

## **Nova: The Missing Piece**

**By Dora Liu**

### ***Prologue***

“Cardinal! Cardinal!” I shouted with panic in my voice. I strained to hear a response from my sister, but all I could hear was the sound of my own heart pounding in my chest.

“Nova! I'm right over here!” Her voice was distant, barely audible over the sound of my own breathing.

I ran towards the voice.

“Nova, help!” she screamed, her voice filled with terror.

“I'm coming!” I shouted even louder than before.

“NOVA!!” Cardinal screamed so loudly that every dragon in the world could have heard her. But then there was a long silence.

I knew I could go looking for my sister, but instead I stayed. I stayed because I knew that Cardinal was gone. I sat there, crying. I was soon interrupted from the earth shaking! A massive crack opened in the ground. I stumbled backwards, trying to regain my footing, but I tripped on a vine and fell backwards into what seemed like a trench. I heard myself screaming as the darkness of the crack swallowed me up.

### **Chapter 1**

I fell. I fell into the darkness of the crack, my heart still aching with knowledge that Cardinal was gone. I could barely see where I was going, but I refused to give up. Suddenly, I hit against something hard and everything went black. I woke up on the bottom of the crack. I

glanced around. It looked like I was in a small cave.

A voice shouted, "HOW DARE YOU ENTER MY CAVE!!!"

My heart jumped. I quickly scrambled towards one of the other caves.

"Wait!" shouted the strange dragon, her voice changing. "You look familiar." she said.

The dragon examined me more closely. "I saw a red fire dragon with white scales yesterday and you look just like her."

I gasped. "It must have been Cardinal! She's my sister!" I said. "I'm trying to find her and she's missing!"

"Hey! Calm down! Tell me more slowly, okay? But first of all, my name is Moonbeam. How about yours?" "Nova." I said quietly, about to cry.

Moonbeam's expression was soft and she comforted me. "I'm sorry to hear that...maybe we can look for her together?" she said, her tone soothing and gentle.

I was desperate to find Cardinal, so I agreed. As we talked, I felt a glimmer of hope. Despite the darkness that surrounded me, I knew that I had found a friend who would always be there for me.

## **Chapter 2**

"Are you an animus?" I asked. I knew an animus wouldn't use their unlimited power much, and would avoid talking about it, so maybe she was one. Moonbeam ignored my question. I could tell by her evasive gaze that she was indeed an animus.

I noticed Moonbeam's attention was drawn to the cave's ceiling. "The prophecy," she whispered. "It's happening."

Eager to know more, I leaned in and asked, "what prophecy?"

"The Legendary Trench Prophecy," she said. "It's coming true."

I read the words carved on the ceiling out loud:

*~The Legendary Trench Prophecy~*

*The earth is shaking*

*The ground is quaking*

*Your fears are coming true.*

*It swallows up anyone*

*Who dares to look*

*Until an army comes through.*

I felt a chill run down my spine as I remembered these words of the ancient prophecy that had been whispered among dragonkind for many generations.

“We must stop it.” She said. “Or everyone we know and love will be lost forever.”

### **Chapter 3**

Determined to stop this catastrophic event, Moonbeam and I tried to think of a solution. Since she was born in the trench, Moonbeam suggested seeking advice from dragons known as elders, that have been in the trench longer than any other dragon.

“They might have knowledge about the prophecy.” She said.

We asked them if they knew how to prevent this from happening. “Legend says a lost piece to the prophecy is right in this trench.” said one of them. “Maybe you can find it.”

We searched for hours, but we didn’t find the lost piece. “All I found was this beautiful pearl encrusted with bits of emerald.” I said. All the other dragons in the cave were amazed.

“Where did you find it?” a male water-plant dragon asked. He was bigger than

me and apparently stronger than the other dragons.”

“In one of the caves.” I replied. “Why do you ask?”

“I-I know about a secret cave.” He stammered. “Tell me more about this cave.” I said, with a hint of suspicion in my voice.

## **Chapter 4**

“What’s your name? Let’s be friends!” Moonbeam suddenly said to the new dragon.

“Moonbeam—” I started, but the other dragon spoke before I could tell Moonbeam he might not be trustworthy.

“My name is Dripleaf,” The new dragon said. “When I was still a dragonet, there were twenty-one caves instead of twenty. Me and my friend, Vine, went exploring in the secret cave. We saw an animus dragon at work. But he turned his head at us and we screamed so loud that the cavern collapsed. Not on top of us though, because we escaped.”

“Where was the cave?” I asked, intrigued by Dripleaf’s story.

“Beside the 20th, of course.” He said.

Excited by the possibility of discovering an animus dragon’s lair, we all began digging at the spot Dripleaf had pointed to. But Moonbeam, in all her eagerness, dug too hard and we all fell into the hole. To our surprise, it turned out to be a slide that took us all the way to the bottom. And what we saw was beyond our wildest imagination.

## Chapter 5

For a moment, I felt like I couldn't breathe. What I saw was too horrifying. Cardinal. This word swirled in my head like a whirlpool. Cardinal's lifeless body lay on the ground, covered with blood. It looked like she had been murdered. Why would anyone do this to her? We carried her body to the place where we came in. Then we decided to go deeper in the cave.

"It's very dark in here." Moonbeam said, after a long silence.

"Don't worry, my tail lights up." I reassured her.

"Watch out!" Dripleaf yelled.

He was too late. I fell into a hole, groaning as I hit the bottom. It was dark, but I saw something shimmering next to a rock. "I found a key!" I exclaimed, and my friends rushed to join me.

Dripleaf studied the key. "I think it opens something down here, but I'm not sure what. A treasure chest?"

"A door maybe?" I guessed. "What do you think, Moonbeam?" I asked, but Moonbeam had vanished.

## Chapter 6

"Moonbeam!!" I yelled, panic bubbling up inside me. "We've got to find her!" I said, shaking Dripleaf.

"Could...you...please...stop...shaking...me?" he groaned.

I released him and took a deep breath. "Moonbeam! Moonbeam!" I yelled frantically.

"Shh!" said Dripleaf. "I think I hear something."

And then we heard it -- a muffled cry for help. "Hey! Let go! OW! Help!"

"That's Moonbeam!" Dripleaf cried. We quickly hurried towards the sound and quietly

entered a dimly lit room where Moonbeam lay tied up and unconscious. Beside her, there was a black, mysterious dragon wearing a mask. It was the animus!

“Moonbeam!” Dripleaf cried out.

“SHH!” I hissed, but it was too late. The animus turned his head at us, and before we could react, he shot a tiny dart at both of us and we blacked out.

## **Chapter 7**

As I regained consciousness, I realized Dripleaf was tied up, and so was I! I tried to bite through the thick rope, but it barely made a difference.

“Any ideas, Nova?” said Moonbeam.

“Maybe you can use your animus powers.” I suggested. But Moonbeam said it was animus-proof.

“Can we use fire?” Dripleaf asked. “It looks flammable.”

“Worth a try.” said Moonbeam.

“I’ll do it.” I said. I blasted the rope with flame, and it worked! I carefully freed Dripleaf, then Moonbeam.

“We did it!” they exclaimed. “Now let’s go find the missing piece.”

## **Chapter 8**

We walked for what felt like hours until we came to a door.

“Do you think this key opens the door?” Moonbeam wondered.

“Let’s give it a try.” I said. Dripleaf inserted the key and turned it. Click! The door opened, revealing a room that looked like a puzzle.

As we stepped inside, Moonbeam slipped on a piece of paper. “OOF!” she exclaimed as she fell.

I picked it up. It looked like some sort of riddle.

Dripleaf read it out loud, “I am strong, I am long, I’m a place where you can find. I am clear, I am near, I’m where the next key now will hide.”

“I think that’s the river!” I said. “Let’s look there!”

We hurried to the river, and Dripleaf dove in with a splash. A moment later, he came out.

“I got it!” he yelled with excitement.

“We have matching pearls!” I said.

“I think you put them in the holes in those pedestals.” said Moonbeam.

We both did as Moonbeam instructed, and there was a low rumbling. Suddenly, another pedestal rose out of the ground. On top of it sat an orb and the lost piece to the prophecy!

“What’s this orb?” I asked Moonbeam.

“It’s a wishing orb,” she explained. “It allows you to have three wishes.”

“Can we read the missing piece now?” said Dripleaf.

“I’ll read it!” said Moonbeam.

*"The only way  
to be free  
the orb you're holding  
is the key."*

## Chapter 9

Moonbeam used her animus powers to teleport us back to the main cave. We were greeted by the other dragons that were all anxiously waiting for our return.

“I think I figured something out.” said Moonbeam, looking thoughtful. “I think the prophecy says we have to wish for us to be free.”

“That is definitely worth a try.” I said. We all agreed Dripleaf would have the first wish.

“I wish every dragon in here would be free.” he said.

Suddenly, the ground started to shake, and the walls of the cave trembled. Then, with a deafening roar, the entire ceiling of the cave crumbled, revealing the bright blue sky above. A blur of wings, tails, and talons shot towards the open sky. Once the chaos died down, Dripleaf passed the orb to Moonbeam.

“I wish the animus who tied me up will die.” She said, her voice filled with determination.

Then Moonbeam passed it to me. I knew that I could have anything I wanted with the orb. I paused for a moment, thinking about what I should wish for. I could wish for wealth, power, or even immortality. But as I looked back at the caverns, I saw the dragon that I had come here for in the first place.

Just then, I knew what I had to do. “I wish Cardinal would come alive,” I said, my voice barely above a whisper.



## **Chapter 10**

As soon as the words had left my mouth, there was a blinding flash of light. A familiar voice called out my name. When my vision cleared, I saw Cardinal, standing on all fours, her eyes gleaming with newfound life as if she had never died. The other dragons gasped in awe at the incredible sight.

“Cardinal!” I cried, tears of joy cascading down my face as I ran to embrace her. It was the happiest moment of my life. The world around us seemed to glow with happiness, even the trees, the rocks, and the sky. As the sun set, Cardinal and I took off into the horizon, flying side by side. I felt a sense of freedom and happiness that I had never experienced before. It was the perfect end to an unforgettable adventure.

**THE END**