

Anastasia DRAGHICI

The Last Dragons

Chapter I

First encounters

I remember the first day I heard about Irina and Dorian Bibescu. It was in 2004, in a small café in Bucharest where books on the occult and dusty newspapers seemed to blend with the cigarette smoke. People who mentioned this couple spoke in hushed tones, as if the mere mention of their names could attract the attention of invisible forces.

Irina Bibescu, née Stanescu, born in 1942, was described as a fragile-looking woman, but with a gaze so intense that few could sustain it. Her husband, Dorian, a linguist and alchemist, Grand Master of a mysterious Order of the Red Dragon, complemented her in a strange alchemy: he was calm and rigorous, she was flexible and elusive. Together, they represented what one dared not even name: a living remnant of a secret tradition dating back centuries.

According to accounts, they had spiritually adopted a French researcher, whom they named Radu Dragonescu, a name that translates as ‘Son of the Dragon’. The spiritual child of this legendary couple was supposed to carry on the spirit and memory of their practices, but he rarely spoke. His silence was more eloquent than any testimony.

Their life had always been clandestine. In Bucharest, then in Sibiu, they received rare guests in dimly lit apartments, transformed into improvised sanctuaries. There was talk of discussions about the ‘Red Breath’ and the ‘Blood of the Word’, of meditations where the rhythm of the heart and breathing seemed to synchronise among the participants.

At the time, under communism, the authorities saw them as nothing more than marginal intellectuals, but those who knew them understood that they were the last guardians of ancient knowledge, a fragile bridge between myth and reality.

Chapter II

The red winged dragon and the schism

To understand the Order of the Dragon as it came down to the Bibescus, we must go back several centuries, well before modern Romania, to a time when knights bore arms for God and king. The original Order, strictly Christian, died out in the 16th century, taking with it a tradition of loyalty and codified rituals.

But some of its members refused to let the knowledge die. In the remote valleys of the Danube and the Carpathians, they encountered shamans, mystical poets and heirs to the Dacian cults, still alive in the memory of isolated villages. Gradually, a dissident group emerged, seeking to merge chivalric practices with local pagan and esoteric traditions.

It was at this moment that the symbol that would distinguish them was born: the red winged dragon. Where the original Order retained the terrestrial dragon, the embodiment of Christian loyalty and protection, the dissidents opted for a blood-red dragon capable of flight, half solar, half subterranean, a symbol of mastery of vital energy and spiritual emancipation.

The schism was not merely symbolic. It represented a philosophical choice:

- To continue the traditional chivalric mission and remain faithful to the Church.
- Or to open the way to forbidden, secret practices, combining meditation, vital energy and codified rituals, sometimes frightening to the eyes of ordinary mortals.

Ancient witnesses recount that these dissidents lived in remote villages, sometimes on rocky heights, where the proximity of the Danube and the Carpathian forests offered natural refuge from outside surveillance. There, they developed what would become the red breath, the circulation of a vital energy that was both physical and symbolic, as well as the first codified rituals centred around the winged dragon.

Archives are scarce and fragmentary. What is known is often delivered in coded notes, written with inks mixing pigments and blood. Each word seems chosen to preserve secrecy, even at the expense of historical clarity. It is impossible to know where myth ends and reality begins. Accounts vary: some speak of meditation, others of invocations, possession or collective trances.

This schism marked the beginning of a clandestine lineage, passed down from master to disciple, until it reached the Bibescus several centuries later. The figure of the winged dragon became the reference point, the common thread linking the vanished knighthood to modern esoteric practices.

Chapter III

The red masses and the scarlet breath

The first accounts of red masses reached me in a small village in the Carpathian Mountains, from an elderly adept who had now retired, his hands trembling, his gaze evasive. He spoke in hushed tones, as if uttering these words aloud might attract the attention of invisible forces.

Red masses, he explained, were not rituals of violence or black magic in the legendary sense, but codified energetic practices centred on what Irina and Dorian Bibescu called the scarlet breath of the dragon. The scarlet breath was neither a myth nor a tangible object: it was an energy, a vital current that could be felt flowing through one's veins and chakras, perceived in the synchronisation of the heartbeat and in the shivers that ran through the whole body.

The participants settled into temples converted from old churches:

- Central nave, space for collective trances.
- Raised choir, observation area for the master of ceremonies.
- Side aisles, reserved for study and archives.

In the centre, the green marble altar held a human skull modified with wolf fangs, a symbol of strength and ritual protection, a silver chalice and an athame, a ritual dagger used to offer blood to the dragon's energy and the vampiric spirits. Behind the altar, a red copper winged dragon stared out into the room, amplifying the collective concentration and perception.

Red, black, and white candles were arranged in a precise pattern. The shadows they cast created a play of light and movement that plunged the participants into a deep trance. Some reported feeling an invisible force circulating in the room, simultaneous shivers running through their bodies, and perceiving shared hallucinations, synchronised visions that shifted the space between reality and imagination.

These trances were not mere mystical experiences: they were codified and repeated, with every movement, every breath, every gaze having a meaning. The scarlet breath was at once ritual, psychophysiology and symbolic discipline.

Yet, despite the testimonies, absolute secrecy remained. Even the most senior members and those who had left the Order never revealed the full extent of the rituals. Notes and manuscripts are rare. Transmission remained essentially oral, so that the knowledge would never fall into the hands of potential intruders, whether agents of the regime or overly ambitious curious individuals.

What we know for certain is that these rituals produced tangible effects: synchronisation of heart rates, deep trances, collective hallucinations. What we do not know is where discipline ends and the supernatural begins. Red masses remain a space where myth and reality intertwine, and where the boundary between symbolic power and real experience remains deliberately blurred.

Chapter IV

Testimonials from former followers

1. Ana, 68 years old

"I remember a moment when my body was motionless but my mind was moving above the others. I saw a huge black figure with wings like those of the dragon on the altar. It stared at me with its fiery red eyes, then approached and touched my hand. I felt a burning energy coursing through my veins. Some participants were screaming, but I could only stare, paralysed by fear and ecstasy. Afterwards, my breath was broken, and I couldn't utter a word for hours."

2. Mihai, 44 years old

"During the final chant, I felt myself being thrown into an empty space, where I saw the other disciples floating in a glowing void. I heard voices that were not human, whispering in this strange language. I never dared to repeat the syllables. When I came back, I was still shaking, and some seemed to have lost their minds. I no longer knew if I had come from the real world or if I was still trapped in that scarlet breath."

3. Constantin 49 years old

"The temple is plunged into darkness, with only the glow of red, black and white candles illuminating the ancient stones. The air is thick and humid, heavy with the smell of wax, incense, dust and a strange metallic essence. The red copper winged dragon fixed behind the altar seems to be sizing me up. I feel my heart beating faster than my breath.

Irina raises the athame and whispers the first syllables in an unknown language.

The others respond in unison. The vibration of their voices seems to pass through the walls, the stones, my body. Icy shivers run through me, while my limbs become both heavier and lighter at the same time. A feeling of floating takes hold.

The synchronisation is immediate. I can feel the others' breath, their hearts, their breathing. The circle engraved on the floor seems to absorb our energy and redistribute it. I can make out winged shadows in the dark corners. I don't know if they are my hallucinations or real spirits. The atmosphere is palpable, as if the dragon's breath were passing through every being present.

Suddenly, I feel my spirit detach from my body. I float above the circle. My body remains motionless, but I hover over the nave, observing the other disciples. Some levitate imperceptibly, others whisper in voices that are not their own. The candles cast moving shadows that take on animal shapes, sometimes human. A shiver of horror and wonder runs through me simultaneously.

The chants rise, guttural and incantatory. Entities manifest themselves more clearly: dark shapes with glowing eyes, gliding across the walls, sometimes touching the participants. I feel their breath on my neck, an invisible force pushing, pulling and brushing against my skin. The words of the unknown language resonate in my bones and my mind. I understand that these spirits are linked to the scarlet breath.

All the participants see the same visions: winged silhouettes, dancing red flames, moving symbols engraved in the air. Some convulse, others burst into silent tears. I feel my body vibrate to the rhythm of the breath, and a deep voice whispers in my mind:

'Drink, breathe, let the dragon guide you...'

I try to resist, but part of me is carried away by this energy.

I notice that one disciple's voice changes, whispering words I don't understand. Her body trembles, her gaze freezes, then she laughs in a way that is not her own. The spirits seem to be having fun, observing, testing our resistance. Another person levitates a few centimetres above the ground, while her body remains completely still.

The intensity reaches its peak. The chants become a collective howl, synchronised with the beating of our hearts. The spirits stir, some brushing past us, some disappearing into the walls, leaving behind an icy wind and electric shivers. My mind is expanding, but I feel a limit: the energy could consume me if I give in completely.

Little by little, the chants fade. The shadows stretch out, retreat, and the red copper dragon remains motionless, watching silently. I fall back into my body, panting, exhausted and marked. The entities seem to have left a part of themselves with me, a lingering shiver, a whisper in the back of my neck that I will never forget.

The temple returns to calm. The air is dense but still. The scarlet breath gradually fades, leaving behind a feeling of invisible presence, of absolute mystery. I know that I have not only witnessed a ritual, I have crossed a boundary between the human world and the world of shadows."

4. Elena, 56 years old

"One day, one of the disciples levitated completely, her body rising slowly, and multiple voices came out of her mouth. She laughed, cried and screamed all at once. A spirit appeared behind her, moving in the flames and shadows. It seemed to look at each participant, as if judging our courage and endurance. What we saw that night was beyond anything I could have imagined: fear and fascination were inseparable."

5. Alexandru, 40 years old

"There was a time when we all heard screams that seemed to come from the walls. Shadows moved on their own, and an icy breath ran through our bodies. I thought one of the participants was pretending, but no, no one was moving, and yet the movement and sounds were real. I never knew if these spirits were evil or simply guardians of the dragon."

6. Gabriela 52 years old

"I saw Irina and Dorian disappear almost completely into the scarlet blast. I could feel their presence around me, but I could no longer touch or reach them. The chants and incantations were so powerful that I perceived multiple entities, some benevolent, others terrifying, which seemed to feed on our collective energy. I never repeated these rituals. I promised myself I would remain silent."

7. Stefan 64 years old

"life of their own. In the centre, the red copper winged dragon stared at me, motionless and menacing, as if sizing me up.

The master of ceremonies, Irina, stood near the green marble altar, where a human skull with wolf's fangs and a silver chalice lay. She raised the athame, the ritual dagger, and murmured the first syllables in an unknown language. Instantly, I felt a vibration in the air, a dull, insistent energy

running through the walls and floor.

The chants began, mournful and guttural, resonating in my bones. Each word seemed both familiar and terrifying. My heartbeat quickened, and soon I noticed that my breathing was synchronising with that of the other participants. Coldness ran through me, while my hands felt light, almost detached from my body.

Then came the strange sensation: my mind seemed to float above the circle engraved on the floor. I could see my body sitting motionless, while I, or what I had become, drifted above the nave. The candles cast moving shadows that transformed into winged silhouettes, black spirits gliding silently along the walls. Their presence was palpable, yet elusive, as if every glance they exchanged pierced your soul.

Whispers reached my ears, neither human nor entirely foreign, voices that seemed to come from the walls and the dragon itself. My fingers brushed the air, and I felt energy flowing, pulsing, coursing through my body. I no longer knew where my body ended and the space around me began.

At one point, the master of ceremonies raised the athame and made a small cut in his hand. Blood dripped into the chalice, and then a greenish, cold, undulating vapour materialised above Irina. It descended slowly towards her, entering through the top of her skull like living smoke.

His back arched sharply, his eyes rolled back, and his body rose several metres off the ground, stiff and silent, as if pulled by an invisible thread.

At that very moment, I felt a force envelop the entire circle: our legs became light, our feet lost contact with the stone, and we were all lifted a few centimetres off the ground, as if the entity that had just taken hold of Irina was now extending its grip to each of us. The chants rose, more powerful, in a hypnotic crescendo, and the entities seemed to manifest themselves more fully: collective shivers ran through each body, bursts of red light flashed in the darkness, and shadows undulated like living creatures.

I saw some disciples change their voices, whispering words that were not their own. Others trembled, some wept silently, as if overwhelmed by a presence too intense to name. And I... I felt my mind dissolving, absorbed by this scarlet breath, feeling both horror and ecstasy.

Time faded away. I no longer knew how many minutes, hours or eternities had passed. When the singing finally ceased, I fell back into my body, panting, exhausted and changed. The candles flickered gently, the shadows retreated into the walls, and the red copper dragon now seemed motionless, but alert.

I then understood that I had witnessed something that went beyond simple belief or ritual practice. The red masses were not just rites, but a journey into the unknown, a passage where body and mind are laid bare, confronted with entities, spirits, and the untameable energy of the scarlet breath.

I left the temple with the certainty that I would never be the same again, forever carrying the thrill of the shadows and the whisper of dragons in my memories."

Chapter V

An elusive existence

When talking about Irina and Dorian Bibescu, it is almost impossible to separate fact from legend. Those who have tried to approach them speak of two beings outside of time, living in a bubble where the usual rules no longer apply. Their existence unfolds in forgotten houses in Bucharest or Sibiu, then in secret retreats in the heart of the Southern Carpathians, far from prying eyes.

The red masses and scarlet breath were not limited to the ritual dimension. They were a total experience, where every gesture, every breath, every shadow and every flame played a role in the subtle manipulation of vital energy. But the intensity of these practices, combined with their clandestine nature, left its mark: some followers sank into madness, others committed suicide, and still others disappeared mysteriously—some suspect the intervention of the Securitate, which did not hesitate to neutralise any form of dissent, spiritual or intellectual.

The regime's official archives are full of alarmist reports: invocation of vampires, possession rituals, exorcisms and blood practices. But on the other hand, the followers themselves downplay their activities, assuring that these meetings were just friendly gatherings to discuss esotericism and poetry, where they spent a pleasant time meditating and exchanging ideas.

This tension between exaggeration and minimisation reinforces secrecy and mystery: rituals are almost never written down in their entirety. Transmission remains oral, coded, deliberately fragmented. The aim is not only to protect the practices from the authorities, but also to preserve their purity, far from outside curiosity and manipulation.

At the centre of this secrecy is Radu Dragonescu, who was spiritually adopted by the couple. This fascinating and discreet researcher has become the custodian of the scarlet breath and the memory of the rituals. But he refuses to pursue or pass on the knowledge. According to the few witnesses, he lives in seclusion on the other side of the world, silent and distant, guardian of a legacy whose true significance no one can measure.

Thus, the modern Order of the Red Dragon exists as a living legend: the Bibescus, perhaps dead, perhaps still present, continue to haunt the memories of witnesses. The red masses, trances, synchronised hallucinations and scarlet breath remain intangible, eluding complete documentation. Each story, each testimony, each disappearance contributes to creating a universe where myth and reality intertwine, where secrecy is both protection and part of the magic itself.

Chapter VI

The Order under Communism

The Iron Curtain fell on Romania, and with it, freedom disappeared for those who dared to think differently. For the dissident Order of the Dragon, this period was a test of survival, marked by fear, violence and disappearance.

The Bibescus, already cautious by nature, found themselves under constant surveillance by the Securitate. Official reports speak of a ‘suspicious couple practising a philosophy of blood and breath’, but every detail seems exaggerated, amplified to justify spying and infiltration. Agents infiltrating their circles reported occult rituals—exorcisms, vampire invocations, possession—which fuelled legends and rumours.

In reality, followers were subjected to brutal arrests, interrogations and torture, intended to extract secrets that the masters of the Order would not divulge. Some were sent to prisons or labour camps, others were interned in psychiatric hospitals, declared insane to neutralise their influence. Disappearances often remained unexplained. Survivors spoke in veiled terms of disguised murders, deportations and imposed silences.

Despite the threat, the red masses continued, more secretive and ritualistic than ever. In remote locations, sometimes high in the mountains or on the banks of the Danube, Irina and Dorian kept up the practice of scarlet breath. The collective trances, physiological changes, and synchronised hallucinations persisted, but now with constant vigilance, each gesture coded to escape prying eyes.

Former disciples still recount those nights, when the flickering light of the candles cast moving shadows on the walls, and the red copper winged dragon seemed to breathe life with every breath. Even under pressure from the authorities, the masters preserved the ritual coherence and oral transmission, refusing to write down instructions that could fall into the wrong hands.

For the Bibescus and their Order, secrecy was a weapon for survival. But this clandestine nature also fuelled the legend: witnesses spoke of disappearances, suicides and mysterious illnesses among the followers, while the authorities exaggerated the facts to reinforce fear. The members themselves downplayed their role, speaking of simple friendly gatherings, readings and meditations.

Thus, during the communist era, the Order of the Red Dragon became both a target and a myth, surviving through secrecy, discipline and absolute fidelity to its teachings. The trials of this period forged the shadow of the Bibescus and prepared the next generation, of which Radu Dragonescu would become the silent heir.

Chapter VII

Post-communism

The fall of the communist regime in 1989 did not bring light to the Order of the Red Dragon. On the contrary, it intensified the mystery and secrecy surrounding Irina and Dorian Bibescu. Freed from the constant surveillance of the Securitate, they chose to retreat to the Southern Carpathians, to a retreat where only a few hand-picked disciples could enter.

It was there that the scarlet breath, red masses and collective rituals continued, but in absolute privacy, far from prying eyes. The improvised temples mirrored the structure of the old churches: the green marble altar, the skull with wolf's fangs, the red copper winged dragon, the candles arranged according to a precise code — everything was in place to amplify the trances and collective phenomena.

Around 2005, the couple spiritually adopted Radu Dragonescu, then 43 years old, a passionate researcher of the occult sciences and fascinated by the Order's archives. He became the silent heir to the scarlet breath, learning to breathe vital energy and perceive the Black Waters, while discovering the spiritual cost of these practices. But unlike his predecessors, he chose not to pursue the path or pass on the knowledge, fearing that it would be misinterpreted or turned into an instrument of power.

The exact rituals remain entirely secret: no one can confirm the content of red masses, fasting practices, spirit invocation, the creation of collective thought forms (egregores) or individual thought forms (tulpas, servants), exorcism or possession. The mysterious disappearances of former followers, some of whom descended into madness or committed suicide, add to the mystery. Rumours suggest that some deaths may be linked to former secret police agents, who continued to hunt down all forms of esoteric activity.

Yet among survivors and witnesses, the memory of the Order remains alive, shrouded in a mixture of fascination and fear. Former disciples downplay what really happened, speaking of friendly gatherings where esotericism was discussed and meditations were shared, while authorities, past and present, exaggerate to dramatise. The result is a veritable veil of ambiguity, where myth and reality merge.

Today, Irina and Dorian have officially withdrawn from the world, perhaps dead, perhaps still present in the shadows of the mountains. Radu lives in seclusion, a silent guardian of the legacy, refusing all media attention. Yet witnesses speak of strange phenomena: at each equinox, a reddish light sometimes crosses the Danube, and the air seems to vibrate with a warm breath despite the cold. This phenomenon is called Răsuflarea Roşie, the Red Breath.

Thus continues the legend of the Order of the Red Dragon: a world where discipline, symbolism and energetic power intertwine, where secrecy protects the memory of the masters, and where the legacy can only be passed on to those deemed worthy. The scarlet breath, the Black Waters and the winged dragon continue to vibrate in the shadows, uniting past and present in an atmosphere of mystery where no one can distinguish between history and legend.