



DRAGON
LORE AND LOVE

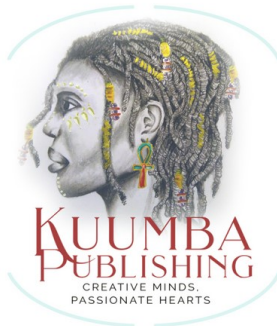
ISIS AND OSIRIS

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

N.D. JONES

DRAGON LORE AND LOVE

N.D. Jones



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DEDICATION

Charlene Theresa Jones
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Be at Peace.

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The Philae Clan Glossary of Important Characters

Bek and Lateef: Ice Dragons; Nebty Border Guards

Geb: Two-Headed Earth Dragon; Former Dragon King; Father to Isis and Nephthys; Mate to Nut

Isis: Sun Dragon; Dragon Queen of Nebty; Mate to Osiris; Ruler of the Preternatural Realm

Nephthys: Moon Dragon; Twin Sister to Isis

Nut: Sky Dragon; Former Dragon Queen; Mother of Isis and Nephthys; Mate to Geb

Tyets: Isis's Sacred Warriors

Aset: Shadow Dragon

Merit: Yellow Energy Dragon HATHOR: Gray Mist Dragon

Serqet: Thunder Dragon

Yumboe Fairies: Triplets

Olivebloom

Rainblossom

Citrussong

Zaman: Time Dragon

The Ombos Clan Glossary of Important Characters

Asim: Sun Dragon; Daughter of Isis and Osiris

Asira: Rock Dragon; Father to Osiris and Set; Mate to Makara; Nebty Border Guard

Dragon Investment Group:

Edjo: Wood Dragon

Hanif: Lightning Dragon

Nour: Rock Dragon

Horus: Rock Dragon; Son of Isis and Osiris

Makara: Rock Dragon; Mother to Osiris and Set; Mate to Asira

Osiris: Rock Dragon; Mate to Isis

Set: Rock Dragon; Brother to Osiris

PROLOGUE



The Dragon Kingdom of Nebty

Forests burned, dragons roared, and wings flapped in a deadly cacophony of violence and war.

Dragons of all sizes and colors were in the air and on the ground, battling to the death over who would control the twin deity scepters of Wadjet and Nekhbet.

Nut, a blue-and-white sky dragon, growled at her mate when Geb used one of his two massive heads to shove her to the mouth of the Cave of Dep.

“You stay here and protect the hatchlings,” he ordered as if the twin goddesses had left the earth dragon as the sole ruler of Nebty. They hadn’t.

Glancing behind her at the cracked white shells and to the baby dragons huddled there, Nut understood Geb’s position, although the thought of leaving her mate set the fire in her belly to boiling.

“If I fall in battle, your sky magic and ferocity will be all that stands between the foolish among us from getting their claws on the scepters.”

“I know.” Nut stepped closer to her mate, her snout going to one of his thick necks and rubbing. *“You must not only defeat the traitors from among us who want the power of the scepters but also those in the Demon Kingdom who seek unfettered access to the human realm.”*

That was as close as Nut would get to acknowledging the very real possibility that her mate may not survive this dark and dangerous night. For years, the Demon Kingdom, led by King Sansabonsom, had sought to undermine the rules set forth by the goddesses after they’d sought eternal rest within the scepters, leaving Nut and Geb as the gatekeepers between the preternatural and human realms.

Even as they spoke of Nut fleeing with their daughters and Geb remaining behind, sounds of warfare permeated the cold winter air, echoing with the sounds of bodies crashing from the sky in flaming scales of defeat.

“Not all want the scepters. The strongest of our allies will stay and fight.” Geb lowered his heads and licked Nut’s face, an affectionate gesture she feared would be their last. *“I need you to lead the others to safety, especially the young ones.”*

A stream of fire emerged from the darkness and behind Geb. The spray of molten heat slammed into the earth dragon. His wings, instinctively, snapped out and up to shield Nut and their hatchlings. With a bellow of fury, Geb leaped into the air, his wings taking him on a collision course with a lava dragon who possessed none of the earth dragon’s size or might.

In a matter of seconds, Geb had one of his mouths locked around the dragon’s reddish-black neck and the other jaw clamped on a black wing. With a hard tug, he disconnected the dragon’s wing and head from its body. Magma spurted and oozed. The dead lava dragon smashed to the charred ground with a resounding thud.

Spitting out the wing and head, Geb turned to Nut, who still stood at the mouth of the cave. As they stared at one another, dragons not involved in the battle began to move toward her. Most of them were dragon mothers with their hatchlings, or dragons too young, old or small to fight on either side but old enough to help tend to the youngest in their party.

“Take care of them, Nut. Fighting is easy, living and building from the ashes of ruin is hard. Be well, my queen. And be safe. Tell my daughters I love the—”

Six dragons attacked Geb. Claws, tails, and fire sent him flying backward but not down and definitely not out of the battle. With an ear-piercing roar of rage, the two-headed earth dragon counterattacked. Fire, wings and scales collided in the morbid, dark sky, the dragon battle epic in its savagery and sacrilege.

Dragons weren’t created to fight each other or intended to use the goddesses’ magic for personal gain and short-sighted goals of power and privilege. Yet, anarchy reigned. Nut’s beloved Geb would fight the dragon traitors who wished to steal the scepters, rule the preternatural realm, and turn a blind eye while the Demon Kingdom invaded the human realm and feasted on the flesh of children.

With a heavy heart, Nut turned away from her heroic mate and to the dragons awaiting her directive. She would lead them to safety as Geb had ordered. He and his most trusted allies were fighting to give Nut time to get as many dragons as possible through the gateway and into the realm of humans.

With a low rumble, she called her daughters to her. On young, unsteady legs they came, and she used her tail to lift them onto her back. She took to the sky, leading a caravan of dragons away from the only home they’ve known and toward the Gateway of the Two Ladies.

Makara, mate to Asir, one of the border guards who’d aligned with the demon king, flew by her side. Her oldest hatchling, Osiris, trailed behind his rock dragon mother as best he could. Set, Makara’s youngest dragon, held on to his mother’s back, dark eyes wide and frightened.

Nut heard the demons before she saw them. Not only did demons have a taste for human children, but they were also known to eat the young of any species, including dragon hatchlings. The sound of bat wings chased the caravan as they sped through the sky and toward the gateway that would take them to the other side. A few more miles and they would reach their destination.

In no time, looming before them, there arose two columns of an archway with hieroglyphic writing decorating the divine structure. The demons were right behind them, three hundred or more, from the sound of their wings.

Nut couldn't risk opening the gateway and having the hordes of demons follow them through.

"What are we going to do?" Makara asked. *"The young ones are exhausted. If the demons catch up to us, they won't have enough energy to fight or flee."*

Nut knew. She'd set a demanding pace from the Cave of Dep to the Gateway of the Two Ladies. Increasing her speed when the demons began their pursuit. During the race to safety, she'd lost no dragon. Mature dragons had to secure the hatchlings who'd started out flying under their own power and load them onto their backs. Makara had wasted no time coiling her strong, long tail around Osiris's winded body and setting him behind his younger brother, who cowered between his mother's rock indentations and wept like the terrified three-year-old he was.

Not questioning the ramifications of her plan, Nut called to the two border guards stationed at the gateway, both ice dragons. They responded with a quickness that gave Nut renewed hope.

"Yes, my queen."

"An ice wall between them and us. Now."

"Yes, my queen."

"Will the ice stop them?" Makara watched the ice dragons fly past the group, her question likely shared by others.

"Not for long and not without my help. Do you have room for two more passengers?"

Before Makara could reply, Aset, a fifteen-year-old shadow dragon, young yet big for her age, answered. *"I'll take the princesses, my queen."*

Under different circumstances, Nut wouldn't entertain the thought of having such a young and inexperienced dragon serve in the role of protector for her hatchlings. But these times demanded decisive action, earned trust, and unflinching faith.

Aset's parents, members of Geb's personal guard, were back there, fighting alongside their king for not only Nebty and the human realm, but for all preternaturals who would be threatened if the demons controlled their realm.

Nut turned her daughters over to Aset, who used her shadow magic to blend into the darkness. Even Nut could barely see the onyx dragon.

Unburdened, Nut turned to face the three demon hordes. The ice dragons, as white as freshly fallen snow, blew out torrents of white-and-blue liquid crystal that solidified when they hit the air. The wall began to form, long and high but not strong enough to keep the demons, with their sharp claws, razor wings and elongated fangs, from slicing through.

There simply wasn't time for the two ice dragons to build an impenetrable barrier.

The first set of demons broke through, crashing into the weakest and lowest part of the wall.

"Strengthen the barricade but fly backward."

The border guards did as commanded. Nut would not leave these dragons behind as they covered the caravan's retreat. No more dragons would be sacrificed this day.

The sky dragon hovered in the air, her eyes cast upward and to the stars above. She called to them, sparkling lights of order to the demons' chaos.

With a roared command, the stars above the demons lowered, and the sky below them rose. The heavenly bodies stretched and arched, resembling a dragon on its back clawed feet while extending the massive girth of its body over a copse of trees, with its clawed front feet on the other side.

“I hold your souls between my sky,” her voice boomed. *“You will not see the light of another day.”*

Sky and stars corralled the demons as the ice dragons not only built an ice wall but an ice fortress that encircled the demons.

The sky above the wall lifted, and the stars multiplied, creating a dome of cosmic energy.

“Go through the gateway,” she ordered the ice dragons.

Nut waited until the two dragons were safely through. She flew backward, her eyes on the prison and listening to the sound of demon claws scratching at the thick ice, followed by the thudding of rammed bodies against the prison.

When she reached the Gateway of the Two Ladies, a king cobra image of Wadjet on the right and Nekhbet, in vulture form, on the left of the arch, Nut took one last look at her beloved Nebty. For over a thousand years, dragons had served as the gatekeepers, determining the preternaturals who would be permitted to leave their realm and travel to the realm of humans.

The goddesses created dragons for this very purpose, placing the floating island nation of Nebty, the name ancient Egyptians gave to the twin deities, in front of the gateway. No preternatural could pass through without permission from the King and Queen of Nebty—Geb and Nut.

Now, with the harsh sound of battle and the scent of blood carried on the wind, Nut’s heart broke. Dragons were meant to protect the human realm at all costs. The Demon Kingdom could not be allowed to win, even if Geb and Nebty fell to King Sansabonsom.

Resolve had Nut flying through the gateway. Darkness and godly magic met her. From there, she could see both realms. The bright light of early morning in front of her and the dark clouds of midnight behind. The tunnel between the realms had many names, depending on the preternatural culture. Gargoyles called it Borlun, elves Gweyr, griffins Ghostcrest. For dragons, the tunnel was known as the Eye of Ra because it saw all.

Flying to the edge of the tunnel and cursing the traitorous dragons and opportunistic demons, Nut filled her belly with sky magic, breathed deep and brought it from her stomach, up her body and out her throat in a devastating rush of fire.

She scorched the Gateway of the Two Ladies and the Eye of Ra, refilling her lungs with fire and releasing it over and over again until the gateway collapsed and the space between the realms disintegrated under the heat of her dragon fire.

Geb, forgive me.

CHAPTER ONE



Upstate New York

Philae Manor

One Hundred Years Later

"This one's from me."

Nephthys handed Isis a flat rectangular box covered with shiny red wrapping paper. It didn't look like the other gifts she'd opened. There were no cute baby bows and ribbons, no pinks, yellows or whites, no "For baby" tag hanging from it.

Isis frowned, knowing her twin sister far too well to think that what she held in her hand was appropriate for a baby shower.

"Are you going to open it or what?"

If it weren't for the way Nephthys's brown eyes sparkled when she was up to something mischievous, Isis might have been fooled by the dragon's innocent smile and bubbling enthusiasm. But she did know her sister, which had Isis leaning forward as far as she could in her chair.

Nephthys, as tall as Isis at six feet and with the same rich brown complexion, almond-shaped eyes and braided hair, which fell to her waist, knelt in front of Isis with an impatient smile. Isis lowered her voice. "Have you forgotten that Mother and Makara are sitting behind you and that this is a baby, not a bridal shower?"

At the mention of their mother and Osiris's mother, her sister crossed her arms over her chest and pouted. "You're no fun. How can you possibly know what's in that box?"

Isis smiled and resettled her back against the plush, red leather throne chair Aset had insisted on for the shower. She was positive, the overpriced chair was one of those baby shower rental chairs intended to make the mother-to-be feel like a queen. Funny, since Isis, technically, was Queen of Nebty.

"I have no idea what's in your indiscreet box, but I do know my little sister."

Isis and Nephthys may have been twins, but they hadn't been hatched on the same day or even during the same season. Isis had come first when the sun reigned high in the sky and a white-tailed kite, a great sparrow, a lappet-faced vulture and a king cobra settled, at once and in harmony on the ancient sycamore tree on the floating island nation of Nebty.

As Isis claimed the summer solstice as her birthday, Nephthys had entered the world the day of the winter solstice, the light of the moon to Isis's heat of the sun. On the day of her twin's birth, white lotus grew around the same ancient sycamore tree. The white blooms created a path from the one-hundred-foot tree to the Cave of Dep.

Nephthys returned Isis's smile, white teeth and youthful beauty. She stood, kissed Isis on the cheek and then whispered in her ear. "It's just a little something to make you feel sexy after having the baby."

Ah, Isis liked that idea.

"Red or white?" she whispered back.

"Both." Nephthys placed another kiss on her cheek. "And I know you, big sister. Enjoy."

Nephthys turned away from her and raised her voice so Isis's mate, who'd been hovering at the edges of the female gathering, could hear her. "You're welcome, Osiris."

Osiris narrowed his eyes at Nephthys, knowing her antics almost as well as Isis did.

Nephthys laughed, and so did she.

Isis spent the next thirty minutes opening gifts for the baby as all the women in attendance *oohed* and *aahed*.

By the time she'd finished, Isis was overwhelmed. Not by the gifts, although she appreciated each one, but by the love and friendship that surrounded her, filling her home and her heart.

Isis closed her eyes, placed her hand on her rounded belly, and sighed with joy. Soon she would be a mother, and the thought no longer frightened her as it did when the doctor had confirmed her suspicions. Isis had moved past fear and was now in a state of anticipatory bliss.

Osiris's father had betrayed Isis's father, which had too much significance to others but none to the couple. They'd decided, when they began dating, to not allow the past to taint their present or their future.

Dragon history noted that Wadjet and Nekhbet, twin deities, had helped unify Upper and Lower Egypt under a single pharaoh. Afterward, they turned their attention to the preternatural realm and its disparate species, some of which preyed on humans. The goddesses used a portion of their godly power to create dragons, first Nut and Geb, and then other dragons. Eventually, the goddesses converted their essences into two scepters, the Moon Scepter of Nekhbet and the Sun Scepter of Wadjet.

As with many powerful objects, they were prized commodities many would do anything to acquire, including betraying friends, family and king.

A hand joined hers on her stomach. Isis opened her eyes and met her mother's teary ones.

"I thought you promised not to cry."

"I promised not to cry in front of everyone." Nut glanced about the spacious living room where family and friends had gathered. "No one's paying me the least bit of attention, so I can shed a tear or two without embarrassing us both."

Nut smiled at Isis, all her love and hope for her eldest child shining through a watery veil. This was the side of Nut, founder of Dragon Investment Group, that people rarely saw. To many, she was a cold and

calculating businesswoman with a heart of marble. She was a viper in the boardroom. But when it came to her family, her daughters, there was no more loving of a dragon mother.

"My hatchling is about to have a baby." With grace, she settled in the chair next to Isis and rolled her eyes upward. "I'm too young to be a grandmother."

Isis opened her mouth, ready to remind her mother that while she may look and play the role of a fifty-four-year-old human that being a dragon over a thousand years old couldn't be considered young by any standard. She stopped and closed her mouth when she saw the way Nut glared at her with a silent challenge to dispute her claim.

Yes, well, sometimes Nut could be a viper outside of the boardroom too. Taking a page out of Osiris's book for dealing with difficult people, Isis smiled politely and shut her mouth.

Appeased, Nut nodded and patted Isis's hand. "All will be fine."

"Are you sure?"

"Have I ever lied to you?"

"Never."

"Then trust me when I say, all will be fine."

A tear slipped from Isis, then another and another. She wiped at them. When in Nut's presence, she could admit that she wasn't as confident about becoming a mother as she would like to believe.

Three hours later, Isis stood in front of her full-length mirror, examining the changes her pregnancy had had on her body. Her breasts were huge, heavy and sore and Isis didn't even want to think about having a baby suckle from them. Not, she admitted with a sensual grin, she ever minded having Osiris suck them.

Speaking of Osiris, what was taking him so long to shower? Isis was in one of her moods, and it had taken all her composure not to do something about it earlier when the house was full of well-wishers.

At eleven o'clock, everyone had gone home or to bed. Well, not Nephthys, who liked to dance, party and drink almost as much as she enjoyed the attention of men—dragon and human. Her twin was likely in a New York City club somewhere, a sexual predator among unsuspecting male prey.

Thankfully, Isis had convinced Aset to tag along to keep an eye on her, which meant Serqet, Hathor and Merit would follow. Her friends needed a night off from serving as her Tyet guards, which they wouldn't have taken if Isis had given the night to them. This way, Nephthys could have her fun and so would the four dragons. Her sister could take of herself, which would leave the Tyets no choice but to relax and enjoy themselves. A win-win for all involved.

Strong arms wrapped around her thick waist. "I thought you would've been asleep by now."

Isis turned in her husband's arms and then looked down at the large belly that separated them. She groaned. "I'm as big as this manor."

"You're beautiful."

"Only if you're into beached whales."

"I'm into you, no matter the size."

"Playboy charms, Rock Dragon Osiris, are the reasons why I'm in this state."

He was also quite handsome and sexy, in both his human and dragon forms. At six and a half feet and as dark-brown as his formidable dragon scales, there was much to admire about her husband and eternal mate. His wide-set eyes had a way of looking at her that made Isis feel as if she had Osiris's full attention.

His long nose with a wide base was a family inheritance he wore with pride. But his lips and intellect were what had first drawn Isis to him, despite the violent history between their clans.

At a merger meeting between Dragon Investment Group and Kemet Holdings, Isis found herself dreamily listening to Osiris, the CEO of the fledgling investment company, as he gave an impassioned speech to DIG's Board of Directors about his company's reach and market shares. It may have been a horizontal merger, with both companies in the same industry, but DIG didn't need Kemet Holdings. They could've simply taken the company over, which all parties involved well knew.

But Nut, in a rare moment of empathy for the Clan of Ombos, had accepted their merger proposal.

Osiris led her to the bed, and they sat.

"You were the one to seduce me."

"I asked you out to dinner. That hardly counts as seduction."

"You wore a tight and low-cut red dress." He caressed her cheek, thumb gliding over lips and parting them for his kiss. Soft and gentle. "By the end of the night, I was yours. My inner dragon agreed. And you are mine. The most beautiful sun dragon I've ever seen."

"I'm the only sun dragon."

"That doesn't make what I said any less true."

After leaving Neby and taking on a human form, some dragons chose to forget about their life on their abandoned floating island, foregoing their dragon heritage in exchange for absolute assimilation into the human world. While others, like Osiris's Clan of Ombos and Isis's Clan of Philae, combined their newly acquired human lifestyle with that of their dragon culture.

The issue of how often and when to shift into dragon form remained an outstanding disagreement between the clans, even within clans. Isis and Nephthys, however, shifted only when in the presence of their mother and most trusted allies. Even Osiris had only seen her in dragon form once. When he finally did, the night of their mate ceremony and consummation of their joining, her rock dragon understood her refusal to do so before.

There were times, many in fact, when Isis wanted to cast off her human shell and release her dragon, soaring above the clouds the way dragons were meant to do. She couldn't, of course. Her responsibility outweighed her personal desires, no matter how unfair her position or how tempting the urge.

He kissed her again, feeding her silent craving that had begun when she'd entered her second trimester and had yet to abate. Yes, she was his, not just in body but in heart and soul.

Isis wanted Osiris in a lusty, primal way that was urgent and all-consuming.

He pulled back, leaving them panting and unfulfilled.

"I want to make love, Osiris."

Eyes dropped to breasts that strained against the silk nightgown Isis wore. Long tongue came out and licked scrumptious lips before parting and swearing softly. "You've had a long day, and you're exhausted."

True, but that didn't mean they couldn't make love.

"You need your rest, not a horny husband pawing all over you."

Ah, no, that was exactly what she needed, but Osiris was laying her down and tucking her in. He was right, but that did nothing to diminish her hunger for him. "At least hold me until I fall asleep."

"That goes without saying." He spooned against her. The distinctive bulge against her backside let her know she wasn't the only one aroused and wanting release.

"Make love to me." This time, when she asked, Isis rubbed her bottom against Osiris's pronounced erection. Over and over again, she shifted against him, pleased when he moaned then settled a hand on her hip.

"We shouldn't be doing this."

His concession, which didn't sound at all reluctant, had Isis turning her head to meet his dark eyes. Lust-filled, they slid from her face and to breasts that ached for his touch, preferably his wet mouth and busy tongue.

"Why can I never say no to you and mean it?"

Shifting onto her back, Isis raised one hand to the nape of Osiris's neck and the other to his pants, stroking his erection. "Because, when it comes to this, our desires are the same. To deny me is to deny yourself." The hand on his nape pulled him down for a thorough kiss while her other hand slipped into his night pants.

She groaned into his mouth at the feel of his thick dick in her hand, hard, ready and panty-wetting.

"Damn, that feels good." A thrust into her hand. "Too good." He moved out of reach, his bare chest, muscular and so very lickable, hovered over her. "You first."

"Are you sure?" Her eyes lowered to the erection tenting his pants.

"It'll keep. Besides," his hands pushed up her nightgown and pulled down her panties, then touched her with a single finger, "you're a lit rocket ready to take off."

A finger pressed inside, two, long and thick and slowly fucking her. Knees lifted, legs fell open and to the sides, and hips gyrated to Osiris's seductive rhythm.

Even with her large belly between them, Osiris was still bigger than her, which she appreciated even more when he stretched his tall form overtop of her. Left hand pressed beside her pillow while his right hand was stroking her to orgasm. Mouth captured her lips in a wet, sloppy kiss she felt all the way to her curled toes.

Thumb rubbed clit, a fast cadence that had her wrenching her mouth from his, breathing hard and clutching at his brawny shoulders.

"Yes, there. There."

He knew what she liked and how she liked it, which was why, when her orgasm broke and she began to shout and shutter, Osiris removed his fingers and replaced them with his tongue.

"Osiris. Osiris." His relentless tongue had Isis weeping her pleasure. One orgasm ran into another and into yet another. Tongue licked up and down. In and out.

Up and down.

In and out.

Drenched and seeing stars, Isis ran her hand through Osiris's cropped hair, massaging his sensitive scalp with her fingernails.

He still lapped at her, licking and kissing but bringing her down slowly from her orgasmic high.

"Is that what you had in mind?"

She couldn't breathe, much less answer Osiris's smug question. But, yes, that's what she had in mind. She'd thought they'd have slow, lazy sex from the side. That he would lift her nightgown and slip inside. That would've been fine with Isis, to be held in her rock dragon's arms from behind as they made love.

"So good," she finally said.

Rising onto her elbows, head still spinning from pleasure, she was about to tell Osiris to remove his clothes so she could return the favor. But he was already yanking off night pants and boxers, then helping Isis to her hands and knees and pushing into her.

They moaned at the joining. Isis sopping wet and Osiris magnificently hard.

Hands on hips, he thrust into her, not forceful but not too gentle either. He set a steady pace and Isis settled into the melodic sway of their bodies. The swinging of her breasts and the rub of pubic hair against soft ass. The grunting of his enjoyment and the fall of sweat onto her back.

Strong fingers tightened and thrusts quickened.

Grabbing three pillows, Isis shoved them under her stomach. With a grateful growl, Osiris fucked her in earnest. His orgasm had him driving into her like a great piston then holding Isis flush against him until he'd spent himself inside of her.

With a sigh, they collapsed to the mattress. She closed her eyes, already half asleep when she felt Osiris cleaning her with a hand towel. He readjusted her nightgown and helped her on with her panties before pulling the cover over her.

Rolling onto her side, Isis felt deliciously sated and unaccountably tired. "You'll work tonight?" she asked when Osiris didn't rejoin her in bed.

"I have a few documents I need to review for Monday's board meeting."

"I left a list of baby names on the desk in your office. We need to settle on a name for our hatchling."

Not that, while in human form, Isis could produce a dragon's egg. She would give birth to their child as a human female. If she'd been a dragon during conception, their child would've been a hatchling in truth. She loved her life in the human realm, but Isis disliked how less of a dragon she had to be to live there.

Osiris kissed her forehead. "I know. I've given it a lot of thought. Let's talk about it in the morning. We still have a little time before your due date. Go to sleep, my sun dragon." Leaning down to meet her lips, he kissed her when she opened her eyes. "I love you, now stop talking and go to sleep."

When she closed her eyes, Isis knew she would dream of Osiris, their baby and tomorrow. What she didn't know, couldn't know, was how her life would change from dragon love to tragic lore.