

Standing amid a sea of books and scrolls, I smile to myself as turn a page. The dry air of the Archives and the gentle light and silence of the space around me are familiar comforts. Rolling my shoulders a bit to adjust the simple robes of my office and how they rest on my wings, I drop the tome in my hands and freeze. Something feels.. wrong? I try to think of what, and try to reach down for the book as well, but something stalls me.

“What.. wh-what is going on? I.. Decades and I've never dropped, what-”

Reaching down for the tome I feel a tickle in the back of my neck and reach for it. There's nothing there though, nothing but skin and scales at any rate. Everything seems.. fine, but not great? Not.. majestic, I think to myself.. Not-

*“Goodness. This won't do at all.. I'm **barely** a dragon, let alone a King.”*

Whipping my head around, I try to find the source of the echoing voice in the archive halls..

“Who's there?! The archives are restricted, and-”

Only to feel a cold sweat creep over me as my own mouth answers, while my eyes wander to the book – History of the Fall of the Dragon King – and set it on the lectern beside me. Mostly, it seems, to free my hands up so they can pluck at my robes and at my body.

*“Tsk. As if a King needs to ask permission to enter anywhere he pleases. At least my archives are more impressive than my body.. and I can **fix** this~”*

My mouth moving without my will behind it, and *dripping* with ego and confidence, leaves me wrestling with a knot of fear in my chest and a deep need to resist what ever it is is happening. It's hard to even be sure what that is, or how to fight it. I just reach inside and try to find what will I have and apply it to myself. All over.

“I don't.. I don't know who you are, or why this is.. is happening, but get *out* of me! I am not.. not some vessel for-”

A shudder wracks me. The bulwark of will I was holding up against.. whatever this is shatters and leaves me breathless – except.. not. I *feel* breathless, in my soul, but my lungs work just fine when that other voice rises up again.

*“Now that **tickled** a little! Hee. I do enjoy a bit of fun, but don't go too far. Now, to adopt proper **stature** for a ruler~”*

What little focus I had crumbles as my body shivers, twitches, and then whatever strangeness was within me finds some kind of equilibrium and just.. relaxes. I feel tension break and wash over

me, then collect all in one place – right around my belly. Looking down, it's hard to tell if it's me or that other intent responsible for reaching down and rubbing at my belly while it swells. My physique was a thing I had some pride in, it's not easy staying fit sitting around reading all day every day, but now I look down and there's a soft ball of belly with clearly visible scutes growing in – and not even in my proper color.

It takes a good second or so longer as I stare, dumbfounded, at my swelling and stretching body to notice my robe looks wrong as well. There are patches of it that have changed from simple embroidered sea green to something purple and gold and downright gaudy. ..Patches I remember touching. Or, rather, I remember *it* touching them.. with my hands.

Once more, I try to reach inside for some measure of control and strength to fight back with. This time, instead of pouring it through my whole self, I focus just on taking back my voice-

“What have you *done* to my body?! I.. I worked so hard, and- *and denied myself so much, which a King should never have to do. You eat what you want, you drink what you want.. well, I do. Even eating **who** you want, if they get out of line. Or if I'm just in the mood..*”

The thought batters against my mind while my hands explore my midsection, *eating someone?* Just.. sliding them down the throat and into that plump belly, and.. getting larger. The way they'd fear me and keep me happy so it didn't happen to them next and-

I try to snap myself out of it, which is helped along when I lift up that round belly and feel it sloshing and thickening. Not just a gut, no – this thing has left me *fat*. A broad scaled belly of sea foam green that takes both of my arms to hold up and rests on a longer frame than before. It's disorienting, being taller. Enough to make me stumble back a couple steps and realize my tail going through something similar and sprawling out long and bulky was the only thing counter-balancing all this flab manifesting.

Worse yet, touching it seems to be making it grow in faster.. and as I plant my fingers into the thick, pillowy bulk of my thighs and watch them rise up and grow underneath I can't quite stop myself from just.. savoring it.

“*Better, isn't it? Mmmn, yes! Glorious, marvelous **me**. Or, well – a good deal closer to it at least. Now why don't you surrender this little resistance attempt of yours and I can be happy and you can be.. well, **me** which is really the best thing you could hope for.*”

The effort I make to shut my mouth is only briefly successful.

*“Now **stop that**. It's useless, you know. Even if you do seem to be digging in rather firmly there.. What's all that about anyway? It tastes like pride, that's familiar enough. But in what..? It can't have been **you**. Not in that scrawny, barely-draconic body.”*

It feels like a small miracle when I pirouette and don't fall on my ever-larger ass in the process. A quick look down and I see nothing but *me* everywhere.. Near as wide as I am tall, apart from the tail, with jiggling swathes of flesh hanging from my arms and my thighs pressing together and bouncing my gut upward with every little motion. I take myself in, feeling a curious surge of pride in how grandiose I look with my robe bleeding into ever finer royal purple and sporting actual gold around the collar. It's enough to stop me from paying much mind to my horns feeling.. odd. Enough that I find myself posing, sprawling my wings out to the sides. Smiling at the sight of all that girth and what it stood for, and..

An odd sense of clarity seeps in after that. I latch onto the feeling and feel a curious resonance. A bit of contact.. and understanding?

*“..I am a **very** fine- *I have been a fine lore keeper, but now-* this archive is second to none, and it is **mine**, and.. *Mine. Such a collection-*”*

Little tremors of excitement move through me as I reach out and touch the tomes at my side once more. I feel something akin to peace as I do, even with my fingers looking like pale green sausages. Peace, purpose, contentment.. *all of me* feels it. Except maybe the contentment, that part-

*“That part is not becoming of a ruler. **Contentment**. As if – but it **is** worthy of respect. Like me! But this is such a lonely looking existence. Where is your- **my** court? A ruler needs a court to wait on them, feed them, worship them, be-”*

I step back and survey my archive, my library. Reaching up, I touch my cheeks and feel just how soft they are. Like big dumplings in my hands, my neck just as soft and swollen, and.. all of me. It's not even done growing, although it's slowed down a little. Groping across my belly follows, little tingles of sensation dancing across so much more body than I'm used to. Every step is cumbersome, swinging vast amounts of weight around, but that..

*“It's like feeling.. important. Things need to get out of the way, don't they? Out of m.. **my way**. This has been quite the lonely place for some time now hasn't it? That won't do! No, not for me, not for you, not for **I**. But, I can understand the.. attachment. Hmm? Yes? Familiarity, priceless treasures of their own sort, we could..”*

My thoughts wander. Musings tumble forth in that rumbling cadence as I start to feel an odd and altogether intoxicating bit of power welling up inside me. Or maybe it was confidence? That was such an unfamiliar thing, at least in this volume. But then, unfamiliar volume was embodying just about everything I can touch and feel right now.

Which I cannot seem to stop doing. I flutter my wings and thrust one hip out, tail lashing behind me and somehow instinctively avoiding all the books and lecterns as if the muscle memory was just always there. It still catches me off-guard how small my archive looks though, I see so much time in all those volumes – both spent and recorded. I feel my wings settle over my shoulders like a cloak, *far* too small to fly with a body this bulky and tall. Even my robes are swiftly being outgrown as I stride toward the central hall of my archives and think..

“It.. wouldn't be *that hard* to attract an *appreciative* court of followers, would it? After all, we're.. I am.. ***I am glorious.*** *The sheer grandiosity that is me!*”

I approach the doors of my archive imagining the central fountain and its gleaming stone lights as the centerpiece of a court room, picturing a throne for myself somewhere amid all of the books and then-

“*Hmm.. I shall need my court to be a good deal larger though. After all, we need bedrooms and kitchens and the like yes? Yes. Places where the little people can do their job of properly appreciating **me** and this magnificent collection! Though-*”

Something tickles at the back of my mind again. It had been mere minutes while my body went about the process of becoming something.. no, it was becoming *me*. The proper *me*, a Dragon King ought to have presence and now I have precisely that. That was *right*. But there was a little buzzing mote of dissonance. A thing that has me, as I turn to survey the keystone upon which I mean to create my new kingdom, questioning what could possibly give such a thing as *myself* pause like this. I step further in and feel my body quiver and shake, but not as much as the stone under me does. I shuffle past some of the oldest tomes in my collection and I smile as I run my claws gently across their spines.

“*I shall have to **encourage** the subjects I gather to bring me rare additions for my library. Perhaps I can even cultivate a stable of authors to cultivate new things for it..? Hmm, I do like that idea. I **do** deserve perfection after all, and they ought to be glad to come provide it for me. Though.. they are going to want to peruse my books.. aren't they?*”

The tickle begins again. I grasp at the last thought I had and look closer, something about it has to be what's at the root of this feeling. My impending kingdom, founded upon a repository of lore and stories. Naturally, people came to such places to partake of wisdom. They had to be vetted of course, they had to be watched, but.. what was the point of the place otherwise?

*"It cannot be jealousy. I mean.. the books are **mine**, of course – but the purpose of this place is to share them with those lesser than me? So-"*

I move further in, approaching the lectern where I had been standing.. no, where that little demi-dragon had been standing. They had been quite the archivist and lore keeper but they were no Dragon King. The volume had been so large before, but now..? Now I pluck it up and hold it in my palm, bringing it up close and delicately touching the page with a claw.

*"..I had best not need glasses now thanks to this. I- oh. **Oh**. That would be it. Of course! It was too obvious, that's why it escaped my notice!"*

Closing the volume in my fingers I grin to myself, then begin carefully gathering a few more books from the same section of the archives. The historical accounts, legends, myths.. everything from that little corner of the world and that piece of history. It amounts to a little cluster of ink and parchment I can tuck against my chest with ease.

*"Of course people will come to read about **me**! But with the wanton slander in these 'retellings' of history.. No, that will not do at all-"*

I shuffle my massive frame along the floor, tail dragging behind me, squeezing into my study and haphazardly moving every cushion in the room into a small pile in the center that just about provides enough for me to rest on it comfortably. The furniture itself is far too small, too flimsy, but that problem won't last. Not like the books – like a King.

*"Now.. let's see.. yes, ink and solvent and sand – and wine! Mm, I'll need more of **that** sooner rather than later.. I suppose that I'll have to dip into the treasury for such and find an errand boy to be my first subject. But for now-"*

The twinge again, I feel it creep around my scalp and the flowing blue-green hair resting between my wings. I feel it between the horns that have stretched into thin, pronged things on my brow. I feel it on the tip of my tongue.

"Am I really going to alter my books..? I'm supposed to be here to take care of them, not to.. to adulterate them and-"

The question burns away the feeling inside me. I know what my decision is before I even finish the sentence – so I don't bother to. Instead, I lean back and savor the sweet taste of wine on my tongue for as long as the bottle holds out. There's more where that came from, I know. A store room that I might need to break a little masonry to fit into.. unless I find that errand boy to recruit sooner rather than later, waits beneath my archives and is well stocked.. if not with the most impressive fare. One more problem to fix. ..But first, the books. I let my fast, soft frame settle against the nest I've made and smile as I gently nudge open the first book I mean to begin my *corrections* in.

“Yes.. first these. We can't have people reading about their King being gotten the better of by some monkey with a stick after all. They say history is written by the victor, so I guess this means one way or another I win after all~”