begins to get her bearings and manages to go outside with them and stares at the vast sky in wonder now that it no longer hurts her. On the way to get food, Clearsight's father sees Arctic and tells him how his son cured his daughter and how grateful he is that Arctic raised such a talented and compassionate kid.

When he arrives home, Arctic talks to Darkstalker and quietly asks if he used animus magic to cure Clearsight. Darkstalker is worried of his reaction, but doesn't want to lie to him so he admits what he did. Arctic isn't angry or disappointed, he is mostly concerned for Darkstalker's wellbeing and even though his son disobeyed him, he is proud that the one time he used his powers was to help someone who was suffering. Darkstalker assures him that he isn't in any pain; his claws are vaguely tingly and he felt tired and a little nauseous after doing the spell, but all of that had faded away. Arctic hugs him and tells him he's not angry, and Darkstalker promises this will be the only time he uses his powers, fully intending to keep that promise.

Over the next few months, Clearsight continues to improve, slowly gaining confidence and becomes friends with Whiteout too when Darkstalker introduces his family. Clearsight is generally quiet and rather shy and prefers to simply nod or shake her head rather than

Speak, but when spending time with her new friends she makes a new noise; laughter. While she is still not going to school as everyone believes that many dragonets would still be overwhelming for her, she is finally getting to live a normal life. Her favourite things include drawing with Whiteout, watching the stars with Darkstalker, and falling asleep curled up with her parents. She has also developed an interest in baking, now that she is conscious enough to actually taste food rather than simply swallowing it. The other NightWings believe that Darkstalker is going to be a miracle healer, completely unaware of what he really did and that he is even an animus.

The war has taken a turn for the worse, Queen Diamond and her soldiers have been paying dragons to spy on their own tribes for her and she is infuriated to find out that not only is Arctic alive and with the NightWings, but he has raised a family and an heir (even though he has no intention of ever returning to the Ice Kingdom, especially with Whiteout) She puts out a huge bounty on Arctic and his family, (the largest for Arctic and Whiteout) along with a promise that whichever dragon (or dragons) kill any of those 4 will not come to any harm from Queen Diamond or her army, no matter how their tribes participated in the war.

Soon after this, Queen Diamond has been thought to have been using her animus abilities more often with many dragons calling her 'feral.' All the reports on her have become increasingly more disturbing, with some rumours that she had simply lost her mind completely and turned on her own soldiers. Some of her soldiers fled and ended up begging the other kingdoms to help them. A soldier who recently fled to the NightWings reported how Diamond had turned on a squadron of her own soldiers and begun killing them mercilessly, her actions more like one of a feral wild beast than a civilised dragon. While managing to escape and later returning to the scene to look for survivors when Diamond had left, the soldier had come across the body of her commander, which looked like it had been partially eaten by something, except that the teeth marks didn't look like an animal...

While her most loyal generals were still running the war for her, many IceWings had fled back home after hearing this news. Not only that, but Diamond had completely disappeared from any planned routes. When she did resurface, it was to kill any dragon unfortunate enough to cross her path. The already bloodthirsty tyrant had finally had her magic catch up to her, having used it for so much violence it had completely shattered her mind and what little was left of her soul until she was just a mindless ravenous beast. She no longer remembered who she was, or knew where she was, or remembered anything about her life, all she knew was she was driven by one powerful instinct; to kill.

For several months, Darkstalker and Clearsight manage to have a happy peaceful time together with their friends. Then the day arrives for Queen Vigilance's Glass Jubilee. Thoughtful is excited to show them the glass sculpture he made, and Clearsight is invited to her first large gathering. She feels nervous when they arrive, but her parents assure her it's probably because she's never been around so many dragons before. While she thinks that it partly is, she can't shake the feeling that it's something else too, that she glimpsed something in a vision once long ago about this night, but it had been too fuzzy and jumbled to make out the details. She stays with Darkstalker and their friends for a little while but as her unease grows and Darkstalker asks her if she needs to go home, it happens.

A NightWing assassin, desperate for the money and not to die at the claws of the IceWings, slips out of the shadows and drives a spear through Foeslayer's neck, killing her. Darkstalker and Clearsight are frozen in shock. Whiteout falls to the ground sobbing violently. As the crowd of NightWings around them scream and run round in a panic, the assassin turns

towards Darkstalker and Whiteout. As he approaches the dragonets, Whiteout throws her head back and lets out a piercing heartbroken wail which releases a huge shockwave of power that knocks all the nearby dragons off their feet, shakes the nearby buildings and shatters every glass sculpture and window within in a 5-mile radius. The NightWings stare in shock as the truth sets in; Whiteout is an animus.

The assassin backs up and tries to leave having realised he's in over his head, when Arctic arrives. He'd only left the group alone for a few minutes to buy treats for the dragonets when all hell broke loose. Drawn over by the panicked crowds screams, the blast of power and the cries of his daughter, Arctic stops cold upon seeing the unmoving body of his wife. When his eyes lock onto the NightWing assassin holding the bloody spear with fear all over his face, something inside Arctic snaps. Fuelled by grief and rage, he throws up his hands and uses his powers to lift the NightWing into the air. With a heartbroken, rage filled roar he violently separates his hands and the NightWing is ripped to pieces. The crowd is silent in shock, no one daring to move.

Among the remains, the bounty on Arctic's family flutters over to his feet. Something inside Arctic breaks beyond repair. The dragon who loved him, who he had raised a family with was dead, gone forever, killed at the bidding of his own mother who had already slaughtered the rest of his IceWing family. His mind was dark and broken, his heart was shattered and his soul had been shredded along with the assassin. Breathing heavily, feeling nothing but a swirling tornado of grief, rage and pain, he comes to the sickening realisation at the same time Darkstalker does; Clearsight would have seen a vision of this, but cut off from her visions and unable to make sense of her old ones, she had been unable to properly warn them.

His sanity and reason gone, Arctic turns and lunges at Clearsight, knocking her to the ground and her bracelet shatters on impact. She writhes in fear and pain as her visions return, stronger than ever. Terrified, Darkstalker launches himself at Arctic and tackles him off of Clearsight. Unaware of what he is doing, Arctic turns his rage on Darkstalker and begins to choke him. With Clearsight still writhing on the ground and the other NightWings too scared to do anything, Darkstalker is on his own. Darkstalker tries to reason with Arctic, to remind him of who he is, but his words aren't enough to break through the swirling darkness in Arctic's head. Feeling himself dying, out of sheer desperation, Darkstalker reaches out and grabs a glass shard from a shattered sculpture and swings upwards, intending to just cut Arctic's arm to let him go. But Arctic had moved his position and the shard slices across his throat instead. Arctic rears back, clutching his throat as the blood pours out. Darkstalker watches in horror as his father staggers and falls to the ground, recognition and sorrow flashes in his eyes for the briefest moment before he goes completely still.

Darkstalker stands motionless, his breath coming in ragged gasps. Surely this was some horrible nightmare? Surely both his parents couldn't be... he can't have killed...

The other NightWings stare with fear and pity at the scene before them. Darkstalker can hear a ringing in his ears as his vision starts to blur and spin. But when he looks behind him, everything seems to stop and come into crystal clear focus. Whiteout is violently vomiting on the ground and Clearsight is looking at him with absolute terror in her eyes. Believing they are both reacting like that to what he had done, he turns and flies away, desperate to flee this nightmare, unaware that Clearsight's terror was because of the violent return of her

horrifying visions and the terrified thoughts of the huge crowd around them, not because of him.

Clinging to her last shred of awareness as her visions set in stronger than ever, she picks up a shard of glass, pressing it into her palm as she flies to keep her aware of where she is going as she flies to a distant quiet part of the kingdom, where she'd often watch the stars. After months of peaceful calm, her powers are back, stronger than ever, showing her increasingly violent and gruesome images of the war, of Queen Diamonds descent into insanity, of the brutal things about to happen in her own Kingdom and the rise of a new horrifying threat in the Sea Kingdom. She can't take it anymore, she knows she will never be free of her visions again and can't stand having to live like this anymore. The dragons who cared about her are all dying or losing themselves and despite all her powers, she can't prevent any of it. With one last look at the stars, she slowly raises the glass shard to her eyes. She doesn't want to see anymore visions, she doesn't want to see more horrifying things that she can't change, she just needs it all to *stop*.

Queen Vigilance is furious and horrified by the events and declares that any NightWing acting on behalf of Queen Diamond will be imprisoned or executed as a traitor. But that wasn't all that concerned her. Not only did Arctic hide that his daughter was an animus too, but Vigilance had now seen for herself what animus magic could do. While originally hoping it was something that could be used against Queen Diamond, the truth that it couldn't be controlled and was now a danger to her own tribe was now obvious. Arctic had been a kind dragon and had yet caused such a gruesome scene, and after hearing the rumours of what Queen Diamond had devolved into, she didn't want to take any more chances. When Whiteout collapses from grief and exhaustion, she orders her guards to take her to the palace courtyard to be executed, believing Whiteout's startling, uncontrollable powers posed a huge threat to her tribe.

Thoughtful unsuccessfully tries to fight off the guards and then goes in search of Darkstalker. He finds Darkstalker on the verge of having a panic attack but has to tell him that Whiteout is in danger. Terrified, they both race back to the castle, but by the time they arrive, they are too late. They arrive just in time to see Whiteout regain consciousness and lock eyes with them, offering a small smile before the axe comes down on her neck, beheading her.

With a shriek of pure rage, Darkstalker flies at the execution, but Vigilance's guards pin him down. As Queen Vigilance walks over to him, intending to offer him her condolences while explaining why she felt it was necessary to protect the tribe, Darkstalker turns his eyes back to the executioner and with his voice loud and clear, he commands the NightWing to impale himself in the gut with his own axe. As the executioner does just that and falls to the ground dead, Vigilance and her guards back up in terror: given the sheer speed of events that had happened that night, not one of them had considered the possibility that *both* of Arctic's children were animus dragons.

Darkstalker turns his rage to the queen. He had respected her, had wanted to serve her, and she had ordered the death of his sister right after he lost his parents. No longer caring about what the crowd thought of him or what would happen afterwards, he casts his last spell of the night: to make Queen Vigilance's brain explode.

Ignoring the terror in the faces of the surrounding NightWings and Thoughtful who is crying over Whiteout's body, he flies off in search of Clearsight. He eventually finds her body on her favourite cliff, the blood dripping down her cheeks. Darkstalker collapses beside her, wanting

to just simply give up and die too, having lost everyone he cared about in the same night. As he lies there prepared to simply let himself starve to death, a thought starts to break through. He may have avenged Whiteout, the assassin may be dead, but the dragon who started all of this was still alive. And with that, Darkstalker makes it his new mission to hunt down and kill Queen Diamond to make her pay for all the suffering she'd caused to his family and the 7 tribes themselves, not caring what happens to him afterwards.

With the arrival of dawn, Darkstalker flies off to find Queen Diamond. That evening with the setting sun, Clearsight's spirit rises. But instead of departing for the afterlife, she finds she is still tethered to the mortal world, invisible to most. As a spirit, she is finally free. Her mind reading will only activate if she touches another dragon, and while she could still feel her prophecy powers were there, she would now only see them when she wanted to. Without a physical form, they no longer caused her pain. (Her powers are essentially far too strong to be contained or used by a mortal living being) She had wanted to simply move on and be at peace in the afterlife like all the other dead dragons, and yet her spirit was still here, seemingly for an unknown purpose. The moons had 'blessed/cursed' her with those powers since she hatched and had yet had been unable to use them to stop all of the tragedies; now was her chance to change that. Upon peeking at the most important timelines, she becomes aware of Darkstalker's new mission and follows to help him, to make sure he doesn't die or fall into complete madness like Diamond did.

While originally invisible, Darkstalker first becomes aware of Clearsight's spirit when he glimpses it in a pond that is reflecting a full moon. Unsure if what he is seeing is real he enchants her spirit to be visible to him. When she talks to him and he realised it really is Clearsight's spirit, he breaks down crying, overcome with guilt and grief that he couldn't help her. She comforts him, telling him this wasn't his fault and assures him that she is finally at peace and she intends to use her newly stable visions to help him in his mission.

Queen Diamond still lurked in the wilderness, mindless and murderous. The IceWings had by now backed out of the war, ending it, and instead hid in fear of the rogue animus queen. Before losing her mind, she had thought she'd made herself invincible with her enchantments against any weapon, dragon or animus. But still in possession of the protection earring Arctic had given him when he hatched, Darkstalker is completely immune to all of her enchantments, including the one that protects *her*. Darkstalker is now the only hope Pyrrhia has of killing Queen Diamond and ending her reign of terror.

FATHOM

Queen Lagoon of the SeaWings saw no need to join the war against the IceWings, believing that her tribe would be safe underwater and that the powerful NightWings would surely be able to handle this issue themselves. As the war went on, the SeaWings only surfaced to trade supplies and news with the SkyWings. Despite having 2 animus dragons, Lagoon thought it was wiser to not get involved in the fight. Even if Albatross or Fathom had been able to do a spell that could target Queen Diamond across the continent, if anything went wrong and she survived, she would no doubt turn her attention to the SeaWings.

As the war reached 7 years, the SkyWings send their princess and an ambassador to the SeaWings to ask for their help. Queen Lagoon throws a welcome party for them on the Island Palace. While playing the part of the gracious host, when Princess Sunset demands

why Lagoon hasn't gotten Albatross to kill Diamond already, Lagoon snorts and says that even if the SeaWings did want to join the fight, Albatross was too cowardly to do anything. After suffering years of abuse and manipulation from his sister, and the recent toll making the summer palace has taken on him, Albatross snaps and kills Lagoon. The SeaWing massacre ensues as it does in the book, with the exception that Indigo *does* die defending Fathom.

After Fathom kills Albatross and the kingdom begins to mourn the dead, dragonet Queen Pearl meets with the SkyWing Queen to come to an agreement. The SkyWings threaten war on the SeaWings for the death of their princess, but Queen Pearl manages to secure a peace deal. She gives the SkyWings half of her palace's personal treasure, promises to double the SeaWings supply of food traded to the SkyWings, and to implement a new rule that the SkyWings had long practiced; that as animus dragons were far too dangerous to be allowed to live, all current and future SeaWing animi were to be executed.

Pearl knows that Fathom is kind and isn't a real threat to anyone, but the same was once true of Albatross. Not wanting to risk Fathom snapping one day and killing more dragons, or risking war with the SkyWings, Pearl orders her guards to kill Fathom while he is mourning at Indigo's grave. After the funeral for the fallen is over and the other SeaWing civilians have returned home, once Pearl is alone with Fathom and her guards, she gives the order and they attack him. As a spear pierces his back, narrowly missing his vital organs, Fathom barely escapes the guards with his life. In sheer terror, he releases a powerful blast of energy that knocks the guards back, before enchanting the coral to rise up and protect him. An enormous wall of coral and seaweed shoots up from the ocean floor, all the way to the top of the sea and stretches for a mile in each direction. The guards aren't able to break through the wall, and through small holes, Fathom glimpses his sister Queen Pearl giving them more orders. Bleeding and stunned that his own sister ordered his death, he flees the Sea Kingdom and collapses in a small cave connecting to a beach on the outskirts of the Mud Kingdom.

He is able to enchant a rock to heal his wounds before passing out from exhaustion. Fathom lives in the cave for months, believing it is the safest place for him as he hoped the SeaWings wouldn't dare search for him on another tribe's land. The SeaWings would kill him on sight and the SkyWings certainly would not welcome an animus, especially one who didn't react quick enough to save their princess. The NightWings and IceWings were at war and a sea dragon could never survive in the harsh deserts of the Sand Kingdom. While he had never met a RainWing, he would never be able to feel safe knowing an invisible acid-spitting dragon could be sneaking up on him at any time. Fathom only leaves the cave to search for food when there aren't enough fish gathering in the cave pool. He spends the rest of his time living in the cave tunnels, retreating any time he thinks he hears a dragon approaching.

He marks the cave walls for each day that passes and for months he remains undiscovered, but with no one to talk to he has started fearing he will end up losing his mind. Recently he starts seeing what he believes to be Indigo's ghost, only catching passing glimpse at first but then seeing her more frequently. He believes she is haunting him: he begs her to tell him what she wants but she never answers. Unfortunately, she is merely a hallucination and isn't real: her spirit had already departed to the afterlife.

As the months went by, Fathom's guilt and loneliness grew until one day a thought came to him: what if he could bring her back? Albatross had once told him that an animus couldn't

bring a dragon back from the dead but Fathom now became obsessed with the idea. He was tired of living in isolation. If it worked, maybe he could bring back all of the dead SeaWings and be pardoned too. If it didn't work, what harm could it do to try? Or perhaps the guards would spot him and kill him before he got close enough to try. Either way he couldn't stand living in that cave anymore.

So, he departed for the Sea Kingdom full of dangerous hope. He managed to make it to Indigo's grave without being seen. And from there he casts his enchantment, to bring Indigo back from the dead. As the sand begins to move and a purple talon comes into view, Fathom is both overjoyed and mortified to realise he should have dug Indigo up first, and he leans in to help dig her out. It isn't until her second hand breaks through that he realises something is wrong: her scales and flesh have been eaten and rotted away, he can see part of her bones, and yet she still moves. Distracted and lost in thought and a creeping feeling of dread, he is caught off guard when Indigo's head shoots out of the sand and her jaws clamp around his throat.

Fathom manages to wrestle free and lies in the sand staring in horror. Indigo thrashes and appears to be stuck halfway out of her grave. Except she doesn't look like how he remembers her. Her body is decayed, some of her bone fully visible through holes of missing flesh, her eyes are empty with an unnatural green light pulsing behind them. Fathom comes to the chilling realisation that he wasn't specific enough with his spell; he had reanimated her body, but had not healed it or restored her soul. What he saw before him was a hungry, mindless husk of his friend. A zombie. Looking into her glowing green eyes, Fathom also realises that when Albatross had said it couldn't be done, he had meant that once a dragon's soul had departed for the afterlife, it could not be linked back to its body. Even if Fathom had healed Indigo's body, her soul would not be in there.

Fathom raises a hand, intending to cancel his enchantment and to let Indigo's body return to its resting place, when pain and drowsiness overcome him. Looking down he is startled to see that the bite wound is turning green and that glowing green veins and arteries are shooting up and down his neck. He can feel his life slipping away but is unable to form anymore thoughts as his vision darkens and the only remaining sensations are pain and a growing hunger.

By the time zombie Indigo manages to break free of her grave, Fathom has already turned into a zombie, his soul gone, now an empty shell whose only desire was to feed on the living. Both zombie dragons turn towards the mouthwatering scent coming from the SeaWing Palace.

Zombie Fathom and Indigo begin biting and feeding on any SeaWing they manage to catch. Alarmed by all the screaming, Queen Pearl comes outside to see what is happening, only to witness the horror of her subjects dying, transforming into zombies and eating the living. Her guards rush to fight the zombies, but it soon becomes apparent the weapons aren't doing any real harm to them. Pearl becomes cornered by zombie Fathom and Indigo and they bite her.

A zombie created by an animus dragon can only be killed by an animus dragon, but with Albatross dead and Fathom himself now a zombie, tragically the SeaWings have none. The bite is highly infectious and can turn a dragon in half an hour if bitten on the tail, wings or back legs, or in as little as 3 minutes if bitten near the heart or brain. Upon dying, the dragon will become a zombie within minutes. Any dragon who is fast, strong and careful enough

could restrain a zombie dragon and lock them up somewhere, but would still be unable to kill them. A zombie dragon can walk, do a lurching run and climb (with some difficulty) SeaWing zombies can also still swim, the only thing the zombies can't do is fly. While a big advantage for escaping, a dragon can only fly for so long before needing to land. Due to the speed it is spreading, there is nothing to be done except to flee the kingdom.

A SeaWing who was bitten on the tail manages to reach the Sky Kingdom and begs for help before falling dead at the guards' feet. Not knowing what to do, the guards are caught off-guard when the dead SeaWing rises again to bite one of them, spreading the infection onto the land. For a week the zombie SeaWings prowled the sea looking for food, and while fish and whales do slightly satisfy their hunger, they eventually turn their attention elsewhere, and hundreds of zombie SeaWings descend upon the SkyWing and MudWing Kingdoms.

With all of Pyrrhia's attention on the war against Queen Diamond, and the SeaWings having been hiding for the last 7 years, the new threat takes the tribes completely by surprise, for even the NightWing prophets had not received visions of this catastrophe. The only dragon to receive a warning is Clearsight's spirit, who urges Darkstalker to find a way to end this after he finally takes down Queen Diamond after a brutal fight...