

Glen woke pleased and happy. The sun was up, warming his hide with a gentle caress and the view he had without even lifting his head spread out for tens of miles. What made him really happy was the memory of the night before.

He only needed to roll his eyes just a bit to see the island that had last night been obscured in flames. Now it was a flat blank slate. He could see the outline of the island and the narrow canals that ran along either side. Hours after singlehandedly reigning in the conflagration everything looked, if not clean then at least improving. There was still the tell tale sheen of spilt petroleum products on the surface of the water of Puget Sound but the rivers feeding into the Sound was clearing everything away.

He finally lifted his head and scanned the horizon. With the massive fire out the air still exhibited a very noticeable brownish grey haze of smoke but it was not getting worse to the degree it had been when the fire had raged. With all the fuel products that had been spilling into the sound gone things would eventually get better. Glen was a bit proud of himself. He couldn't have stopped the environmental disaster from happening, but he had done more than anyone else could to limit the damage.

There were still fires burning here and there as far as his eye looked. These though were mostly buildings. Even some of the high-rises in the city were burning. He wasn't sure his efforts there would be appropriate, or even welcomed. In the case of a burning building his involvement would only do more damage than it would prevent.

Glen amused himself by practicing blowing out a smoke ring or two. He'd done what he could, and would do more only if asked. Snorting at the thought and idly blowing another smoke ring he spread his wings and stretched. Up on all fours he took one more moment to scan the landscape under him. He doubted very much that there was or even could be anyone in actual charge at the moment.

For now, he was hungry. Taking to the air Glen soared high and to the east. The day before he had found traveling by air, over the vehicle clogged roadways was one of the best things about being a dragon. It didn't make the top five, but the ability to simply pass over the masses of stalled cars and trucks that filled the roads was for certain top ten material.

He again cruised over Lake Washington watching for the sign of fish close to the surface. Spotting a small shoal he glided just a foot or two over the surface until just before passing over them. With a quick grab under the water he came up empty. He didn't meet with success until his third pass. Climbing and clutching his catch in both hands he snorted his humor. He was getting better. It had taken over two dozen tries before he had caught anything the day before.

He ate on the wing. That too had been a learning experience. Eating while gliding was easy and felt natural. It had been getting used to eating raw fish, his human scruples had fallen under the silent screams and pangs of hunger. That first fish, tasty as it was to his new sensibilities, had only stoked his hunger further. He'd stopped counting the number of fish he was devouring after six. His focus had been more on improving his hunting skills.

This morning he felt like stopping at four. He soared over Bellevue feeling satisfied and pleased once again. He saw nothing underneath him that was of a nature to gain his attention. Landing back on the Space Needle and wrapping his tail about his feet Glen took to scanning the landscape again. He was feeling like there was something he should do.

He had never been one to sit idle. He was, two days into being a dragon, itching for something more to do. Extinguishing the blaze the night before had not only been empowering and fulfilling, he now understood it was like answering a call. He couldn't put a claw on just what it was that made him think so, but he was fairly sure he was meant to make a difference. Why else would he have been changed into a dragon.

His thoughts were still puzzling out his future when a blur stopped right in front of him. As it hovered twenty feet from the end of his snout Glen blinked as he made out the features of the creature before him. A mix of hawk and some kind of cat it hovered and darted side to side staring back at him. He could see she had wings but they were a blur of motion as her tail twitched and spun behind her.

He understood the tail was a means of maintaining balance and orientation in the air. He focused on her face. A hawk's beak curved slightly and wide brown eyes looked back. Knowing he was unable to smile or speak without really thinking about what he was doing Glen mentally sent the greeting *Hello*

The little gryphon rose about three feet in surprise.

Glen was a little surprised himself. He hadn't realized until that moment that he was able to speak to another with his mind. Raising a hand to the gryphon and letting the humor into his sending repeated *Hello. And yes, that was me*

How are you doing that? She sent back.

He could see by the way her tail dropped and almost unbalanced her she was just as surprised. She recovered in an instant. Glen answered back, *I'm guessing the same way you just did*

Wow, I didn't know I could do this

Neither did I Glen said tilting his head. *I'm Glen Harris by the way*

Anna Holmes. You're not dangerous, are you?

Snorting and turning his head a bit to blow a smoke ring Glen answered *No. Besides, I doubt I'll ever been able to catch a hummingbird, even as a dragon*

Anna sent a mental chuckle as she zipped through the smoke ring as it rolled further from Glen and widened. *A pleasure meeting you then*

Glen watched and arched his neck to follow the gryphon until she landed twenty feet from him. She stayed on her feet and settled her wings on her back. *Likewise*

They stared at each other for seconds. He had the thought that since he couldn't speak with his reengineered snout it made sense that with everything else he would also be granted another way of communicating.

Anna finally sent *So, do you have any plans for today?*

I was just trying to come up with something He puffed another smoke ring mostly just to see what she'd do.

Anna watched it as it rolled and though she tensed her body she stayed on the rooftop. As she looked back to him *I saw you up here earlier. Are you going to make this your home?*

I don't know. It sounded like someone moved in downstairs last night. Depends largely on how sane the neighbor is

Oh. Another one like us?

I assume so. How else would they get up here?

Anna nodded. After thinking a second she sent *Be right back*