

It was a beautiful sunset from the top of the Space Needle. The golden red light of the sunset reflected off the rising smoke columns as if they were thunderheads. The layer above, where the smoke found equilibrium had spread far and wide and was thick enough to color the sky a deeper purple tint. To the newly minted dragon it looked like a massive bruise.

The smell didn't really bother him, too much. He was a dragon now but that didn't mean he liked the astringent stink of the city burning. From his vantage he could see the downtown area, which was at the moment not burning except at a few spots but large columns of smoke rose from beyond further south and he thought it was just a matter of time. He turned his head to watch the sun slide behind the ragged silhouette of the Olympic Peninsula.

Glen lay sprawled out on the top of the Needle watching the light drain from the sky and the smoke gather high above. His mind went back over the past few hours as he watched the show.

He'd gone home first. Flying over the streets he'd followed the same route he used to get to work and back. Along the way someone had taken a shot at him. He'd felt the bullet hit him right in the soft underbelly. Shocked and hurt he'd beat his wings even through the pain to gain altitude. Landing on a rooftop he'd examined himself for the expected bullet wound. He'd stared for over a minute just absorbing the implications of the sight. There was a faint streak of lead on two scales of his belly. That was it.

Rubbing at the spot with a talon he'd felt a little sore, but it was really no more than as if someone had playfully poked him in the gut with a finger, and yes maybe a little too hard but not really that bad. He considered that maybe he was so high the bullet had lost all but the last of its momentum, until he remembered he had only been flying about a hundred feet up. No, he'd been shot, and had only felt a momentary discomfort. In hindsight and considering the lack of damage and how it had actually felt at the time, he'd acted like a wuss.

Angry now he took to the air again and retraced his route. He almost wanted them to take another shot. He felt it was his turn.

He got back home without further incident.

Landing in the back yard of the house he rented with three other guys Glen moved to the back door. The sliding glass door was locked. He was considering breaking the glass and entering when the second thoughts came. There was nothing in the house he really needed. They had little food in the fridge, none of his clothes would ever fit again, and after being shot without suffering any damage he doubted his room mates would be any help to him either.

He sat in the back yard a few minutes thinking. His family were all several states away in Montana. He should be concerned but as far as his family were concerned it was like the song lyrics. He'd say he was an orphan after anyone met the family. He'd severed all communications years ago. He still didn't feel there was any reason to change that policy.

It had been three months since Glen had broken up with his latest girlfriend. After six months of dating she'd turned out to be self centered to the point of selfish. Everything had become about her. What she'd wanted, what she felt, what she wanted to talk about, watch, or consume. Glen had never been too heavy into alcohol or drugs but Denise was a borderline junkie. When she wasn't drinking or smoking something it was going up her nose.

His time with Denise had informed him he simply wasn't the addictive type. Pot put him to sleep and coke made him hyper and nauseous to the point of throwing up. Given that, there was no way he was going any further. For all her promises that he'd get acclimated to it all, he saw no point in continuing

something that so obviously disagreed with him. The relationship staggered on for another month before she just didn't come around any more.

With nothing for him to do, Glen decided to enjoy the one thing his new dragon body was really good at. Launching himself back into the air he gained altitude until he could see for miles. There had been small fires breaking out everywhere he looked. The entire Seattle Tacoma metro area had spot fires that at the height Glen soared it looked likely to do nothing but spread. He had found it hard to care.

Now, hours later he was on the top of the Space Needle, just because he could, and watching the sun set. As darkness fell he could see the spot fires by the glows that seemed to be everywhere. The surprising thing were the number of sailboats making their way out of the Sound. Like those on the boats making their escape, there was nothing holding him here now that the job was gone. If it wasn't for the feeling of hunger that was beginning to gnaw at him he'd stay right where he was. The view was fantastic. And no one would disturb him here.

Glen stood up and arched his back to stretch out the muscles that had been idle. He was pleased to note that while stretching felt good, there was not the slightest hint of aches or tightening of muscles or joints. He hadn't eaten since breakfast that morning and was only now getting hungry. With every place he could think to get a meal either closed or long ago looted he thought he'd try his claw at fishing.

Launching himself from his roost he glided down toward the water.