



CHAPTER EIGHT



“Dismissed,” said F’digan, and the abrupt scrape of his chair against the floor indicated the Wingleader’s normal eagerness to escape the Wing meeting and get on with more important things.

T’kamen didn’t look up from the slate upon which he had been sketching F’digan’s chosen formation for the afternoon’s drill. It was a nonsense, as usual. The brown riding Wingleader always insisted on flying point, although Benreth was small for his colour, and in taking the lead position in every formation he tended to disrupt the pace of all the dragons behind. Faranth forbid he put the one bronze pair in his Wing in a position that even suggested leadership. Even putting L’stev and Vanzanth on point would be an improvement: the tough old brown was not far off the size of a smaller bronze. But F’digan, like most of Madellon’s Wingleaders, cared less for practical fighting formations than for what was most flattering to his own ego. Wing drill was so infrequent under L’dro that it was a wonder the Weyr had Wingleaders at all. The rank was little more than ornamentation in a Thread-free Interval.

Absorbed in his criticism of F’digan’s formation, a meaningful cough from T’kamen’s left was necessary to make the bronze rider look up.

Seven of the eight remaining members of the Wing were on their feet, standing to attention behind their chairs. L’stev remained sprawling in his seat, wearing an expression halfway between grin and grimace. E’vahal who, nearing his seventieth Turn, counted as the eldest, was almost impassive, but there was a gleam of approval in his eye. The youngest, T’sten, looked even more boyish than his twenty Turns, but he held himself proudly, and he was the one who spoke. “T’kamen, sir. Permission to withdraw?”

T'kamen eyed the other wingriders warily. He wasn't comfortable with the show of deference, but at least it was sincere. His old Wing had been broken up and reassigned, and with the exception of L'stev, these riders had never known him as a leader, but F'digan wasn't popular with his wingriders.

It wasn't his place to give the command, but then each rider knew that, too. "Granted," he muttered, half amused.

One by one the seven riders saluted him and departed, T'sten throwing him a grin over his shoulder as he went.

"Don't look at me," L'stev growled, before T'kamen could say a word.

The bronze rider leaned back in his chair. "Was that approval, disapproval, or just disbelief I saw in your expression then?"

The former Weyrleader shrugged. "It was T'sten's idea, and he's always had that contagious enthusiasm. Not that Gerah or E'vahal would have played games with a weyring if they didn't agree with the sentiment."

T'kamen looked down at the notations he had made on his slate, his eyes idly tracing the asymmetrical formation. "It's a little premature."

"Acting as if you were already Wing and Weyrleader? Yes. Throwing their support behind you?" L'stev shook his head. "They've flown with you for three Turns. They know what kind of man and rider you are better than most. Accept the compliment, T'kamen, and their confidence." The brown rider considered for a moment. "Though if word gets out, it's bound to shorten the odds on you again. By the shards of Vanzanth's shell, I'm glad I don't have a class to keep in hand at the moment. I don't know how I could stop them from betting every mark they have on this."

T'kamen was unmoved by the talk of gambling, and completely uninterested in the current odds for and against him. C'los kept track, insisting that it was a good gauge of the Weyr's support, but T'kamen had been somewhat distracted from the campaign for the last few days.

Since Epherineth had nudged him into talking to Sarenya, T'kamen had felt a great weight ease from his shoulders, a burden so familiar he had not even recognised it until it had lifted. For the first time, he could think back on that memorable month seven Turns ago without bitterness. Things were not the same: the impulsive, spontaneous passion that had sparked so readily between himself and Sarenya would not easily be rekindled. But the old poison was gone, and something had eased between T'kamen and C'mine, too. The blue rider's delight at seeing their reconciliation, albeit partial, was tangible. C'mine was far too subtle to start throwing them together in the hope of provoking something more, but T'kamen was no longer

reluctant to visit his friends' weyr because of the possibility that Sarenya might be there. The issue of the Weyrleadership seemed somehow very distant and abstract to T'kamen's newfound lightness of spirit. It was easier to ignore the bilious remarks of L'dro's ranking cronies, F'digan's heavy-handed approach to leading the Wing; even the food didn't seem quite as bad as before.

"You remember C'los wants us all there for a progress meeting after lunch?" L'stev asked.

T'kamen nodded. "More diagrams, I imagine."

"It keeps him happy, and he knows what he's doing," said L'stev. "C'los has his faults, all right, but he's one of the sharpest weyrlings I ever did train."

T'kamen picked up his slate. "He always was."

The two riders left the Wing ready room together. The contrast between the coolness of the cavern and the blazing temperature outside was marked, and T'kamen squinted against the sun. The wild cry of a green dragon in heat made the bronze rider pity the flight participants: it really wasn't the weather for such exertions. He watched as the green hurled herself aloft, several males after her, and automatically his gaze moved to Shimpath's ledge.

The queen's colour was vibrant in the sun, but there was none of the glowing luminescence about her hide that the green had shown. T'kamen doubted that he would see any visible sign of Shimpath's readiness to mate before Epherineth sensed it, anyway. In that respect he deferred completely to his dragon's judgement.

L'stev came up beside him, following his gaze. "She's a good-looking young queen," he remarked. "If Vanzanth was any younger – and if she wasn't senior...."

"You have the choice, at least," said T'kamen.

The brown rider snorted. "That's as may be, Kamen, but not a chance, even if he had the impulse. There's no brown here who could compete with even the weakest bronze."

T'kamen watched Shimpath critically. Young and strong, yes, but without the sleek strong lines of a fighting dragon. Even in an Interval, a queen flew less than any other dragon. "If she wasn't senior ... Epherineth would still chase. He doesn't have the option."

"Price of a bronze, Kamen," L'stev said succinctly. "I taught you that Turns ago."

"He's always chased," T'kamen said slowly. "Cherganth, twice. He'd barely reached his full size the first time. She was too experienced for him; the older bronzes knew her ways."

“I remember the first green Vanzanth ever took it into his head to chase,” said L’stev. “Thirty Turns older than him. He choked on her dust.”

T’kamen smiled slightly. “Young queen, young bronze. Epherineth has a better chance at Shimpath now than he’s ever had against a queen. But...” He stopped.

“She may not be what you want, T’kamen, but she’s all we’ve got,” L’stev told him. “And like it or not, you’re the best chance we all have to turn this sorry Weyr around.”

“As if I could forget,” T’kamen replied ironically.

“Does it bother you?” the brown rider asked.

T’kamen considered the question. “Only in the sense that I don’t like having my every move watched and analysed.”

“But you don’t feel under pressure?”

The bronze rider shook his head. “I understand the necessity of popular support. But the only obligation I feel is to myself, my dragon and my friends.”

“And to beat L’dro?”

T’kamen shrugged. “He’s a bad Weyrleader, and he’s made himself my enemy. But he was always the one who had something to prove as a weyring, not me.”

“I remember thinking that might be the case before he even Impressed,” said L’stev. “He was his father’s only son, and he always was little too conscious of the fact that L’mis was sometimes Weyrleader – when Fianine chose. A green or blue might have been the making of him, but Pierdeth just confirmed the opinion Leddrome had of himself.” The brown rider chuckled. “Then you Impressed Epherineth: you, with your Trader background and your ignorance of the Weyr, and your friends Impressing blue and green, and showed the little tail-fork that there’s more to being a proper dragonrider than being the Weyrleader’s son and riding a bronze.”

“Sometimes there’s less to riding a bronze than being a proper dragonrider,” said T’kamen.

“Too often, when a Weyrleader like L’dro is setting the example,” L’stev agreed. “We’ve been lucky with young T’rello. I thought the lack of another bronze in his class would go to his head, but that, and his youth, seems to have made him less competitive. And petty competition between weyring bronze riders has been the bane of my time as Weyrleader, T’kamen.” The brown rider scowled at him. “Watch how Epherineth mates Shimpath, you hear? I don’t want any more than one bronze in a clutch. They’ll send me *between* before my time.”

T'kamen smiled briefly as the gruff old brown rider walked off towards his waiting dragon.

"I'll see what I can do," he murmured, to himself.



The new gown was beautiful. It had arrived less than an hour ago, brought to Valonna's weyr by one of the blue riders from Shimpath's first clutch, and the Weyrwoman had signed and sealed Tailorcraft papers to confirm its safe delivery. The young rider had hastened back to his dragon with the receipt, visibly anxious to discharge his duty.

It hung in Valonna's weyr now, resplendent in gilt-coloured satin, trimmed with delicate lace, hung with sparkling glass beads: exquisite in every way.

Except that it was too big on her hips, too small on her waist, too low fronted for propriety, and matched neither the slippers nor the jewellery L'dro had given her to wear at Turn's End.

Valonna gazed at the gorgeous, useless dress, and despaired.

The last month had left her as dazed as she had been in the early days of her time as Weyrwoman. T'kamen's open challenge in the dining hall had made her painfully aware that, much as she had hated it the first time, she was once again going to be the centre of attention until Shimpath rose again. And while Valonna was eager for things to go back to normal, she anticipated her dragon's mating flight with trepidation.

L'dro had been attentive and solicitous to her needs since the other bronze rider had made his challenge. Valonna wasn't a complete fool. She recognised L'dro's transparent efforts to curry her favour for what they were. But that didn't stop her feeling pathetically grateful for his kindness.

Things were the way they were meant to be again: the way they had been for the first three Turns of Shimpath's life. L'dro treated her with a courtesy and generosity that went beyond gowns and trinkets. He had escorted her to half a dozen major Gathers, north and south, insisting on only the very best for her, speaking glowingly of her skills as Weyrwoman to the other Weyrleaders and Lords they encountered. Once, a man had pushed carelessly past her, jostling her into the dust at the side of the thoroughfare through the Gather stalls. L'dro had pursued the offender, bringing him back to offer an abject apology to the Weyrwoman. Then L'dro had purchased Valonna another new gown to make up for the dusty condition of the one she had been wearing.

Valonna knew he was going out of his way to please her for the sake of the Weyrleadership: she *knew* it, but she couldn't bring herself to believe that there was nothing more to it. L'dro had become complacent, yes, but perhaps after Pierdeth won Shimpath's second flight, the bronze rider would be grateful, and reward Valonna with his fidelity as Shimpath had rewarded Pierdeth. Perhaps the threat posed by the other bronze riders of the Weyr would finally make L'dro settle to her.

Perhaps.

But what was the alternative? A bronze rider Valonna didn't know, didn't understand – didn't love. A bronze rider L'dro loathed, despised, for reasons Valonna had never dared to ask, but that must be valid to inspire such depth of hatred in the Weyrleader: T'kamen: a rider Valonna rarely saw, and barely knew but by reputation. Valonna dreaded L'dro's bad moods, but at least she had grown accustomed to them. The prospect of being forced to learn how to handle the black tempers of a strange man frightened her.

Still, the prospect of having to tell L'dro that the priceless gown he had commissioned for her was all wrong scared Valonna, too.

Pierdeth's rider made the mistake, not you, Shimpath said from outside. *You should be angry with him.*

It wasn't his fault, Valonna protested. *He wanted to surprise me with it: he couldn't arrange a fitting.*

To surprise you with a gown that you cannot wear is not thoughtful, Valonna, said the queen, in a rare tone of reproach. *If he's angry with you because he got it wrong he is even less thoughtful.*

He's trying, Shimpath, the Weyrwoman insisted. *He's trying so hard, and I don't want to upset him.*

The young queen rumbled disapprovingly. *Why don't you go and see Darshanth's rider?* she suggested. *He always makes you feel better.*

I can't, it's his anniversary.

Shimpath was silent for a moment, and then she said, *Darshanth says C'mine says you're always welcome.*

Valonna was more surprised by her dragon's naming of the blue rider than the fact that she had spoken to Darshanth unasked. *You never say names,* Shimpath.

I like C'mine, the queen replied offhandedly. *He's kind to you.*

Did you bully Darshanth? Valonna asked suspiciously.

Shimpath was indignant. *I wouldn't bully him.*

Valonna sighed and shook her head. *Maybe later.*

The young Weyrwoman gazed at the lovely gown L'dro had given her. It was so beautiful. Maybe she could wear it anyway... But it wouldn't be right on her – too big in some places, too small in others, wrong, overall. If she wore it, she knew she would always be grateful to L'dro for the stunning, if imperfect, gift. If she didn't, L'dro would be angry – he might even be unfaithful again, and Valonna couldn't bear that – but at least she wouldn't feel so indebted to him.

Valonna reached out to touch the gown. Against the shimmering fabric, her hand looked pale and sickly, a washed-out reflection of its golden magnificence. It was too rich a hue for her. She would never be able to wear this gown as if it had been made with her in mind.

Gold, she realised with a sick, sinking feeling, never had been her colour.



T'kamen finished oiling the steel buckles of Epherineth's fighting harness and set the work aside, wiping his hands on the rag dangling from his belt. As an afterthought, the bronze rider pulled the cloth free, folded it, and tossed it back into his leather-working kit.

As he headed into the cool dimness of his sleeping chamber to find a clean shirt, T'kamen felt his stomach growl, and he realised how long it had been since the previous night's dinner.

I told you to eat, Epherineth said reasonably.

T'kamen pulled off his grease- and sweat-smearred tunic and found a fresh shirt, pulling it on and rolling up the sleeves but leaving it open. It was too hot to stifle in heavy clothes. *Los and Mine will have something*.

Abruptly, Epherineth's amusement changed to indignation, and T'kamen heard his dragon demand, *What do you want?*

What is it? he asked, straightening the collar of his new shirt as he strode out onto the weyr ledge to investigate the cause of the disturbance.

Another bronze was perching awkwardly to let his rider dismount. There was no room for two dragons on Epherineth's ledge at the best of times, and T'kamen's dragon had come to angry attention at the invasion, huge and bristling, the facets of his eyes edged with red. T'kamen put a calming hand on Epherineth's shoulder, distractedly noting the reversal of their normal roles, and stared up at their unwanted guest. The smaller, darker bronze was Alonth, and his rider, H'ersto, was ranked Flightleader, a senior member of the bronze rider Council.

T'kamen watched grimly as the older rider made an graceless dismount, neither offering assistance nor asking Epherineth to move aside. "What do you

want?" he demanded, unconsciously echoing his bronze as the Flightleader sent Alonth away.

H'ersto was a small man, with a build that had once been stocky and was now becoming stout, and the weakness in his face that all the senior bronze riders who had served under Fianine as Weyrwoman seemed to share. "A moment, T'kamen, just a moment, to catch my breath..."

T'kamen folded his arms. "What is it?"

"Could we at least go inside?" the Flightleader panted.

T'kamen was perspiring in the full sun, too, but he had no intention of offering this man any hospitality. "What do you want?" he asked again.

H'ersto glanced furtively around, as if anyone might be listening so high up in the Bowl. "I really shouldn't be here, risking myself. But, T'kamen, you're the rising star in the Weyr, and I have a proposal for you."

T'kamen started to turn away. "I'm not interested."

The sweating little Flightleader held up his hands. "Just hear me out, T'kamen. For the sake of the friendship we had when you rode in my Flight..."

"That friendship ended the day you gave my Wing to a brown rider," T'kamen said coldly.

"I know, T'kamen, it was a terrible thing to happen to a good working relationship, but I had to heed the Weyrleader's wishes. You're a reasonable man: you surely see the position I was in!"

"I see you very clearly, Flightleader," said T'kamen, disgusted.

"But L'dro's time is ending," the little man pressed on. "Anyone can see that, with the popularity you have. Madellon wants a new Weyrleader. *You*. But just one thing stands in your way."

"I don't think I need to hear any more of this," T'kamen said, trying to turn aside again.

"Hear me out, T'kamen!" H'ersto urged him. "All the blue and green riders of Pern could support you as Madellon's next Weyrleader, but when all's said and done, they can't help you where it really matters."

"And you can?" T'kamen asked, with heavy sarcasm.

"When the queen rises, bronzes chase," H'ersto told him, as if he was imparting some great secret. "And *that's* where Alonth and I can help you. Oh, Alonth could never catch Shimpath. But if he got in Pierdeth's way..."

T'kamen couldn't form a reply for several moments, shocked. "You'd interfere in a mating flight?"

“In the heat of mating, who could say what’s interference and what’s sheer chance?” H’ersto’s expression became crafty. “And it’s no more unfair than trying to alter the outcome in advance by building popular support. Think about it, T’kamen. With Pierdeth out of the running, Epherineth would have no competition.”

T’kamen felt sick. To influence opinions in the Weyr was one thing: to deliberately plan to obstruct a dragon in the flight itself was another. It defiled every law of respect for dragonkind. That H’ersto would consider such a thing, whether or not it was even possible, was repellent. “And what would you get out of this?”

“Me?” H’ersto’s eyes went wide with feigned innocence. “Why, nothing but the guarantee of a strong Weyrleader. A Weyrleader who, I’m sure, would be wise enough to know what to change and what to leave be.”

“You mean like the favours that let Council bronze riders get fat while everyone else suffers?”

“Don’t make your decision yet, T’kamen,” the Flightleader said, ignoring T’kamen’s fury. “Think it over – discuss it with your friends. You’ll see the sense of it.”

H’ersto’s brightly condescending tone made T’kamen see red, but then Epherineth’s touch on his mind cooled him. The bronze rider took a firm hold of himself as he listened to his dragon’s calm suggestion.

“Well?” H’ersto asked.

T’kamen took a deep breath. “What do you think, Epherineth?”

H’ersto’s expression registered disbelief at first, as Epherineth lowered his great head to stare at him. But T’kamen guessed that seeing oneself reflected back a hundred times in the crimson-laced eyes of an angry bronze dragon was enough to frighten even another dragonrider, and that getting a good view of that dragon’s teeth was similarly distressing. Slowly and very deliberately, he said, “Get off our ledge, Flightleader, before I throw you off.”

The bugle of alarm that could only have come from Alonth sounded thin and shrill compared to the deepest and softest of menacing growls that rumbled from Epherineth’s throat.

T’kamen placed his hand meaningfully on his dragon’s jaw, close to those gleaming teeth, as Alonth descended from the Rim to collect his shaken and intimidated rider. Sweating more profusely than ever, H’ersto scrambled aboard his bronze, and only then summoned the courage for a retort. “You’ll never beat Pierdeth without me, bronze rider!”

“Watch us.”

He stood vigil with his bronze until Alonth had gone, dropping to the low-level weyr that belonged to H'ersto, and Epherineth had relaxed. Then T'kamen leaned more heavily against his dragon: half incredulous that the incident had occurred, half weak with revulsion at the bargain his former Flightleader had tried to strike. The sun beat down as harshly as ever, but the bronze rider felt chilled to the bone.

Finally, Epherineth spoke. *The suggestion that I would need the help of one such as Alonth to win my queen!*

T'kamen smiled at his dragon's offended outrage. *I know, my friend. You never could handle insults.*

Insults. Absurdities. The bronze shook himself all over, and flexed his talons into the stone of the ledge. *Indioth says you're late,* he added, more peaceably.

T'kamen straightened up decisively. *Tell her we're coming. C'los will want to hear about this.*



Sarenya smoothed down the seam she was mending on one of her heavy wherhide tunics, then continued to sew, running the thread through the fine holes already punched in the leather. The stitching seemed to unravel the moment she turned her back on it: the garment had been weathered and cracked by wind, rain, dirt, and was probably due for complete replacement, but the journeyman was loath to spend her marks on a new one.

So she sat quietly, making repairs and listening while the riders discussed the latest twist in their plans to influence the Weyrleadership.

"It was inevitable that someone would get scared and come running to you sooner or later, Kamen," C'los was saying.

"And it doesn't surprise me that it was H'ersto," said R'hren. "Traacherous little tail-fork. He always did like to keep a foot in each camp."

"Then why did you keep him on as Flightleader when you were Weyrleader?" asked T'kamen.

R'hren sighed heavily. "You have to remember, T'kamen, that on the occasions when I was Weyrleader, the main thing on my mind was *staying* Weyrleader." The old rider grimaced. "I never did, but that didn't stop me trying. H'ersto wasn't a threat. Even if he'd had the ambition to lead the Weyr, Alonth never had the class to take on a queen. So it seemed wiser to leave H'ersto in a ranking position than to replace him with a bronze rider who was a bigger danger."

"Flightleader's an even more decorative title than Wingleader," L'stev muttered.

R'hren nodded reluctantly. "It means very little these days."

"Take it as an encouraging sign, Kamen," C'los advised the bronze rider. "If H'ersto was willing to defect, others must be thinking about it."

"I was more concerned about how far some Council riders would be willing to go to affect Shimpath's flight," said T'kamen.

"He has a point," commented V'rai. "L'dro would rig it against Epherineth if he thought he could."

"But could he?" asked T'rello. "I mean, I don't know from my own experience, but *could* Alonth have interfered with Pierdeth once they were all airborne?"

"Mid-air tussles do happen," said R'hren. "Bronzes will lash out if another gets too close, or if they're obstructed. But could H'ersto actually make Alonth do that deliberately?" He shook his head. "I don't know. Queen flights are very intense. Neither bronze nor rider is thinking about anything besides winning."

"You said that Alonth isn't good enough to have a serious shot at a queen," said Jenavally. "If H'ersto knew he didn't have a chance himself, could he hold back from the need to win, and settle for influencing the outcome instead?"

"I suppose so," R'hren said doubtfully. "A rider could make his beast more reckless, more likely to collide with another."

"In that case, Epherineth could face half a dozen bronzes with the intention of blocking him," said C'los. "D'feng and Sejanth don't have a serious chance, and D'feng doesn't want to be Weyrleader himself."

"It would be very easy to make it seem accidental with twenty dragons in the air," L'stev added. "No one remembers what happens in a flight, anyway."

"And Pierdeth doesn't need long to win Shimpath," said Jenavally. "The other bronzes would only need to delay Epherineth long enough for Pierdeth to catch her up."

The discussion made Sarenya frown as she bit off a thread and pulled experimentally at the seam she had just sewn. "I thought mating flights were more straightforward than this," she commented quietly to C'mine.

"They are, for the dragons. It's people who make them complicated," the blue rider replied softly. He smiled. "Do your fire-lizards chase much?"

"The blue probably does, but he leads quite a separate life from me," said Sarenya. "Tarnish caught queens at Blue Shale once or twice. I haven't seen any here, though."

"There aren't many at Madellon," C'mine told her. "Too far inland, and most riders have enough to keep them busy."

"Evidently," Sarenya said dryly, indicating the debate with a flick of her eyes.

“We need a new Weyrleader,” said C’mine. “Can you think of anyone better than Kamen?”

Sarenya looked at the bronze rider. Beside him, C’los was talking rapidly, with characteristically exaggerated gestures, but no one could have mistaken him for the real force in the room. T’kamen was still and focused, listening, his eyes intent, his demeanour one of contained readiness: he almost seemed to radiate leadership. He would probably never be a beloved leader, but he would always command respect, and lead well and wisely. Sarenya had known T’kamen seven Turns ago, and she knew him still: this was a man who had been born to make decisions.

But the longer she listened to the discussion, the more aware she became of her exclusion from it. It wasn’t that the dragonriders were deliberately ignoring her – she simply had nothing to contribute. C’mine had sought her out and specifically invited her to come to the meeting, and Sarenya was grateful to the blue rider for thinking of her, but her presence was completely superfluous to the business at hand.

The only other non-rider present was Chuvone, and even he had once ridden a blue. Sarenya didn’t know the full story of how the man had lost his dragon, but there was something unsettling about him. “C’mine?”

The blue rider looked at her inquiringly.

“What happened to Chuvone’s dragon?”

C’mine glanced at the dragonless man, and a deep sadness touched his eyes. “His dragon misjudged a turn in training manoeuvres and hit the wall of the Bowl. Ch’vone got away with some minor injuries, but Gommeshath died on the ground.”

“Why did it happen?”

The blue rider shook his head. “He was the youngest weyrling... T’kamen thinks it was his own fault. Gommeshath was the most agile of the blues in our class, and maybe Ch’vone needed to prove he was as good as any of the older riders. Or maybe L’dro was taunting him; I don’t know. What I do know is that he didn’t deserve to lose his dragon. No one deserves that.”

Sarenya considered for a moment. “Do you think he would rather not have Impressed?”

C’mine’s expression turned briefly distant, as if he was talking to his own dragon to reassure himself. “I can’t say, Saren,” he said finally. “Not even for myself. To lose Darshanth...” He shook his head. “I don’t even want to think about it. But to never have known him at all...I don’t know. I suppose it would be like choosing

between being blind from birth, or losing your sight during adulthood. Is it better to lose what you once had, or to never have it in the first place?"

"I think it would be better to have gone blind later," Sarenya said slowly. "At least then you could imagine what everyone else is seeing."

The blue rider looked at her with such understanding and sympathy in his eyes that for a moment Sarenya was confused. What had she said...? But then she knew, and the fact that C'mine had perceived it first spoke of the blue rider's sensitivity. He knew how hard it was for her to be among dragonriders; almost, perhaps, as hard as it must be for Chuvone. Chuvone, at least, had seen the rainbows that Sarenya never would.

"I know I'd rather lose my sight than my dragon," C'mine said finally. "Not that I'd like to go blind." Then the blue rider smiled, and nodded towards his weyrmate. C'los was wearing a garish purple and black shirt. "Not unless he makes a habit of wearing that thing, anyway, and then it might just be out of my hands..."