

Excerpt

Tracking Trisha

Dragon Lords of Valdier book 3

By S. E. Smith

Trisha vaguely heard Cara call out to Ariel as she moved toward Abby. Trisha stood frozen in place as Ariel pushed past her and ran to where Carmen was lying in the dirt. Her eyes flickered between the three huge shapes.

Trisha moved cautiously toward Ariel, who was kneeling on the ground next to Carmen. Trisha could almost hear her father's voice in her head as she approached the massive figures. *Always assess the situation, baby girl. Make sure you know what you are getting yourself into before you make a move.* Trisha tried desperately to think about how she could assess this one! Her father never taught her how to deal with creatures that could breathe fire and had huge wings.

Her mind tried to flit through some of the movies she had seen to see if any of the scenarios in them might actually work. She was definitely drawing a blank here. She would give anything to call her dad and ask for his advice. He would know what to do. He always did.

She absently patted her uniform to see if she actually had her cell phone on her. She didn't, of course. Her uniform didn't have any pockets on it. The designer said it messed up the sleek lines of the design when Trisha and Ariel requested some pockets

be included in the female uniforms. Her cell phone was in her jacket pocket, which was lying on the tarmac back at the Shelby airport.

Trisha's eyes widened when a beautiful—it was the only way she could describe it—jade green and silver dragon with glowing gold eyes moved a step toward her. She was captivated by its beauty. For several timeless moments she couldn't see anything else. The regal head and blazing eyes, the huge body encased in gold, the long curve of its claws, and the graceful whip-like tail with silver and gold spikes on the end. Trisha cataloged each magnificent part of the dragon's body, unable to break the hold it held over her.

She felt like it was calling to her, demanding she surrender to it. Trisha's whole body shook as she fought for control. She felt like she was drowning. It was Ariel's soft cry for help that finally penetrated the daze that clouded her mind and forced her out of her reverie. Trisha shook her head at the dragon, breaking the hold it had on her before she hurried over to Ariel.

"How is she?" Trisha asked quietly as she knelt down next to Ariel. She made sure she kept her senses tuned to what was going on around her. It could turn ugly real fast, and she wanted to be prepared in case it did.

"There's so much blood," Ariel said frantically as she tried to use the cap Carmen had been wearing to stem some of the blood flow from the wounds to her

chest. "Her pulse is getting erratic. I think one of the wounds may have hit her lung."

Ariel turned to the huge green, red, and gold dragon. "Please, help me. She's my sister. Please..." Ariel's voice faded as tears filled her eyes.

Trisha heard the dragon growl out something to the two standing next to them. She had a sense of forewarning that something was about to happen, and she didn't think she was going to like it. She stood quickly and went to turn toward the truck. Her legs, still stiff from the long flight and torturous truck ride, gave out on her. She gasped and reached out trying to keep her balance. Her hands encountered a silky smooth wall.

Trisha's eyes jerked up as she realized the jade green and silver dragon had stepped in front of her when she started to fall. Long, curved claws gently held her elbows while her hands were splayed across a wide chest covered in some type of gold armor. Trisha's eyes widened as thin threads of gold began weaving out from the armor and up through her fingers and along her wrists where they formed delicate bracelets.

She felt a sudden warmth invade her, almost as if the gold bands were trying to reassure her she was safe, protected. Trisha's head snapped back when she felt vibrations under the palms of her hands as the dragon purred at her. She was staring into a pair of flaming gold eyes when a bright light suddenly surrounded her.