

Dragon Changes 3: Observations and Encounters

By

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"Down," urgently yelled an older man to the two people behind him. Both dropped to the open wild grassy ground surrounding them while a huge dragon lazily glided over the group. Once he saw the enormous blue three headed dragon fly by, the man then got up out of the prairie grass he and the others had dove into.

"Think it noticed us Bill," the younger outdoorsy man hesitantly asked him.

"No," Bill calmly replied peering about the wide rolling grassy Montana plains surrounding them. "Are we close enough for you to get a good look," the older man asked the other person in the trio.

Off to Bill's other side lay a twenty five year old woman. She held in her hand a huge white telephoto lens connected to a black camera body. Briefly she peered through the camera's view finder. The woman aimed the camera at the looming white capped rocky mountains off in the distance. After a moment she lifted her head and wiped some of her long windblown auburn hair out of her face before focusing back on the rocky peaks.

"No, I need to get closer."

"How close Regan," inquired the younger man.

"Oh I think another mile and I might be able to view the dragons better," Regan coolly replied to him.

"Alright then, let's get hiking." Bill remarked to the other two. Regan and the other man followed suit and soon fell in line behind the older man.

"If I didn't say it before, I wanted to thank you both for helping me get this close to the dragons," Regan thanked Bill and the other man.

"I've been wanting to ask you why you wanted to get close to them in the first place, especially with the extreme danger they pose," The younger man hesitantly asked her

"We know very little about these dragons Michael. Where they came from, what they want, or even why they're all congregating around Earth's major mountain peaks?" Regan informed him as she peered intently up at the myriad of dragons winging their way above the loft peaks ahead.

Michael contemplated that for a moment before hesitantly asking, "that's all good, but why can't you just use satellites or other less risky methods"

Regan didn't answer right away. She just contemplated the huge multi colored dragons who seemed to have no problem eating humans for snacks. "Others, like the military, are using

satellites and long range high altitude flying surveillance to monitor them. Yet, those people are looking for a way to defeat them. To kill what they call monsters. Things they see that have a propensity to eat humans at will."

Michael softly cut in, "I sort of agree with them."

"So do most people around the world," Regan agreed. "But I think these dragons aren't dumb. That they may be highly intelligent and may even be reasoned with. If there is a way to negotiate with them, then maybe we could co-exist."

Bill grunted, but Michael actually spoke up, "co-exist with something that see's us as food?"

"I know, I know, but if there is a chance, then we need to try it. Either way, this is just a information gathering mission. I need to observe them for a while before going any farther." Regan replied as she occasionally brought up a pair of binoculars to her eyes and peered at the mountains ahead of them.

As they got closer to the high snowy peaks, Bill picked up his own binoculars and began to gaze about the open grassy land around them. After a couple minutes Bill spoke, "ah found it, I thought I saw something off in the distance. It looks like an abandoned cabin. Somewhere perfect to hide inside while observing the dragons."

With that, the trio hurried the rest of the short distance towards the old structure. Coming closer, the three could see that it was an old two room abandoned homestead with a couple collapsed structures surrounding the main cabin. Michael guessed that the place hadn't been occupied for over eighty years. Yet with the main cabin surprisingly was still standing, it allowed all three to dash inside for cover.

Cautiously Regan moved through the cabin towards the its rear facing window. The opening's glass had long since been blown out while glass shards crunched under her feet. Bringing her camera up, she began to peer at the distant mountains. A smile crept over her face as she began snapping photos. "Perfect, just perfect," Regan absentmindedly commented while peering through her huge telephoto lens.

Hearing Regan was pleased, Michael and Bill began setting up camp within the old structure. Once they were settled down, both men tried to angle themselves within the old cabin to get a view of the dragons winging their way around the distant peaks.

"Wow," Regan exclaimed to the other two. "I never knew there would be so many and they'd be so different!"

"Is there any sort of pattern to their flight," Bill asked interestedly while trying to peer at the distant peaks with his own binoculars.

"Not that I can see. They look more like birds flittering around. Wait did you see that," Regan urgently called out as she peered at a couple dragons. The dragons she watched seemed disorganized. Then within moments the small group flew together. Each seemed to be moving their heads or gesturing to each other, shortly the handful of dragons all flew away in one tight group. This group unknowingly flew over the trio of humans hiding within the abandoned cabin below them.

"Did that looked like they were communicating," Regan hurriedly inquired of the other two. Yet neither could see that far with their limited binoculars. "It looked as if they gestured with their heads and legs before forming a group and flying off."

"And that means..." Michael asked leadingly.

"That they are intelligent," Regan asserted to the other two.

"Could be," Bill hesitantly agreed. "Let's hunker down, eat something and get ready to spend the night." He spoke to the other two as he began to unload some stuff from his backpack.

Once night had fallen, the trio camped in the center of the structure. Their only light they had came from the full moon outside of the structure. None of them wanted to risk a fire being seen by a passing dragon.

The group observed the dragons for a couple days. What they saw was that while the dragons seemed disorganized, they were actually communicating. Regan theorized that deeper within the mountains, these dragons must have some sort of sanctuary or open ground where they could be congregating in. She wanted to get closer to see if she could peak into their home. Bill quickly dissuaded her of the idea as they had no climbing gear. Plus there would be no hiding spot they could jump into to keep from being spotted.

The three huddled together within the cabin trying to figure out what to do next. Michael wanted to head home and re-supply while Regan was eager to push on. While Bill listened to the two silently.

However, before the group could discuss it any farther there was a slight ground tremor. It felt as if something really heavy landed just outside the cabin. Bill held up his hands for the other two to be quiet as he carefully peered through the open door.

What he saw looked like a gigantic six legged single headed golden dragon. It had its two huge wings tucked against its back as it casually peered about the abandoned structures with its green three eyed stare. The dragon's huge nostrils moved with every snuffled sniff.

The trio tried to stay as quiet and unnoticeable to the dragon. Cautiously it moved closer the cabin, almost guardedly. The thing began to poke its huge head around the outside of the small structure. A head that was at least as large as the old wooden building itself.

Each person tried to find a spot to hide deeper in within the cabin. Conversely, the dragon angled its head so that it could bring one of its huge green eyes close to the open door. It squinted the eye trying to get a good look within the dark tiny interior.

To Regan, the dragon's actions bespoke more of an intelligent interest than feral hunting. As if the dragon wanted to find out what was in the cabin then to just simply smash it down.

Almost as a confirmation, the huge monster reached out one of its limbs to delicately grasp the top of the cabin. Then it tried to carefully remove the roof without collapsing the rickety thing. As it lifted off the old roof, the dragon caused some of the cabin walls to either come with it or collapse down around the startled humans.

The sudden removal of the roof caused Regan to cry out in fright and the men realized how exposed they just became. All three were horrified to see that they had nowhere to hide and no way to get away from this huge dragon.

Out of unthinking desperation, "please don't eat us!" Regan cried out to the dragon.

Yet, for some strange reason it didn't seem to be making any movement to grab or snap at them. To the humans, the dragon seemed as if it was peering intently at them. Almost studying the trio. Rapidly the realization that it might not eat them emboldened Regan. She decided to fortify herself and try to communicate with it.

Defiantly standing up, Regan carefully stepped closer to the beast's head. She peered intently up into its three eyes. Eyes that to her were the size of large hub caps.

"Do you understand what I'm saying," she hesitantly asked the huge dragon. Its head was so close to the woman that every breath it exhaled through its nostrils caused Regan's clothes and hair to flutter. The thing had its head hovering a couple feet off the ground while its huge body was crouched behind it. Then, to answer her question, it nodded its head.

Looking to the other two, "see they are intelligent!" Regan exuberantly blurted out to the two men. Cautiously the two got up and hesitantly stood behind Regan.

"Do you want to eat us," she asked the dragon while readying herself for it to nod yes. Yet the dragon shook its head no. Seeing that caused her heart to leap.

"Can you speak to us?"

At first it seemed as if the dragon wasn't going to reply. Then the dragon lifted its head up away from the ground a bit to open its mouth. The trio instinctively reacted as if it was going to eat them before they remembered that it gestured it did not want to.

Before the amazed humans, the dragon seemed to be doing something within its mouth as it looked as if it was pushing something out. All of them watched as what looked like a nude human woman was being pushed out from underneath the dragon's tongue. Her black hair was soaked with saliva, her arms held to her sides, and her almond shaped Asian eyes closed. Yet instead of fully disgorging the human, they saw that she was actually connected to the dragon by a large fleshy tendril coming out of its mouth.

Once fully expelled from its pouch under the dragon's tongue, the female torso woke up. The dragon carefully closed its mouth and lips around the torso's fleshy connection while the woman angled herself to face them. Then the dragon laid its head on the ground so that the newly emerged Asian woman could come closer to the humans as if she was just another person.

Michael couldn't stop staring at the nude woman in front of him, while Bill simply was speechless. Regan didn't know what to say at the moment but it was this woman who broke the silence.

"Hi, I'm Oni and you three are," the woman introduced herself.

Regan was the first to regain her composure and soon all three had spoken up to introduced themselves.

"So did the dragon somehow capture you," Regan hesitantly asked Oni.

Oni easily began to chuckle, "oh no, that's all me. I'm the dragon." She informed the amazed group of humans while gesturing to her huge body behind her.

Regan had all sorts of questions she wanted to ask the dragon. But first she needed to know something, "why didn't you eat us? I mean in the past we've seen you dragons wolfing down scores of people?"

"I had spotted you guys a while back and decided today was a good day to investigate. To see what you three are doing," Oni simply stated.

"Just so I understand, you don't want to eat us?"

"Nah, I filled up on some bison and horses a short bit ago."

"That's good to know. But I got to ask, heck the whole world wants to know, is where did all of you come from?"

Oni chuckled a bit, "why from around here."

Regan was a bit confused, "what do you mean?"

"I'm personally from Buffalo New York," Oni informed them while crossing her arms across her chest.

It took a moment for the three to digest what she said, "you mean you once were human?" Regan asked Oni realizing what she meant.

Oni nodded her human head, "yep, we all had been at one point." She gestured to the other dragons flying around the mountains.

Finally Michael spoke up, "but why do you eat us if you had been once human. Why not tell the world who you were?"

Oni looked like she didn't really want to answer the question. That if she did, she might upset them. Oni realized that speaking to these three humans was actually very intriguing to her. To speak to someone who hadn't changed, who hadn't experienced what she had.

"It's complicated," Oni finally admitted. "Once you get as big as we have, things change. Plus when we transformed we were so hungry that our hunger drove most of us to eat humans." Then as an afterthought she blurted out, "but most of us don't do that now!"

"So you have eaten humans," Bill slowly deduced.

Ashamedly Oni shook her head, "I'm not proud of it now."

"But why are you all hanging out around the mountains, why not go out and communicate with the world," Regan inquired of the huge dragon.

"We're not sure ourselves," Oni admitted. "Just that we felt the need to be around the peaks and that we didn't want to disturb the world at large. I don't know if that makes sense or not, but that's how we feel."

Regan had an idea based on what she talked about with the two men earlier, "you know could I speak to the other dragons. Go to the spot where you all hang out?"

Oni shook her human head, "while I said most of us don't eat humans, a few still enjoy it. I'm not sure that those dragons won't quickly grab you for a snack."

Regan was disappointed that she couldn't go into the heart of where they lived.

Seeing Regan's unhappiness, "but I am enjoying this conversation and I know a few others who would like to join in. How about tomorrow we speak again?" Oni proposed to the group.

Seeing an opening to continue this dialogue, Regan readily agreed. With that they watched Oni's human torso slide back into her mouth. Oni waved to the trio of humans with one of her huge car sized dragon hands before jumping back up into the air. The down gust from her huge wings alone bowled the small humans off their feet.

Once back on their feet all three began to huddle in deep discussion. They tried to figure out what they were going to do. Bill reminded them that they had only enough supplies for a couple more days. Plus that now their hiding spot was destroyed they were out in the open.

Regan urged them to take a chance. That to speak to more dragons was too much on an opportunity to pass up the chance.

Seeing her eager face, Bill sighed and the three began to try and find something else to shelter in. With the help of some of the broken timbers and their tent, they had come up with a decent hiding spot to camp in until tomorrow.

The next morning, found Michael and Regan fast asleep within their small camouflaged tent within their own sleeping bags. Bill had already woken up with the break of dawn. By the time he had a small hidden fire popping away heating up some coffee, the other two separately emerged from the tent.

The smell of fresh brewed coffee alone seemed to perk up Regan's senses as she gratefully accepted a cup from the old experienced man. Michael briefly walked around the camp making sure nothing had happened while they were asleep.

Regan contemplated what she was going to ask the dragons if they came back. She was so eager to learn more about them and why they had transformed. The other men were still trying to get over the fact that these huge beasts had once been human.

Yet, their waiting didn't last long as four huge shapes blocked out the sun and sky for a moment. Before the three puny humans landed four colossal dragons. One was the golden three eyed six limbed dragon by the name of Oni. The second was a red dragon who had, instead of forelimbs, a pair of huge bird like wing arms and a long sinuous neck. The third dragon was green and instead of two, it had four huge wings along its back. While the fourth and final dragon was silver and was even more stranger then the other three. For it had not one, but three heads, four limbs, and a pair of wings. Along with three heads, the dragon also had two mouths per head, one under the other.

However they all shared the same thing as Oni did, as each pushed out a human torso from their mouths. The red dragon had a young teen male human torso that introduced himself as Ryan. The green dragon also had a male torso that looked like he was in his late twenties who introduced himself as Cooper. While the fourth silver dragon had a single teenage woman's torso emerging from its center head upper mouth who introduced herself as Lucy.

Each dragon leaned their torsos close enough so that it seemed as if four nude humans sat around the fire along with the three remaining unchanged clothed humans.

Seeing Bill and Michael still cradling their coffee cups, Cooper asked, "hey could I have some of that coffee please, it's been ages since I last had any!"

Bill was nonplussed for a moment. Unsure at what to do, he silently began brewing up more coffee. They all waited until all dragons were cradling a steaming cup of black coffee in their human hands.

Oni winced at the bitter taste, "I used to be a tea drinker, but in a pinch I would drink this stuff. Though with lots of milk and sugar," she absentmindedly commented while sipping from the dark steaming brew.

"Me I always used to drink it black. Felt the bitter taste made me a stronger person," Cooper absentmindedly commented to Oni as he continued to contemplate his coffee.

The other two younger looking human torsos just silently sipped their drinks. Both happy to be doing something human and normal again.

Regan decided to take the lead, "so one question I've always wanted to ask is how did all of you transform?"

"Painfully," muttered Ryan.

"No I mean, how did it start," Regan clarified to the four.

"I think it all starts with what seems like a cold," Oni replied looking at the other dragons for conformation. Each agreed with her remembering their own transformations.

"So it was something you caught," Regan asked them.

"I don't think so," Lucy chimed in. "My roommate from college also had a cold like me, yet she didn't transform."

"How'd your change start," Regan prompted Lucy trying to prod her for more information.

"First there was the cold and I was aching all over. Then came the scales and my body began to reshape into a dragon."

"Like you are now?"

"No, at first I just had a single head and looked like a simple human sized dragon. Then I got larger and larger. When I grew to the size of a small house, then I grew these other heads." Lucy informed Regan as she brought her other two heads close to the group. They seemed to loom above everyone menacingly. Both Bill and Michael seemed to get a little jittery at the sight of their evil looking stares. Seeing the men's nervousness, Lucy quickly pulled them away from the group.

"You mentioned your roommate didn't change," Regan asked once things had calmed back down.

"Yes," Lucy simply stated. It seemed to Regan as if Lucy didn't want to talk about it.

Regan decided to push a little further, "what happened when she saw you transform?"

Lucy's face showed that it was a painful memory. Yet she chose to answer, "she began to scream. But something in me clicked and I pounced on her once I stopped transforming. She was so scared and paralyzed with fear. Something inside told me to attack. So I killed and ate her." Lucy admitted to the group ashamed of what she did. Her huge body shuddered in horror at the thought of the painful memory. "Once I got away, I promised myself I wouldn't eat anyone else."

Regan was both horrified and sad to hear Lucy's story. "I'm sorry to have asked you to remember something so painful. Was that the same for the rest of you?" She asked the other dragons.

"To varying degrees," Cooper simply commented.

"I never ate anyone I knew personally, but yes I have." Oni chipped in putting her empty metal mug on the ground beside her torso.

"My mom," Ryan softly spoke. That was all he wanted to say.

Michael's face got a little darker upon hearing the dragons speak about who they ate.

Regan decided it was best to change the topic, "so how did you all know where to come." She asked the four dragons gesturing to the tall mountains behind her.

The four looked at each other for a moment. Their expressions seemed as if each was trying to put into words what they felt. "I guess it was instinct," Lucy spoke before the others.

"I just felt like I had to come here," Oni agreed. The two males just nodded their human heads in agreement.

"But why are you all here, what's going to happen, what's going on?" Regan queried them farther for information.

"None of us are sure of anything. We don't know why we transformed or why we needed to come here," Cooper informed Regan.

"So none of you can leave the place?"

"Not so much as we really feel like we should be here. We can go out, but in the end we always want to come back," Ryan finally chimed in speaking more than a few words at a time.

"Well you got to know that the world has noticed you by now," Bill finally spoke up.

"We know. We've all seen their surveillance aircraft flying around us," Cooper answered Bill.

"But we don't mean you any harm," Ryan chipped in.

"Except to eat us," Michael darkly muttered.

"Not all of us," Lucy spoke indigently.

"Most of us don't want to eat you anymore," Oni carefully informed Michael calmly.

"But you could if you chose to," Michael replied with a hint of anger to his voice.

"Yes, I guess so, but like I said we don't mean you any harm," Oni quickly replied picking up on Michael's bitterness. "I mean we're here talking with you now instead of simply gulping you done."

"I guess so," Michael slowly replied getting their point. Though he wasn't too happy that they had already eaten people before.

"Like Oni said, none of us want to hurt you. We just wanted to reach out to the places where we came from. To get back in touch with the society we left behind," Cooper informed the group.

After that the conversation evolved into what it felt like to be a dragon. Each describing the differences of their bodies and the other dragons they had seen. Though Regan began to get the picture, that to the dragons, it seemed as if there were many different subspecies. That the dragon transformations weren't completely random. Each dragon mentioned how they had seen others just like them.

Then the conversation moved on towards what each did before becoming a Dragon. Oni mentioned that she used to work for an advertising agency. Cooper had been an architect. Lucy was studying to be a doctor. While Ryan was just about to graduate high school.

After another cup of coffee the four dragons concluded it was time to leave. They thanked the humans for the coffee and conversation. Each mentioned that if Regan ever came back, they would always come to gossip. That doing so made them feel a bit more human.

With that they withdrew their human halves back into their mouths and flew off back towards their mountain home. The three humans sat there discussing what they learned. Bill was keeping an open mind. He saw enough to convince him that at least those four really meant no harm. Michael still wasn't so sure. He remembered them mentioning how a few dragons still saw humans as food. While Regan was eager to continue to talk with them.

Checking their watches, all three agreed it was time they started hiking back home. Though as Regan walked back, she was already planning another trip. Maybe with a few other friends who were eager to learn more about the dragons.