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# Injury

by Ellen Million

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"You have to remember that he's only been alive a sevenday," Resla said patiently. "He simply doesn't understand things that complex yet." She wrenched up another fistful of the weeds that grew too quickly in the little garden by her office.

"How complex is *eating*?" Harmina asked with exasperation.

Resla laughed. "You're asking the mother of a baby not even a Turn old yet?"

When the first flights began to return from 'Fall, Resla paused and put a hand up to shade her eyes as she looked up to watch them. The first Wing cleared to leave room for a swift second Wing. That would be V'lar's Wing, but she didn't have time to count dragons before they were making room for the third, and the fourth Wing. The fourth Wing she had time to count; the dragons of this Wing got larger, rather than smaller, as they came to land in the generous expanse of the drill grounds.

Thirty-seven weyrings had gone up with the Wing, with Ambri and L'ward flying as D'zan's seconds. Resla hadn't counted more than a dozen of them before the erratic flight of the last dragon caught her eye and her chest went cold. It wavered in position, nearly colliding with the green beside it, then curved away sharply towards the Main - a mad half-plummet towards the Infirmary, clearly injured.

Resla clambered ungracefully to her feet, dropping her current handful of weeds as she dashed for the Infirmary. "Watch Varla!" she called back to the weyring as she fled. Hope, who had been playing in the bushes, scrambled after her too late, and wailed at his abandonment.



It had hurt, Jreth repeated. It didn't hurt anymore, as it had been generously slathered with numbweed, but Jreth remembered it hurting, and he was still quite appalled by the idea.

"You'll have a handsome scar to impress the ladies with," V'lar assured him out loud.

Jreth's reply was still outraged - he was already certain he impressed plenty of 'ladies,' and he was more than a little taken aback that Hazeroth had dared to injure him. V'lar refrained from reminding him that he had been injured before, and tried to wordlessly comfort him while Dawn put the single stitch the minor wound. It had stopped bleeding, but the gap was enough that Giselle had decreed it too likely to be pulled apart again with strain.

"You'll need to put this salve on twice a day and after bathing," Dawn told him, handing him the jar, and she looked past him and said, "It's not that bad, Resla, don't look so alarmed!"

V'lar turned.

Resla was blinking in the relative dimness of the Dragon infirmary, looking disheveled, and V'lar felt his heart lighten. She looked like she had sprinted from her office - her cheeks were flushed, and damp tendrils of her hair were stuck to her face. She walked towards V'lar hesitantly. "Jreth was injured?" she said slowly.

V'lar stepped forward to meet her, clasping her hands in his own. "He's fine," he assured her. "I almost didn't pull him out of the 'Fall, it was that minor."

Jreth muttered without appreciation in his head - *he* certainly did not consider it minor.

"Oh, good," Resla said, still sounding dazed. "I'm glad it wasn't worse, Jreth," she said politely

Jreth nodded his head politely back at her and turned back to inspecting the slice on his back leg.

"He'll forget it in a day," V'lar said cheerfully. Resla still looked agitated, and V'lar tapped her on the side of the face. "It's nothing," he promised. "You ran all that way for nothing."

"I didn't know you were here," she blurted.

*Jreth, which of the weyrings is here?* V'lar tried to remember which of her charges she spoke of most often; it must be someone close to her to make her look so rattled.

***Shamath is here***, Jreth said petulantly, with an undertone of offense that his rider was concerned over anyone other than him. ***And Tillreth has been threadscored in the wing. They are frightened because Yoseth is here and hurt and they are used to him being in charge of them, not hurting in their heads. Will it be a different color when it heals? I am a very fine bronze color; it would be a shame if it did not match.***

*Yoseth...* If Yoseth was here, D'zan was here, and with a cold knot in his stomach, V'lar realized why Resla looked so panicked.

"I am sure your scar will be a perfect color," V'lar assured Jreth out loud. And for Resla, he found out and relayed, "The Weyrilingmaster is across the Infirmary, bay six."

She managed to look grateful and guilty and embarrassed all at once. "Is - is it bad?" she asked.

"A sprain, maybe dislocated," V'lar relayed. "They aren't sure yet."

There was a long awkward moment while neither of them was sure what to say. Finally, V'lar took pity on her clear desire to go to him and offered, "You should probably check in, see if he'll need you to do anything extra with the weyrings..."

She flashed him a smile and paused only long enough to say to Jreth, "I'm sure it will heal to be a very handsome scar," before dashing around another dragon body to find D'zan.

***She has distressed you***, Jreth observed, before a horrifying idea occurred to him. ***It won't heal blue, will it?***



D'zan was scowling ferociously while the dragonhealers prodded at Yoseth's wing and tested his range of movement. The scowl didn't mean an awful lot - he tended to frown equally when news was good and bad.

"D'zan," Resla said hesitantly, when he didn't acknowledge her presence. He glanced at her in surprise; clearly he had not realized she was standing at his side. He didn't answer, only grunted, and returned to glaring at the dragonhealers.

"Yoseth," Resla said achingly, and the big brown dragon made a miserable whuffling noise, turned his head and put his nose down to her. Without thinking twice about it, Resla wrapped her arms as far around it as they would reach and lay her cheek against his hide. "Poor Yoseth," she said sadly. "Does it hurt badly?"

"A shardin' lot," D'zan said darkly. "Can't get numbweed in that deep, and the shaffin' dragonhealers keep seeming to find new positions to make it hurt worse."

"Nothing more to do here," Giselle said briskly. The dragonhealers let Yoseth fold up the wing again, and Resla let go of Yoseth's nose so he could follow its painful progress visually. "We'll ice the wingjoint, and he's not to fly for at least two weeks, maybe six. I think it's just a sprain, and not too bad at that. You'll bring him in daily." The last was not a request.

D'zan grunted, and was nearly drowned by the shriek of a more wounded dragon across the Infirmary. Giselle frowned and turned away from them to oversee the new disaster. Yoseth returned his nose to Resla, and she gave him long scratches across his eyes ridges. She murmured comfortingly at him for a long moment, and when she finally stepped back, she thought that his eyes were whirling a little less intensely than they had been.

"It's been a long time since our last injury," D'zan said, and Resla heard the edge to his voice under the gruffness.

"How did it happen?"

"Just a thermal, wrong place, wrong time, and a stupid weyrling out of place to dodge," D'zan said curtly. "Next time we shouldn't avoid the collision and let the wet-nosed whelp feel the pain instead," he grumbled as Yoseth folded his wrenched left wing carefully against his back.

Resla looked hard at him, trying to match his expression to the concern she knew he felt. "You're worried for him," Resla said, gently touching his shoulder. "But he'll be fine."

D'zan looked no less sour for her reassurance and Resla felt him flinch away from her touch. "Tillmeth and Shamanth are out in the central court with what I think are mild scoring. Go and check on them, make sure Sarassa and A'prel aren't blubbering and in the dragonhealers' way," he

said in dismissal. Resla nodded and retreated a step, while Yoseth gave a long sigh that ruffled their hair. "And I trust that Jreth is not seriously hurt?" D'zan added, as Resla paused to offer Yoseth a familiar parting scratch on the nose.

Resla heard the pointed message in the Weyrilingmaster's words. "Jreth is fine," she said meekly, stepping away from his dragon. "Just a scratch. It looked like it only needed one stitch." It was selfish of her to take Yoseth's attention from his own rider, and worse to play favorites with any dragon over that of the man she was *involved* with, and she felt guilty all over again. As much as she tried to like Jreth as well, she *knew* Yoseth like no other dragon. She half-hoped that Yoseth would nudge her with his nose and ask for more attention, but he swung his head to D'zan, instead, and let his rider continue his scratches.

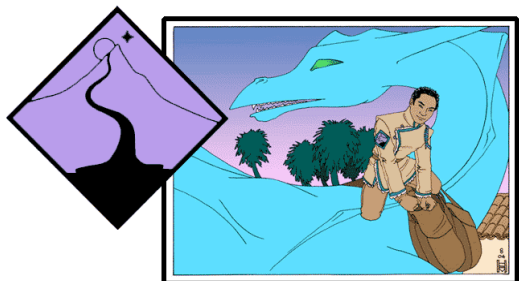
"I'll check on Sarassa and A'prel..." she said faintly, and ducked away to pursue that task, not bothering to look back at the Weyrilingmaster as she left.



She returned to the far side of the Infirmary to find that V'lar and Jreth had already been released.

"Not too bad a 'Fall," Journeyman Dawn said cheerfully as she sponged off the bench. "All the injuries seemed relatively minor. Even your weyrlings have already been returned to their cots and won't be grounded more than a sevenday."

Resla smiled. "That's a relief," she said politely. She thought about V'lar's look when she confessed that she hadn't known Jreth had been hurt. It had to be insulting to know that she preferred another dragon over his, and she wondered just how minor an injury that had been.



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