

The attack on the humans' camp had ended in a pitiful defeat. They did not expect the battle to go out this terribly; humans overwhelming the dragons with their new and powerful weapons, even without the aid of their armors. Some of the dragons wondered how did their two-legged enemies get so strong over the course of the centuries since their kinds saw each other. The tribe flew on back to their home, bearing wounds in the form of bleeding holes that felt sore on their bodies. The flight on their way would be painful, considering the conditions they were in. Indeed it was, with a few dragons occasionally grunting and wincing every now and then. Upon reaching the heart of the mountains, they saw the rest of the tribe turning their heads to them and moving back to the edges of the clearing to give the males space to land on. After the dragons landed, the tribe was shocked to find their fighters bloodied and tired. To add to the consternation, the ones who stayed behind also noticed that the males had returned with fewer number of them than they had gone off with. Worried voices from the elders, females and their hatchlings began to fill the air as they expressed their alarm and asked questions about the battle. The fighters' shoulders as they panted. The king turned his head to the bloodied scout next to him and asked hoarsely, "Nova...I thought you said the humans didn't have any weapons."

Nova excused, "I didn't know these know these black tube things were weapons... Honest!"

The king did not blame the scout. The new weapons the humans had were completely alien. No longer did they have the swords, spears and bows they once used to combat dragons. It was now these strange shooters, exploding balls and weaponized carriages that did the job for them, and they were far more effective than the weapons of old. The king shook his head, feeling disheartened, "It looks like we're powerless to defeat the humans. We don't stand a chance against them the way they are now."

The tribe was demoralized by this revelation. If fighting the humans was impossible, then what was the solution? Surely, they cannot coexist with such dangerous creatures on their island. One of the female dragons asked, "Then what are we going to do, King Gregorios? There's got to be something we can do to get rid of these monsters. They'll kill us all!" The tribe chorused their agreements with her.

King Gregorios understood their fears and concerns. There definitely needs to be a solution to their human problem and he already knew that fighting was out of question. Maybe they could scare them off? But how would that be possible? The new weapons would have likely emboldened to face anything without fear. Terrifying roars will not work will just simply lure the humans over to the sounding dragons. There was only one thing left he could think of, but this idea would sound impossible to the tribe and some would even oppose it. But he must voice it out anyway for the sake of his tribe and hope that there would be some who would agree with him. The king looked at all the faces of his tribe from young to old and male & female. He prepared himself for any backlash he would have to endure and opened his mouth. He suggested, "My tribe... If we are to survive, then there is only one solution." Everyone looked at him eagerly, waiting to hear whatever would give them the hope to survive the humans' invasion. The king continued, "We must try and make peace with the humans. Try to convince them not to kill any more of us."

As expected, all of the tribe members were disappointed with the answer. They all looked at him as if he was delirious or something. "What?!" cried one of the adolescent hatchlings.

An elder shouted, "Are you crazy?!"

A female yelled, "This cannot work! They killed our mates; you'll be dishonoring them that way!"

Another elder begged, "Please reconsider this, your majesty."

A black & red male dragon staggered up beside the king and growled, "They're right, your majesty. This is insanity! The humans will never form a truce, especially not after we just attacked them. They'll want revenge!" He bared his sharp teeth after speaking the last line, emphasizing their enemy's bloodlust. He continued, "I say we must finish what we started and be rid of them for good."

Gregorios countered with a murmur, "And lead us all to doom." He shook his head with his green eyes closed. Then he looked the black dragon dead in the eye and questioned seriously, "Let me ask you this, Ronord. Just what can we do against the humans? You've seen how powerful their new weapons are and how easily they defeated us. Charging in blindly at them will do us no good."

Ronord insisted, "Well we have to stop them somehow. It's either kill or be killed."

The king replied, "Well if you have a plan that doesn't get any of us killed, I would like to hear it."

Ronord opened his mouth as he tried to think of a plan that would fit in with the king's requirement, but unfortunately nothing came to mind. The black dragon frowned grumpily and groaned, "Alright fine, I got nothing."

"Very well then," Gregorios responded. "Then we'll just have to go with my idea." Turning his attention back to the rest of the tribe, he spoke, "My tribe, I know this solution sounds very much impossible and I understand some of you hold hatred for the humans who took away your mates and fathers." He looked at the faces of the grieving females and their hatchlings. "But it's the only one we have for the moment and the only one we should try. I am suggesting this so that hopefully the lives of every one of us here will be spared. As Ronord pointed out, the humans will not agree to make peace with us anytime soon. So we must wait until their anger for us dies before we make this attempt. For now, we must avoid them at all times until we're ready." To the male dragons, he told, "Let us rest and heal our wounds and minds. We can grieve for the fallen as we do so."

The males headed off to their caves to lay in and rest. The majority of the tribe reluctantly decided to accept Gregorios's plan; some of them were still not hopeful of it succeeding though. Humans and dragons were longtime enemies since the Ancient Greek times and that relationship might not change so quickly. Ronord was still intent on getting rid of all the humans; he may not have a good plan right now, but he will not give up until the perfect solution came to him. For now, he must recover.

The military had doused out all the fires the dragons had blown down on the camp to prevent anything else from being burned down. The tents that had taken damage were cleaned out of all the items inside and replaced with new ones to house the soldiers for the night. Private Dylan laid on one of the beds, thinking about his encounter with the dragons he fought. As a young child, he once believed in the existence of these creatures. But as he grew older, he then knew that they were nothing more than imaginary beasts from fairy tales. Now, these same creatures had shown themselves today and no one was hallucinating them either. It was unbelievably ironic how these things would end up proving his younger naive self right. This would be an amazing story that the world will hear once they learned that the Americans had discovered these mythical creatures along with the magical island they lived on. Dylan could see the news channels talking about this, websites blogging about it and newspapers printing stories of these discoveries. The hype for it will be grand.

Soon, Dylan heard Commander Stevenson calling from the outdoor PA speakers, "Attention all soldiers! I need you to report to your commander immediately. I repeat, all soldiers report to your commander at once." Sounds like the troops were about to receive their new mission. Dylan got up from his bed and left the tent with the other soldiers to go meet up with Stevenson. They joined the crowd of soldiers, who were all organized in rows, standing and facing their commander as they all waited for his orders.

Once the commander was sure that the last soldier was here, Stevenson started, "Men, our encounter with these monsters was sooner than we had expected and it came with nothing less than an ambush. Thankfully, none of us died in the attack. However, we have a mission to fulfill as one of our tasks for Operation Delta. The researchers currently examining the dragon bodies to learn their anatomy and discover everything about them. But dead dragons alone are not enough to get all of their secrets from. The research team also needs to study live dragons as well." Dylan suspected this was going to be a capture mission. And right he was as the commander told, "Your mission is to find and capture at least one dragon alive and report it to me, so that I will send a cargo truck to pick it up. And to make that job easy, I will be supplying you all with tranquilizer guns and knockout grenades." Then he warned them sternly, "But don't get too cocky with them; these things don't put you to sleep quickly like they do on TV. It takes many minutes, if not more, for them to work. Do you hear?"

"Sir, yes sir!" the troops replied simultaneously.

"Good," Stevenson responded, satisfied that his troops understood the effects. "Now I'll also warn you to not bother with too many dragons on one spot. Remember, you're only going after one, if not two. So if you do find a group, just until one is left or go somewhere else where they're few. Now that I've gone over your mission with you, I want you all to pick up your tranq guns and grenades at the arsenal and begin searching the woods for these dragons. You're all dismissed!"

The troops made their way to the arsenal tent and collected the needed weapons for the mission, along with some combat weapons in case they needed to kill to save themselves. Some of the soldiers drove out into the woods in IFVs, while the others just went out on foot. Dylan and Kurt were one of the ones that did the latter. The pair decided to go together on this mission. Everyone dispersed into the woods to cover the range of the island to find dragons. Dylan and his friend decided to take the direction they had seen the dragons come and go from to make their search easier.

Luna and a friend of hers were out in the woods hunting for food. Taking their king's warning into consideration, they had to make this quick or else they will run the risk of getting slain by humans. The teal dragon walking alongside her asked, "Luna, what do you think of the king's idea? Will it work?"

The pink dragon shook her head, "I don't know, Ashley. The humans sound pretty scary. I wouldn't be surprised if they turned us down."

Ashley agreed, "Yeah, me neither." She brightened up with a smile, "But hey, who's to say that a species can't change? Maybe the humans might be nicer than their ancestors. We won't know until we meet them."

Luna said, "Maybe, but we can't just walk up to them and see if they're friendly. They're dangerous, you know."

"You're right," said the teal dragon. "But still, I think we should give them a chance."

"We'll see," the pink one replied.

Dylan and Kurt kept a vigilant watch out for dragons as they trekked through the woods. They looked left, right and above for signs of these beasts as they went. So far, they had found nothing but the trees and bushes around them. Kurt suggested, "Hey Dylan, let's split for a bit and see if we can cover some ground."

The brown-haired man replied, "Alright." The two left each other as Kurt kept going forward while his friend went down the small slope to check the lower ground.

The dragons heard sounds of movement on the ground somewhere nearby up ahead of them. Ashley asked, "Did you hear something?"

Luna sniffed the air before she responded, "I think so and it smells really strange." Of all the scents she had smelled in her life, she had never smelled anything like this before. "I'm going to check it out really quick. I won't go too close in case it's a human."

Ashley replied, "Okay, roar you're in trouble."

"I will," the pink dragon promised. She went off a distance away to get a look at the mysterious creature. The smell became stronger as she got closer. Soon, she stood behind a cluster of bushes and saw a bipedal creature walking upright, carrying a strange black object in its arms. Luna remembered Nova mentioning a strange black tube thing. This object had a long snout. This must be the weapon the humans used against the tribe. It was best to keep away from that thing and its owner, so she just watched it from a distance.

Dylan's walkie-talkie sounded as Kurt spoke from it, "Hey Dylan, find any dragons yet?"

The man picked up the walkie-talkie and pushed its button to speak into it, "Nah, I'm still looking. There doesn't seem to be any around."

Kurt replied, "Guess we'll have to go further. Let's meet over at the big rock to the north, alright?"

"Got it, over," Dylan said, before the walkie-talkie shut off.

Luna was surprised to hear the human talk. She murmured to herself, "It can speak our language." She never thought an animal of a different species could communicate dragonspeak; it was very strange. Even stranger was that an object such as that small box thing hanging on the human's chest would talk as well. This generation of humans was far different than what stories she has heard of them. What other magical items did they have with them? Perhaps if the dragon herself would spy on this one, then she could learn more about his kind and share what she knew with the tribe. Then they'll be better prepared the next time they battled the humans, if ever such an event came. Luna followed the human as it went on its way to the meeting place.

Eventually, Dylan got to towering large stone and leaned back against it as he waited for Kurt to show up. He pulled out an emergency snack bar and ate it. It was a granola bar with peanuts in it with chocolate coated on the bottom and drizzled on top. As soon as he finished all of it, the man felt a sharp bite on his leg. "Gah!" he cried out as he jerked in pain and dropped the bar's wrapper. He looked down to where he was bitten and saw a wolf shaking its head to rip at his pants and flesh. The wolf pulled him down to the ground and continued to tear at him as the soldier screamed in pain. Dylan was in danger and he needed to save himself now. Gritting his teeth and grunting, he pulled out a revolver and aimed it at the wolf.

From behind the tall bushes, Luna watched the human's smaller weapon and thought, *'What is it going to do with that?'*

Dylan clenched his teeth and yelled, "Die, you bloody mother****er!" He shot the wolf in the head, hitting its brain, and killed it. The canine let go of his bleeding leg as it dropped dead with its mouth open, showing blood stains on its teeth.

The noise the weapon made was so loud that it startled Luna and nearly made her shriek. Even the birds were just as much frightened as they flew off the treetops to go somewhere else for safety. The dragon had jerked her head down when the weapon made that noise. She slowly looked back to the human and stared at its gun. She did not see anything fly out when it killed the wolf. It must have been some kind of magical item that was more advanced than a wand. She thought, *'How does it do it without words or arrows? Isn't the thing magic? Could humans still have magic all this time?'*

Dylan sat down against the rock and breathed out a sigh. He looked to the dead wolf and said to it, "Well you really got screwed." His leg was still hurting and needed medical aid right now. He opened up his small bag to get out a mini first aid kit and opened it to take out a bottle of disinfectant and a roll of bandages. He pulled his pants down and applied the disinfectant to clean his wound of the wolf's germs. It stung and made him wince, but the alcohol did its job. Then he wrapped the bandage around his wound to prevent it from bleeding any further. Dylan pulled his pants back up and put away his mini first aid kit.

Having watched it heal itself without any magic spells, the dragon thought, *'I guess it must not be a wizard after all. But then how was something so deadly sounding can actually kill wolves like that?'* It was so weird and confusing just thinking about it.

An insect flew by Dylan swiftly, wings making a buzzing noise as it flew upwards towards the short cliff in front of him. His eyes followed the bug and he noticed a pink creature in front of him with the face of a dragon, despite its lack of horns. *'Found one!'* he thought, happy that he was going to be the first one to catch a dragon. He grabbed his tranquilizer gun and aimed it at the dragon.

Luna saw the human pointing its weapon at her. Fear overcame her as she realized, *'Oh no, I've been spotted. I need to run!'* She quickly turned away and began to spread her wings to fly away.

As soon as it began to make a run for it, Dylan pulled the trigger and shot the dragon's wing with a dart filled with a comatosing substance. He gave chase to the dragon as he ran towards the cliff and climbed it up to get to the elevation it was on. Pushing his way through the bushes, he thought, *'Get back here, you!'*

The dragon's wing was hit; she could not fly now. The only thing she could do to get away was run, which she did. She let out a loud roar to let Ashley know that they were in danger and that she needed to get away now. She prayed, *'Please hear me, Ashley!'*

The man noticed that the dragon was running quicker than he was and not just due to the fact that his wounded leg slowed him down. He took out his revolver and fired at the dragon's hindlegs, shooting a bloody hole in each of them to immobilize her. The pink beast staggered before it collapsed on its underbelly. Dylan was now able to catch up to it. As he went, he brought out his walkie-talkie and contacted Stevenson, "Commander, this is Private Dylan. I found a dragon. I shot its legs and wings, so it won't go away. Over!"

The commander replied approvingly, "Excellent work, private! I'll be sending Sergeant Smith over to bring that monster back to camp. Over!"

Dylan reached the dragon and waited for the cargo truck to come. He heard whimpering coming from the creature; it sounded like it was scared. He walked around cautiously to see its face, being careful not to get too far in the range where it could breathe its fire at him. Its eyes were wide with creases above them slanted upwards, resembling puppy eyes. The moment it looked at him, it closed its eyes and covered its head with its talons. The poor thing must be frightened of him and Dylan did not blame it after what he did to it. The man tried to calm it down by speaking softly, "Hey, hey, hey, hey. Relax, it's okay. I'm not going to hurt you."

But Luna did not let her guard down as she wailed, "But you did hurt me! You shot at my legs and wing."

Dylan's mouth dropped open in surprise when he heard the dragon talk. He had no idea it could speak English. Composing himself, he apologized, "Okay, I'm very sorry about that. I wasn't trying to kill you, I promise."

Luna, still afraid, asked, "Then what were you attacking me for?"

The man answered, "I was ordered to capture a dragon and bring it back to camp."

The dragon assumed, "So you can skin me and cook me?"

Dylan assured, "No, no, no, it's nothing like that. The guys back there just wanted to study you and see what you guys are like. That's all."

This got the dragon to relax a bit. She took her talons off and looked at the human, asking it, "Study me?"

He nodded, "Yeah, you guys are like a new species to us. Researchers like to learn everything they can about animals, so that they can put all this into encyclopedias and websites for the world to see."

Luna did not know what two of things the human mentioned are. She tilted her head and asked, "Encyclopedias? Web-sights? What are they?"

Dylan guessed that a dragon would not know what these things are, being the nature-roaming animals that they are. So he did his best to explain, "They're these things that us humans get our knowledge from. Like if we wanted to know what 'X' is, we would look them up and find out what it is."

Luna replied, "Oh, that sounds convenient." Then she winced when she felt a sore burning from her wounds. She looked at one of her hindlegs before asking, "Hey, would you mind fixing me up? I don't want to die from blood loss."

The man realized he had completely forgotten about that when the conversation started. "Oh right!" he said, rushing to get the first aid kit out. He cannot have this dragon dead before the truck came. He took out the needed supplies and then removed the bullets from the wounds. He even took the tranquilizing dart off her wing. He assumed her to be female due to how she sounded feminine. After he had treated and bandaged all the shots, Dylan said, "There you go; that should stop the bleeding."

"Thank you," Luna appreciated. She could take the chance to flee now, but with the human being so friendly, she decided to use this chance to get to learn as much as she could before she could return to her tribe. She started with the first thing that came to mind, asking, "So that strange-looking thing you used to kill the wolf with. What is it?"

Dylan takes out his revolver from the sheath on his side to show to her. He answered, "Oh this? It's called a 44 Magnum. It's a gun designed for close-range combat." He puts the revolver up in the air and turned it sideways where she can actually see on the side.

"Close range?" the dragon asked. "Is it different from your other weapon that you used to shoot me with?"

The man put the revolver back into its sheath and held his tranquilizer gun. "This thing?" he asked. "That's a tranquilizer gun. It's what I'm using for this mission. It doesn't kill by the way." He purposely left out the part where it was used to put targets to sleep. He did not want to spook the dragon in the middle of the conversation.

Luna finally understands what these things were called, but she still does not know how they work. The sight of the tranquilizer enough to scare her as this was the very thing that hurt her earlier. She asked, "Can you please put your weapon down?" She sat down very slowly anxious.

Dylan replied, "I will as long as you don't take me and my tranq away."

"I won't," she promised.

The human put the gun down on the ground next to its feet. Then he asked her, "So how are you guys real? I thought you dragons were just myths."

Luna giggled and said, "I'm real alright. You just haven't seen us dragons for hundreds of years."

"I guess that makes sense," Dylan figured. It sounds like the dragons really did exist during the Medieval times. But if they did, then why did they hide themselves from this world?

Then the dragon looked at the strange-looking headwear on the human's head. She asked, "What's that funny thing on your helmet?"

Dylan realizes that she was looking at his night vision goggles sitting on his helmet. He took them off the helmet and asked, "Do you wanna know what these are?"

Luna nods, "Yes, what are they?"

He answered, "These are night vision goggles."

She looked at the human curiously and asked, "Night vision goggles?"

"Yes, it helps us at night, so that we can see in the dark."

Luna asked, "How do these things work?"

Dylan answered, "It's hard to explain. Even this technology is beyond my understanding." He never learned exactly how the goggles work. All he knew was that they allowed him to see in the dark.

"Oh okay," the dragon replied. Then she went back to the subject of weapons. Looking at the guns, she asked, "Your weaponry has evolved like that. Or is this magic?"

He explained it the best way he can in which she would understand, "This is kind of like magic, but it's not. It's basically a small mouth that fires. And right within the cylinder is where all these little iron stones are. Whenever I pull the trigger, they fly out fast in a blink of an eye."

She asked, "So you don't have to be in approximately of your enemies to take them out."

He says, "Yes."

Luna realized, "So that's how you were able to kill the wolf."

Dylan was surprised. "You've been following me?"

The dragon admitted, "Yes, I didn't know what you were. I saw you with that tranquilizer gun and I didn't know what it was until you told me just now. It looked like a weapon and I didn't want to be in your sight. I was afraid you will kill me." A tear ran down her eye and she continued, "I really was afraid I was

going to die just by one of you guys with those things of yours." She sniffed, "I didn't know if I was ever going to survive if you did find me."

Dylan tried to calm her down, "Hey now, don't cry. I'd be in trouble if I ever did kill you. The military just wants you alive."

"Well that's reassuring, I suppose," Luna said as she started to let her sadness fade. Then she asked, "What kind of other things do you guys have instead of those little white things of yours? Do you still use horses and all?"

The man shook his head, "No, basically these uh...carriages are made of metal and are called tanks. We move them from the inside instead of having anything pull them."

The deep voice the human used for the word, tanks, made the dragon scared like a cat splashed by water. She backed away a little bit and said, "Goodness, tanks!"

He said, "Yes, they are very fast. They can go a little faster than a horse. They could keep you going on mud terrain, swamps, snow, solid ground, sand and desert."

Luna wondered if the humans had also moved on from ballistae and catapults in favor of more advanced versions of them. Maybe they might have even armed the tanks. She asked, "Do these tanks also have weapons? What kind do they have?"

Dylan answered, "Most of the tanks we use are M1A2 Abrams. They're all armed with a 120 mm L/44 smoothbore gun."

"Smoothbore gun?"

"Yes, they have the capabilities of shooting that target more than two miles away."

The dragon looked amazed. "I know how far miles are, because the last 1000 years ago, you humans used magic spells that can go that far. And you even ride brooms that fly endlessly."

Dylan was surprised and bewildered by what he just heard. "Humans have magic?" That can't be true; no one's ever done it as far as he knew. Even if anybody tried to cast a spell, nothing happened.

Luna looked at him confused, "Yes, didn't you know?"

The man shook his head, "No; it doesn't exist where we come from."

"Then what do you use to get your tanks to move?"

He answered, "Well we fuel them with some kind of liquid and it's cold oil or gasoline."

"Gasoline?" Luna asked, not know what it is.

Dylan continued, "It's something we have in all our vehicles, or carriages; and our lamps use them, too."

She asked, "So you're tell me that these things run on gasoline?"

"Not just gasoline, but also diesel oil and anything else we also have for flying machines. They can go faster than any flying animals."

Luna looked scared and asked, "If that's true, then that means there they can take us out of the air."

"Yes," Dylan confirmed without sounding proud of the weaponry's capabilities so as not to offend or scare her so more. Then he tried to get to relax with a change of topic. "By the way, my name is Dylan. Private Dylan. I probably should have told you who I was at the start."

The dragon relaxed a little and said, "It's alright. And you can call me Luna." This human was very friendly, so unlike the stories she had heard about its species. If the rest of the human army was like him, then perhaps King Gregarios's diplomatic plan might work after all. Then she asked, "Will you ever tell the other soldiers about my kind and our conversation?"

"Well if you want me to, then yes."

Luna smiled, "Then by all mean-" Suddenly, her eyes started to become weak as her vision went blurry. Her head rocked slowly as her body felt tired and heavy as well. "Oh, I don't feel...so good... What's happening to-" Then she plopped down to the side with her eyes closed. The tranquilizer had finally taken its effect and rendered her unconscious.

Then a familiar voice chuckled and spoke out from nowhere, "Looks like she's finally off to Dreamworld, huh buddy."

Dylan looked around for his friend and immediately spotted him from the corner of his eye. "Kurt? How long have you been here?"

Kurt answered with a sly smile, "From the moment you two went on about guns, night goggles and everything else. I was hoping you would learn a thing or two about her kind like she was doing with ours." He shook his head and continued, "But it looks like that's going to have to wait until they bring her back to camp."

The brown-haired man smiled in amusement, "Well sorry about that. But that talk we had was just too fun for me to bring that up so soon. Just thought I'd get all her questions out of the way before I brought out mine."

"Fair enough, I suppose," the lighter-haired brunette understood. He stared at the sleeping dragon and said, "Wow, a pink dragon. Never thought I'd see a color like that on an animal. I think we stumbled into a fairy tale, Dylan."

"You can say that again," Dylan agreed. He grinned, "That or we've been in one all this time without even know it."

Kurt laughed, "Hah! Life, a fairy tale? That's a good one, bud! Next you'll be saying that it's a sci-fi too when we see the aliens."

The darker-haired brunette asked, "I wonder when that will be?" After seeing dragons and hearing of magic walls, it would not be a surprise if they see some other mythical creature in life.

Eventually, the cargo truck came over and stopped by them. Sergeant Smith and a couple of other men got out of the truck and went over to Luna. The two soldiers went to the back of the truck to open it as Smith went to the two friends and congratulated, "You boys done a good job capturing that dragon. Those scientists are going to be happy getting to do whatever experiments they can with that thing." After the soldiers took the cage out of the truck using a pallet jack, the sergeant turned to them and told everyone, "Alright men, let's get that dragon hauled up so we can get back to camp."

Everyone, except Dylan, gathered around Luna and picked up her. The private felt concerned for the dragon and asked the sergeant, "Sergeant Smith, what are they going to do to her? They're not going to hurt or kill her, are they?" He did not want any kind of harm to come to that gentle dragon if the experiments were going to be dangerous. She was too nice for that.

The men began to carry Luna to the open cage as Smith answered, "I don't know, soldier. I have no idea what they plan on doing with her. But if you're that curious, why don't you go talk it up with them?" Dylan planned to do just that once they returned. He needed to make sure that Luna was going to be okay for this. The soldiers put her in the cage and locked it before one of them pushed it up the ramp with the pallet jack into the trailer of the truck. After loading the truck, Smith and the men who came with him went back to sit in the cab, while Dylan and Kurt rode inside the trailer. The truck began to drive on back to the camp.

Ashley's jaw hung open like she was gasping and her eyes were wide in horror. She had just witnessed the kidnapping of her best friend. Earlier, Luna had let out a roar, alerting the teal dragon of the humans. Ashley had run away for safety, but then she felt guilty about leaving her friend behind. So she went back to go check on her to make sure that she was still alive in one piece. That was when she saw

the humans taking her away. She cried, "Oh no, Luna! I have to go get help!" She begun to run and fly back home to the tribe to tell them what happened.

Inside the researchers' tent, Dr. Pierce was at her table writing down her reports on paper of the dead dragons' anatomy under the bright light of the desk lamp. During her team's dissection of one of the dragons, she had discovered the organ that was the source of their fiery breaths and the bodily fluids within them that enabled them to burn things. One of her employees tested the flame resistance of the throat & mouth and discovered that they were immune to fire, which explained how these beasts were able to spew out fire as much as they want without any side effects or pain. That is assuming that dragons did not experience these things. Out of all the many species that humanity has discovered, the dragons were very unique. Not just with their fire breaths, but also their limbs. Before dragons, all the known non-insect animals with wings had four limbs, two of which were used as wings - wings that had evolved from the arms. Birds came from small two-legged dinosaurs and bats came from small gliding mammal that fed on insects. But the dragons, there were no other creatures like them that possessed their set of limbs. Where did they come from? How did they evolve like this? And most curiously, did their existence meant that other creatures of mythological legends lived on this planet, too? There were so many wonders to discover about the dragons and this island they lived on.

The sound of truck wheels whirred outside and came over by the lab tent. Dr. Pierce assumed that Sergeant Smith was returning with the captured dragon. One of her employees looked out the window under its flap and announced, "Dr. Pierce, they're here. They brought the dragon."

The head researcher put down her pen and got off her seat. She told her employees, "Get the flaps open. We're going to bring that cage inside." The researchers got the entrance flaps rolled to allow cage to get inside the large tent.

The cargo truck stopped beside the tent and parked there. The Sergeant Smith and two other soldiers got out of the cab. Dr. Pierce walked outside to meet with the sergeant. He saw her coming and said, "Dr. Pierce, we got your dragon here in this truck and we're getting it out now." On cue, the soldiers went to the back of the truck and pulled up the bars that kept the doors shut. They pulled the doors open and they let down the ramp. Dylan came walking out as Kurt pushed the pallet jack to bring the cage outside. The two other soldiers held the cage in place so that it would not slide off from the gravity of going downwards.

Dr. Pierce nodded gratefully and replied, "Thank you, sergeant." She glanced to the cage and saw a sleeping dragon inside. "It looks the tranquilizer's still in effect after all this time. Gives us the time to prepare and plan for more experiments."

Smith said, "Speaking of, one of the men here was curious about what sorts of experiments you would be doing with that one."

"Who?" asked the head researcher. The sergeant pointed to one of the soldiers behind her and she turned her head to see Dylan walking towards her. His eyes were filled with worry.

Dylan stopped before and asked, "Dr. Pierce, those experiments of yours. They're safe, right? No harm or nothing?"

Pierce assured, "Of course they are. Every scientist has to follow the Code of Ethics. It's the law. It's not like it'll be different for dragons just because the world doesn't know about them yet." This man standing before her seems oddly concerned for the dragon. Usually, most people dropping off animals that were not pets would just go on like it was nothing after doing their job. Why was he worried over one little dragon?

The private relaxed, "Okay, that's good. I didn't want anything bad to happen to Luna."

Pierce raised a brow, asking, "Luna?"

Dylan explained, "That dragon we have; she can talk. I know it sounds crazy, but once she wakes up, you'll hear for yourself and believe me."

Kurt came out of the tent with the pallet jack after putting the cage inside. He confirmed for his friend to the woman, "It sounds like something out of a TV show, doesn't it, doc?" He grinned at her.

"Yes, it does," Pierce replied, feeling surprised and puzzled. This island just keeps getting stranger and stranger. Now apparently dragons can talk as well. "I suppose I'll have to add it to my reports." Well later anyway as it was best to hear the dragon speak first before she could have that fact confirmed. She told Dylan, "Don't worry about the dragon, sir. I promise you no harm will come to her. All of our experiments are safe."

Dylan, now assured for real that Luna will be safe, replied, "Thanks, I'll hold you to it." Then he walked off back to the tent he was in earlier before the mission.

Smith and Pierce watched him go as the former said, "The way that boy talks makes it sounds like he's friends with the lizard." He snorted and scoffed, "Talking dragons. There ain't no animal in the world that talks, unless it's a parrot. That private must be out of his mind."

"Maybe," Pierce half-way agreed. "But I'll have to check first."

Just then, Commander Stevenson showed up and approached the head researcher. He said to her, "Dr. Pierce, are you content with the new dragon we brought in?"

The woman responded, "Why yes, Commander. This one is fine."

"That is good," Stevenson responded. Then he turned to the sergeant and told him, "Sergeant Smith, I would like a word with the doctor alone. You may return to your quarters."

"Sir, yes sir," Smith obeyed before he walked off and left the two alone.

The commander questioned the woman, "So doctor, have you found out anything useful we must know about the dragons?"

Pierce confirmed, "Yes sir." She told him about the flame organ and where it was located in dragons. "I believe shooting them there just might stop them from blowing out fire again."

"Excellent," Stevenson responded, glad that he could use this information to his advantage. "Be sure to draw a picture of a dragon and where that flame organ is and put it in a PowerPoint slide. The soldiers could do well with that knowledge."

"I will."

"Now is there anything else I must know?"

"I believe so," Pierce replied. "We also took out a dragon's brain and discovered it to resemble a human brain. The shape and wrinkles were the same. I think these monsters might be on the same level of intelligence as us. One of the privates even said that the dragon he and the others brought back can talk like we do."

Stevenson rubbed his chin in thought and said, "Well I guess that explains why their attack seems so organized." And also, why the horde of them seems so large compared to the usual animal groups. These dragons must have a tribe or some other sort of civilization.

"We also noticed that all the dragons killed were male. Quite typical of the most aggressive gender. That's all I got for now, commander. I'll see if I can learn more from the pink one."

"Very well, doctor," the commander replied. "I'll be waiting to hear back from you about the discoveries. The more we learn, the better we'll understand our enemies and prepare for the next attack."

"Got it, sir," Pierce understood. Then she went back inside her tent and helped her team get the equipment and things ready for the first experiment. Stevenson walked back to his own tent with his mind on the dragons. Once the research was done, the army can get on with Operation Delta and soon humanity's ancient enemies will be forever history.