

# Exodus Rising

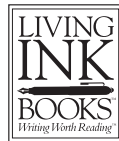
TALES OF STARLIGHT SERIES





# Exodus Rising

TALES OF STARLIGHT SERIES



Bryan Davis

# Exodus Rising

Volume 3 in the Tales of Starlight® series

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AUTHOR'S NOTE FOR  
*EXODUS RISING*

*Exodus Rising*, published by AMG/Living Ink Books, is the third book in Tales of Starlight, a series that acts as a companion to Dragons of Starlight, a series for young adults published by Zondervan.

*How to Read the Story World:*

You can fully enjoy Tales of Starlight without reading Dragons of Starlight. If you read both series, however, you will gain a fuller understanding of the story world.

If you intend to read both series, here is my suggested reading order:

1. *Starlighter* (Dragons of Starlight book #1)
2. *Masters & Slayers* (Tales of Starlight book #1)
3. *Warrior* (Dragons of Starlight book #2)
4. *Third Starlighter* (Tales of Starlight book #2)
5. *Diviner* (Dragons of Starlight book #3)
6. *Liberator* (Dragons of Starlight book #4)
7. *Exodus Rising* (Tales of Starlight book #3)

You may switch the reading order for entries 1 and 2, and you may also switch the order for entries 4 and 5.

Because *Exodus Rising* ends the entire story world for both series, the story refers to events in the Dragons of Starlight series several times, so I recommend reading Dragons of Starlight in order to fully comprehend the details of this final episode.



**D**OES a corpse care how loving hands lay her in the ground's embrace? Adrian smoothed out the dirt over Regina's shallow grave. With no tombstone available in this uninhabited land between the southern dragon kingdom and the Northlands, no one would ever guess that the body of a petite Starlighter rested here. Only thousands of surrounding flowers would pay homage to the little blind girl, nodding their heads as the breeze whispered about her courageous acts, her indomitable spirit, and her sacrificial love.

Shellinda and Wallace knelt at the opposite side of the grave, both with tears tracking down their dirty faces and grass staining their trousers. Their rolled-up sleeves revealed grime covering their arms as well, interrupted in spots by a rash—the telltale sign of the fatal disease plaguing nearly all of Starlight. They couldn't stay here to mourn. The only possible cure lay to the north where Cassabrie had flown with Regina's spirit in tow. Dwelling within Exodus, this world's guiding "star," Cassabrie had floated away less than an hour earlier, guiding the buoyant, glowing sphere with her powerful mind.

"We'd better follow Cassabrie." Adrian swiveled, slid his hands under Marcellé's unconscious body, and rose with her cradled in his arms. Although she had spoken now and then, always in a dream-like state and murmuring about her imagined adventures in their

home world of Major Four, she had been quiet for a while. Some evidence pointed to the idea that her spirit had separated from her body, so he had to figure out how to reunite them. Maybe Alaph, the king of the Northlands, would know how to accomplish that feat. In any case, the cooler weather that lay ahead might rouse her.

Without a word, Wallace, the one-eyed preteen, led the way, his shoulders and head hanging low and a sword dangling loosely in his grip. Shellinda walked in silence at Adrian's side. The only sounds came from the south-flowing river to the left and the ever-cooling breeze from the north, each one mimicking whispers that stayed just out of reach of understanding.

As they walked through the grass-and-flower meadow, Marcelle's body bobbed in Adrian's arms. She grasped his wrist and shivered.

He held her closer to his chest. "I'm sorry, Marcelle. I know it's cold, but we lost the deerskin along the way. When we get to the Northlands castle, we'll find a soft bed and warm blankets."

Marcelle stared at him, unblinking, though Solarus cast rays of bright light across her face. She took a deep breath and spoke labored words. "The Northlands?"

Adrian nodded. "It's not far. That's why it's getting so cold."

"Your father ... is there. ... Waiting ... for you."

He studied her lips—pale and dry. Every syllable likely caused a lot of pain. "It's good to hear your voice again."

She frowned. "Look ... for him."

"My father?" Ahead, nothing but grass and flowers lay in view, though the colorful carpet seemed thinner in the distance. "Sure, I'll look for him. I saw him get healed there. I'll tell you all about it when you recover."

Marcelle blinked, her brow wrinkling. She seemed confused, worried. Her dreams had likely turned to nightmares, and delirium



ruled her thoughts. Gasping between words, she said, "Have to ... go back. ... When it's cool. ... Get the soldiers."

"When it's cool?" Adrian lowered her to the ground and knelt at her side. Wallace and Shellinda seated themselves nearby amidst the grass, their bodies still slack. Although the cooler air had made carrying Marcelle easier, sweat still trickled into Adrian's emerging beard.

After brushing a sleeve across his brow, he rubbed Marcelle's fingers between his hands. "You're already cold. You need to warm up, not cool down."

With her free hand, she ran her fingers up his tunic and caressed his face, her eyes now wide and clear. "Thank you ... for taking care of me."

He rubbed her cheek with the back of his hand. "I would do anything for you. Just relax and concentrate on getting better."

"Can't ... relax. ... Too much ... to do."

"I've heard. You've been talking about being home on Major Four, something about traveling there in spirit. I don't know if you're just dreaming or not, but no matter what happens—"

"Shhh." She touched his lips with her fingertips. "Just tell me ... one thing."

He set his ear closer. "What's that?"

"Did you ... mean it? ... Or was I ... dreaming?"

"Mean what?"

"Your question." She closed her eyes, took in a breath, and opened them again. "You asked me to marry you."

"Oh, Marcelle!" He took her hand again and continued caressing her cheek. "If it will help, I'll ask again."

She shushed him with a fingertip. "Wait. ... Wait until ... I return ... from Major Four." Letting out a long breath, she closed her eyes. Her breathing settled, deep and even. Sleep had returned,

and her dreams of Major Four would probably follow. Or maybe her spirit returned there, as unlikely as it seemed.

After folding Marcelle's arms over her chest, he wiped tears from his cheeks. She had seemed more lucid than ever, maybe a sign of recovery or maybe a signal that her wandering spirit had drawn closer. Either way, it was time to move on.

"Hurry back, my love. I will be waiting." He picked her up again and nodded at Wallace and Shellinda. "We have to go. Just do your best. Let me know if you need to stop."

They tramped across the grass, Shellinda jogging at times to keep up. Adrian focused again on the northern horizon. At this pace, it would take hours to reach the Northlands, and stops for water and other necessities would slow them further. Not only that, his arms would need rest from time to time. Every delay would bring Wallace and Shellinda closer to death as the disease ravaged their bodies. Earlier, Cassabrie had hastened their journey by a miracle, making the river reverse so they could ride a raft toward the north, but it seemed that any chance for another miracle floated away with her and Exodus.

As flowers brushed against their legs, even the spindly stems felt like a blocking force. Shellinda winced, now limping. Wallace's shoulders drooped further. If only they had the cart the flooding river had swept away, a horse to ride, or anything that might dissolve the distance to the Northlands castle and its lord, King Alaph, the white dragon. Perhaps he held the secret cure to all their ills.

\* \* \* \* \*

Marcelle clutched the spine protruding from Magnar's back as he beat his powerful wings, whipping the air with effortless strokes. Below, Mesolantrum's soldiers filed through the woods toward a clearing a couple of miles in the distance. Dressed in coats and thick trousers as they marched in balmy weather, their faces

glistened with sweat. Although laboring now, they would soon find relief. The clearing hid the portal to Starlight, a passage to the frigid Northlands region in that world.

Marcelle reached under her tunic and pried a dragon's scale away from her chest, the scale Arxad had given her as a seal of their covenant. In moments, she would pass through the portal and lose the physical body her mind had conjured from the soil upon her spirit's arrival on Major Four, and this scale would fall and become lost.

She pushed the scale into a leather pouch hanging from Magnar's spine alongside her scabbard. Inside the pouch, the scale lay next to the stardrop's box. Both would be safe, at least for now.

Magnar bent his neck and drew his head close to Marcelle. "Two humans await our arrival in the clearing, but I do not think they have seen us yet. I hope to learn their identities and purpose before they learn of our presence, so I will fly lower and out of view for the time being."

"Understood." Marcelle clutched the spine more tightly. Magnar dropped to just above tree level and flew in a line that would take them to the right of the clearing. With the troops now out of sight, only greenery and an occasional glimpse of the ground passed underneath, though the soldiers' crunching footsteps and the commands of their leaders penetrated the foliage from time to time.

Soon, Magnar bent to the left and circled back. Shouts from below indicated that the soldiers had reached the clearing. Magnar extended his long neck closer to the trees, apparently listening. After a moment or two, he drew his head toward Marcelle again. "I have now identified the humans I noticed earlier—Edison Masters and Governor Orion. Captain Reed has arrived and is conversing with them."

"Interesting," Marcelle said. "I trust Edison, but Orion will do anything to keep the soldiers from going through the portal."

“I assume he fears the disease and its spread here in your world.”

“And loss of influence.” Marcelle leaned to the side to try to get a look at the clearing, but the rush of passing treetops and Magnar’s wings blocked her view. “We need to make sure he stays on this side of the portal. If he goes alone to Starlight for even a moment, he could close our way back.”

Magnar’s ears flattened. “We must prevent that at all costs.” He rose higher and brought the clearing into Marcelle’s line of sight. Edison and Orion stood side by side. Orion glanced upward and locked stares with Marcelle, his tall form and hooked nose making him look like a long-legged hawk. He then said something to Edison and turned toward the portal.

“No!” Marcelle shouted. “Don’t let him go! He’ll close the portal!” She hunkered low. Magnar swooped toward the ground. Orion jumped through the invisible doorway and disappeared. Grabbing the air with his wings, Magnar leveled out and zoomed after him.

The moment they passed through the portal, sparks flew. A sizzle erupted. When everything cleared, Orion came into view, stooping between a boulder and a line of crystalline pegs in a landscape of snow and evergreens. Cassabrie stood nearby inside a shining sphere, shouting something indistinct.

Magnar thrust out his wings. With several powerful beats, he shot into the sky. Marcelle instinctively tightened her grip on his spine, but her fingers passed through it. Yet, the sudden shift in direction failed to sling her from the dragon’s back. The wind in her face felt like a tingle rather than a gust. “Where are you going? We have to stop Orion!”

“Not with Cassabrie present.” Magnar flew toward a castle in the distance, a familiar structure now, though clouds covered its higher levels. “She has the power to slay me and enough fury to do so without so much as the bat of an eye.”

“You’re flying away from a girl in a bubble? Are you a coward?”

“Your loose tongue will be the death of you,” Magnar growled. “I am no coward. If I die, your human friends will die. If I live, I will fight to free them from slavery. If you wish for me to risk death at the hands of that wicked Starlighter while she is empowered within Exodus, then give the word and I will do battle with her. Otherwise, allow me to continue humiliating myself by carrying a thankless shrew to find help to solve her bodiless condition.”

Marcelle drew her hands close to her eyes. As they moved, they flickered in and out of visibility. She had become a spirit, as expected, altering the effects of gravity and wind on her amorphous presence. “I apologize, Magnar. I spoke too hastily.”

“As is your custom.” Magnar drew his head close yet again, his brow bent but not menacingly so. “I accept your apology. I, too, am one to speak without thinking. We would both do well to bridle our tongues.”

“I can’t argue with that.” She laid a palm on her cheek. “Can you see me?”

“Only fleeting glimpses when you move.” He straightened his neck and looked toward the castle, raising his voice to be heard over the wind. “I will take you to Alaph’s domain. There you may seek his counsel.”

“Will you search for Adrian for me? If he’s carrying my body, he might need help getting here.”

“I will conduct a brief search, but after that I must travel southward to my domain.”

“Did the soldiers make it through the portal? I didn’t look back to see.”

“Some made it. I cannot be sure how many. I saw Captain Reed, so at least they have a commander.”

“That’s good. And thank you for whatever you can do to search for Adrian.” As a mixture of snow and rain pelted Magnar’s scales,

Marcelle looked down. Patches of dirt marred the pristine whiteness of the once-frozen land. The river, now directly below, flowed freely. Perhaps this shift was part of the breaking of the curse Arxad had mentioned. He said that unpredictable consequences would result—perhaps a change in climate might be included.

Ahead, the cloud bank peeled back, revealing more of Alaph's ivory castle standing in the crook of a mountain. Although heavy mist shrouded the three turrets, the shield of vapor couldn't hide their reddish hue.

As Magnar drew closer, the doorway came into view, wide open and unguarded. A moment later, he flew inside and landed in the foyer, running a short distance before digging his claws into the wooden floor.

Marcelle slid off his side and floated down, like a leaf falling from a tree. Once she balanced herself, she ran to Magnar's front and faced him. "If you're unable to find Adrian, will you return to let me know?"

"If I find Adrian, I will bring him here. If I do not, my lack of return will inform you of my failure." Magnar angled his body and let the scabbard and pouch slide from his spine. The scabbard clattered to the floor, while the pouch struck with a thud. He then turned toward the door and took off in a run, beating his wings and lifting above the splintered wood. Within seconds, he had zoomed through the opening and into the sky.

Marcelle crouched next to the scabbard and tried to pick it up, but her hand passed through it.

"He is an impulsive dragon, isn't he?"

Marcelle straightened and spun toward the voice. A little girl stood a step away, semitransparent and shining. Although her misty body made her clothing hard to see, she appeared to be wearing wool-like trousers and tunic that fully covered her

arms and legs. She ran her fingers through her short red hair and smiled.

“Who are you?” Marcelle asked. “You look familiar.”

The girl bowed. “My name is Regina. And I know who you are, Miss Stafford.” She grinned. “Alaph said for me to greet you.”

“Thank you.” Marcelle gave her a nod. “But please call me Marcelle.”

“Very well, Marcelle.” Regina giggled. “That rhymes.”

“Yes, it does.” Marcelle looked Regina over. Although semi-transparent and sparkling at the edges, she stayed visible even while motionless. “Are you a spirit of some kind?”

“You and I both are.” Regina grasped Marcelle’s wrist. “We can see and touch each other like we have bodies, but we don’t have much weight at all. You’ll get used to it in a few minutes.”

“I think I already am getting used to it.” Marcelle squinted at her. “So where have I seen you before?”

Regina’s grin widened. “You sometimes opened your eyes while Adrian was carrying your body, and we were together in Frederick’s little house in the wilderness.”

“You were with Adrian?”

She nodded vigorously. “He’s trying to bring your body here. I was with him and another girl named Shellinda and a boy named Wallace.”

Marcelle looked out onto the snowy landscape, whispering, “So it’s all true. It wasn’t a dream.”

“Uh-huh. All true. But I think Adrian’s still pretty far away.”

Marcelle refocused on Regina. “Then how did you get here?”

“Cassabrie brought me, because I died of the disease. She’s inside Exodus. It’s like a glowing ball, and she makes it fly. She couldn’t bring Adrian and the others, though. Since they’re alive, they’re too heavy.”

"I heard about the disease." Marcelle touched Regina's shoulder. "I'm sorry it took your life."

"Not me!" Regina ran a hand through her closely cropped hair again. "I was bald and blind, but now I can see. I like it a lot better this way."

"Well, I can certainly understand that." Marcelle turned in a slow circle. Cloud-obscured sunlight revealed the massive foyer's mysterious features. About a hundred feet above, ivory beams spanned a domed ceiling. Between the beams, leaded glass displayed a network of colorful spheres with a large reddish one at the center, likely a depiction of Solarus and its orbiting planets. A mural on the rear wall displayed a golden throne embedded with glittering gems representing dozens of colors. Below, deep scratches marred the planks, the landing zone for visiting dragons.

"Are you looking for something?" Regina asked.

"Not really. I'm just getting my bearings while I wait for Magnar to come back with Adrian—that is, if he finds him."

"Alaph said I can take you to his chambers. He's not back yet, but you can watch for Magnar and Adrian from a window." Regina reached her hands high. "It's way up there, so you can see all over the place. And when Alaph comes back, maybe he can tell you what he's seen while flying around."

"Good idea." Marcelle looked up. "Is there a stairwell around somewhere?"

Regina took Marcelle's hand. "This way."

As they walked, Marcelle caught a glimpse of her sword and pouch on the floor and stopped. "Oh, wait. I forgot about the things Magnar carried for me. I can't leave them here."

"I don't think you have any choice." Regina touched the scabbard with her toe, raising a slight sparkle. "I heard that we'll learn to move light things a little ways, but I haven't figured it out yet. I can't even move a dust bunny."



Marcelle tried to nudge the pouch with her own toe to no avail. "I suppose I couldn't stop someone from taking them even if I were here."

Regina shook her head. "Don't worry. I don't think any robbers are around."

"You're probably right. Let's go."

They walked into a side corridor, high and wide. Beams of light emanated from murals on each of the walls, following their progress. To the right, stars hovering over a dim river valley shone thin rays across their surreal bodies, like little eyes taking interest in the recent arrivals. To the left, Solarus hung over a castle very much like the one they now walked within, though the surrounding landscape of vivid green and flowered fields proved that the mural's castle had been built in a vastly different climate. Solarus cast a wide beam of reddish light that made the visitors' sparkling frames glow with a pink hue.

Regina swung their connected arms playfully. "A girl named Resolute showed me how to get to Alaph's room. There's a ladder nearby, but we won't need it." She stopped at a gap between the river-valley mural and a more abstract one of a white dragon painted on the wall several steps down the corridor. "This is where we climb."

Marcelle studied the smooth marble. "Climb?"

"You'll see." Regina laid a hand on the surface. A glow emanated from her skin, revealing tiny projections on the wall that ran toward the ceiling. She grabbed one at shoulder level, stepped on another next to her knee, and began climbing. "Follow me."

As Regina ascended, Marcelle stepped on a lower projection and followed. Normally these handholds would have been too small, but her unusually light weight made the seemingly impossible rather easy.

With every upward step, the surrounding light grew brighter. The paintings at each side ended, giving way to red plaster. The

walls narrowed until the corridor became a vertical cylinder, likely one of the castle's turrets.

"Almost there," Regina called. "Just another minute."

Soon, Regina leaped forward and disappeared. "We're here!"

Marcelle climbed a few more steps until her head rose into an expansive cylindrical chamber with a high ceiling, marble floors, and curtained windows spaced at ten-foot intervals all around. Setting her hands on the floor, she vaulted to the new level, her body as light as the air itself.

Standing on an elliptical red pad at the center of the chamber, Regina looked up. "I think Alaph will be back soon."

Above, a gaping circular hole in the ceiling allowed a view of the dreary sky. Clouds raced overhead, but no precipitation fell into the chamber. "Is an invisible barrier keeping the snow from coming in?" Marcelle asked.

Regina nodded. "It's like the front doorway. People and dragons can pass through, and the bad weather stays out. But it's mostly rain now. The snow is melting."

"Because the curse has been broken?"

Regina shrugged. "I don't know. I haven't been here long enough to know much about what's going on."

"Well, it's like this ..." Marcelle gazed at the raindrops sizzling on the invisible weather dome above. "Magnar wanted to break a curse that kept him bound to the southern region. Arxad said that doing so would unleash a new curse, but he didn't say what would happen." She set a foot on the pad. Since it covered nearly half the floor, it was plenty big enough for a dragon's resting place. "Maybe Alaph will be able to explain it."

"Maybe." Regina looked up again. "He's not much like the other dragons."

"And we're glad of that." Marcelle walked to a window with a southern exposure and pushed a red curtain panel to the side. In

the distance, a dragon flew away, his form no more than a scarlet smudge in the midst of snow, rain, and fog. Magnar must have run into a delay somewhere, but now he would soon be out of sight. How long might it be before he returned with Adrian? Would he even keep his word to search for him?

She glided to another window and looked toward the portal. Fog hovered over the river, veiling everything except a vague sphere of light—Cassabrie inside Exodus. Magnar had mentioned that Taushin wanted to use Koren and Exodus to expose humans on Starlight to a deadly disease, but it seemed that much had developed since then. The disease had already been unleashed, and now Cassabrie rode within the sphere. This mysterious Starlighter, a mesmerizing redheaded beauty, had inhabited and charmed Adrian, foiled the authorities on Major Four, and intimidated the strongest of dragons. Not only that, she had put a certain cocky sword maiden in her place, and that took some doing. Cassabrie possessed an incredible amount of power.

The Starlighter's words came to mind like whispers on the wind. *That was part of my goal, to provide him with the experience of giving control to a powerful presence so that he would be ready for a greater test.*

*What greater test?* Marcelle had asked.

Cassabrie's answer echoed. *I don't know ... I don't know ... I don't know.*

The sound of a whipping breeze rushed in. Alaph settled on the floor mat, his wings beating as he balanced his sleek white body. His blue eyes locked on Marcelle, and his pointed ears perked straight up. "Welcome to my abode."

"Thank you." Marcelle bowed. "I apologize for bypassing further polite talk, but I—"

"You want to know the whereabouts of Adrian Masters." Alaph bobbed his head. "I have seen him from afar. He is on his way, though the burden he bears has slowed him considerably."

Marcelle's throat tightened. "My body, you mean."

"That is his physical burden. It makes his legs ache, his arms quiver, and his skin pour sweat, but his emotional burdens weigh down his heart, and such weight can make a man's feet drag as surely as if he were carrying the world itself on his shoulders."

She blinked at him. "What are his emotional burdens?"

"Concern for your well-being is paramount in his mind, but he also believes in the reality of the idiom I used." Alaph's tongue—narrow and blue with tiny red stripes—flicked out and back in. "Adrian is the kind of man who carries everyone's troubles. He is unable to rest, thinking that he must unlock every chain, mend every broken body, and dry every tear. Surely his shoulders are burdened by far more than they are called to bear, and his dogged determination to carry your body for untold miles is a profound symbol of his unbreakable resolve."

"But that's good, isn't it? It means he loves me. It means he cares about everyone."

"His love is unquestioned, but whether or not his method is good ..." Alaph let out a frosty sigh. "I will leave that judgment for others."

Marcelle squinted. "Since you saw him, why didn't you help him? You could've carried him ... or us, I guess ... and he wouldn't still be trudging here with me in his arms."

"True. I could have relieved him of his physical burden." Alaph extended his neck, bringing his head within reach. "But that would have done nothing to relieve his heavier burdens, so his arrival will be delayed. His physical burden must remain in place for the time being."

Marcelle set a fist on her hip. "That doesn't make sense. The faster he gets here, the better off we'll all be."

"So you think." Alaph drew his head back. "There are other factors in play. Magnar is well equipped to bring Adrian here, and it is

important that he do so for reasons that you need not know. If he fails to find Adrian or decides not to offer transport services, then Adrian will continue on his trek, and although the journey will take a great deal longer on foot, I doubt that anything can conquer his admirable resolve. Of course, he will have to cross my moat, but my servant Resolute is there to ferry him. Either way, he will come sooner or later.”

“When he does, can you tell us how I’m supposed to reunite my body and spirit?”

“I know the method, but I lack the tools. When Arxad arrives, he will explain what you must do. In the meantime, it is essential that you learn a specific portion of Starlight’s history.” Alaph’s ears rotated ninety degrees. “Regina will be your guide.”

Regina pointed at herself. “Me? A guide? How?”

“You, my dear, were a Starlighter.” Alaph gestured with a sweep of his ivory wing. “Take Marcelle to the white room I showed you earlier, and you will be able to tell the tale she needs to learn. Gather the story from the voices in the wind. Cassabrie and Exodus have already supplied them.”

“Okay ... I think.” Regina slid her hand into Marcelle’s. “The white room is on the main level, so we have to climb back down.”

Marcelle returned Regina’s grasp but kept her gaze on Alaph. “How will Adrian know where to find me?”

“When Adrian comes,” Alaph said, “my servants will guide him to you. You will know when he is close. As your body draws nearer, you will be able to sense its presence, including its pain and discomfort.”

“Wouldn’t it make more sense for me to meet him before I go to the white room? My presence will encourage him. He’ll know that my spirit is alive. Then we can listen to this tale together.”

“You are a persistent one.” Alaph rose to his haunches and stretched out his wings. “I have many difficult tasks ahead of me,

so I must leave you for now. Feel free to do whatever you think you must to help your friend, but my advice is to wait patiently for Adrian while you witness the tale. Adrian will be better equipped if you do not intervene, and when he arrives, you will already be prepared to do what you must to reunite your body and spirit. This plan will save time so that when Arxad arrives, you will not delay his purpose.”

“How will Arxad know where to—”

“Our conversation has gone on long enough.” Alaph beat his wings and skittered across the room. When he reached the hole Marcelle and Regina had climbed through, he collapsed his wings and dropped into it, disappearing in an instant.

Regina stared at the hole with wide eyes. “He’s gone!”

“I noticed.” Marcelle crossed her arms over her chest. Wait patiently? Easy for him to say. He wasn’t a bodiless spirit waiting for someone to show up with a missing body. And he didn’t say she *couldn’t* go and help Adrian. He had just given advice. It didn’t make sense to stand around listening to a history lesson while Adrian toiled. After all, he carried her body. At least she could give him moral support.

Marcelle glided back to the south-facing window. Magnar was no longer in sight. The precipitation had changed to all rain, and the blanket of snow had receded to reveal muddy ground with splotches of ice.

No amount of bad weather could stop Adrian. He would find a way, dragon or no dragon. She could trust him. Without a doubt. When he arrived in the main entry room, he would find the scabbard and stardrop pouch and assume she was close by. He would figure everything out.

She turned toward Regina and extended her hand. “Show me the way to the white room.”