

Anna stayed seated on the table when the humans all rose. The meeting was concluded as far as they were concerned. She remained undecided.

No one had actually asked her if she would help the police in controlling the chaos that was expected once night fell. She watched the unchanged humans file out of the room, some speeding their steps to be out of the room as soon as they could. She couldn't blame them. Shelby's silly display of magic had shocked them all. In less than a minute the four of them had the room to themselves.

They were all still in the same places they had been during the meeting. Back when the meeting started Robert had pulled the chair back from a position at the table and pushed it to the wall with his tentacles. Anna was still amazed at how that simple act had seemed so natural for the tall cat. He'd pushed it further behind himself with just one tentacle, and had moved it more than eight feet. It had stopped on a dime after being pushed rather quickly.

He had stopped the chair just inches from the wall instead of letting it bump up against the barrier. His back had been to it but he'd known just how far to move it, and the tentacle wasn't at its full extension either. There appeared to be a lot of strength in those things. The guy had enormous range with his tentacles as well. She only then truly realized they were as thick as his forearm their entire length and looked like they were all muscle. She made a note to herself to never anger the multi-limbed cat.

The dragon had taken the place to Robert's left and pushed the chair behind himself in the same direction. It had been a seemingly casual gesture but Robert had intercepted it with a tentacle and placed it right next to his own discarded chair, still not even glancing back. She and Glen had shared a look indicating he too had noticed.

Now that it was just the four of them she met the cat's eyes wondering at his behavior. He'd said nothing for himself during the meeting. He'd only passed on what she and Glen had to say. For someone that had as powerful a presence, and a wide sphere of influence he'd been strangely silent.

\*So, what do you think?\* She sent to the cat.

"I'll go along with their request, for now."

"I'm sorry, what?" Shelby asked.

It took a second for Robert to realize she hadn't been included in Anna's sending. "She was asking my opinion." he answered and sent to the gryphon, \*You should include her\*

"Oh." Shelby said and glanced at the gryphon. Looking back at the displacer she asked "You turned down their offer of accommodations. I assume you have something else in mind? I have to ask because all I've got left to my name is what I've got with me."

Robert smiled at her and replied. "Sorry to hear that, but since you're pretty much one of us now, we've kind of taken over the Space Needle."

Anna saw the surprise and wry humor on her face as Shelby repeated "You've, taken over, the Space Needle?" She could literally hear the air quotes.

"Yeah. It's not being used by anyone else right now." Robert answered. He shrugged his two top tentacles with the statement.

Anna would have laughed if not for Glen sending \*I don't know about the rest of you but I'm hungry. I'm going fishing before I head south\*

\*I could go for a bite\*

Glen snorted his humor at her reply the same time Robert said "Yeah, I'm a bit hungry. How about you?" He finished looking at Shelby.

"I've got a couple of food bars left. They won't go far but I'm willing to share if you need." She stopped when they all looked at her. "What?"

Robert said "Food is not really a problem."

\*Let's just go if we're going\* Anna sent as she got to her feet.

"Right." Robert said. He looked at Shelby and continued "You don't mind riding with me, do you?"

Glen chortled at the remark. He stood and turned for the door. \*I'll catch up with you three later\*

Anna lifted herself from the table and flew toward the door. Remembering how she had gotten out of the cab of the ferris wheel she applied the same technique to the door. As it opened she zipped through, missing the looks behind her.

The flight to the Space Needle gave her time to think over the city's proposal. Her career was over. There was no way she could go back to her former job. She hovered over a tow truck working to clear the streets as she thought over that decision. She really didn't want to go back. She had an open door before her to, something.

She wished she knew the road ahead. She was now a gryphon. While it would have been nice to have been bigger she'd still not want to be anything else. Sure, Robert had a nice little trick in being able to go from here to there in less than the blink of an eye. He couldn't fly, and he apparently couldn't move things with his mind.

Being able to fly was worth not being able to form words that were intelligible. She could vocalize but it mostly came out as a screech. There was also the way she was able to open doors and get out on her own. And that thing she did to the cop. She had just done it without knowing what she was doing. It had almost killed him too. That had just been a defensive reaction, but it gave her the boost in confidence she had so desperately needed.

As Anna hovered and watched the things she was seeing lead her to think things were going to eventually get back to some sense of normalcy. The road traffic below her was light and still mostly police and tow trucks but there was also a few other vehicles moving. The efforts to get everything running again was seeing some success. She had picked Settle to vacation at. It was a beautiful city, even after having parts of it burn to the ground. If things back home in Reno were anything like this, she might as well stay.

Resuming her flight she thought about Glen. He too had acquired a new form. She wondered if he also had a hidden power as she and Robert did. He had extinguished the fire at Harbor Island, but considering the way he did so probably came along with being a dragon. When she arrived at the Space Needle Anna simply zoomed inside and landed on the bench Shelby was seated at. They were out on the observation deck and looked to have been in the middle of a conversation when she'd arrived.

Robert was as always standing. With six tentacles sprouting out of his back and the tail it was likely something he was going to be doing a lot more often. Anna had the thought that with all that extra mass

behind him he'd likely topple over if he tried to sit. Losing the ability to speak coherently was a minor thing compared to that. She stared at the displacer cat and made a bit of a show in getting comfortable while sitting on her haunches. He just looked away with a twisted smile on his lips.

It struck her that he was standing straight. The extra mass should have been forcing him to lean far forward, or go on all fours, or sixes considering his new form. She wondered if Robert didn't have a little of the same ability she did.

Robert broke into her thoughts when he said, "We were talking about the things we're able to do now. Shelby wasn't too far into it, but it might be a good idea to start over."