

Ronord continued his trek through the forest to search for the portal. He was going to find this human mage and slaughter them to save his island. No one was going to stop him, not King Gregarios or the rest of his tribe. The humans needed to be dealt with now. Waiting was only going to make things worse; proof of that was Luna and others getting captured and the death of Heaton. Soon, the dragon saw a huge oval light ahead halfway up the slope. It must have been the portal that Nova was talking about. Ronord went up the slope and stopped at the edge of it. He watched the portal carefully and looked at its surroundings to see if any humans were here. Curiously, there were none to be seen. It looks like they had left this place since last night, thus leaving Ronord open to search past this place. The dragon made his move towards the portal. But then he stopped when he saw something coming out of it, or rather someone. A white dragon came walking out of the portal. Ronord knew that this dragon was not from his tribe as he did not recognize him. The white dragon looked to him and asked in a friendly manner, "Oh hello, you look surprised."

"I am," the black dragon admitted. "I've never seen another dragon not from here before. Who are you?"

The white dragon smiled and answered, "My friend, you can call me Whitley. May I ask for your name in return?"

"It's Ronord," the black dragon answered. "Listen, have you seen any humans around? I heard they were right by this portal last night."

"Portal?" Whitley asked, looking behind at the portal behind him. He smiled in amusement, correcting, "No, no, no, no, my friend. The humans didn't make this portal; I did."

Ronord got surprised and asked, "You what?!" But how? The humans got rid of the dragons' magic. No dragon alive should be able to create any new portals.

Whitley nodded, "Yes, surprising, is it not? I understand the reaction. It's been too long since any dragon has been able to use magic; until today that is."

'Until today, indeed,' the black dragon thought. This was good news to him. If one dragon is able to use magic now, then that means he can do magic as well and use it against the humans. The tables have finally turned for the better. "That's wonderful, because this island has a human problem; a big one! And I need to be able use magic as well. What I'm saying is that I need you to teach me."

"Humans?" Whitley asked. "Like the ones that's keeping me away from the other portal I made?"

Ronord asked, "You made that portal as well?"

The white dragon confirmed, "I did. I was just testing out my newfound powers. I was going back there to close it, but the humans got to it first and they won't ever leave." He shook his head at the ground

sadly, bemoaning, "It seems I have inadvertently put your island in danger."

The black dragon forgave him, "Don't beat yourself up over it. What matters now is that we can use magic again. How did you bring back it back?"

Whitley answered through story, "Well Ronord, you see? I was inspired my tribe's stories of our kind using magic that I ventured away from home to search for the place where our magic was sealed. For years, I have kept myself carefully hidden away any and all human eyes. Then yesterday, my journey took me far deep into the coldest and highest mountains; mountains that humans cannot climb. I noticed a small cave sitting at the peak and decided to check inside and warm myself there after suffering the harsh weather. There, I saw some kind of table, surrounded by stony pedestals. On top of it was an old-looking treasure chest."

"A chest?" Ronord wondered if that box had anything to do with sealed magic.

"I tried opening its lock with my smallest claw, but it wouldn't unlock. Then I broke the smallest chip off the pedestal and tried opening the lock through it, but no luck with that either. Then I finally tried to smash the box by throwing it over and over again against the wall. Eventually, it broke and then all of the energy inside flashed out like a bright light. I had to close my eyes to keep myself from going blind. It was really bright."

"And that's when you got your magic powers?"

"Yes, but I didn't know until I accidentally cast a bolt of lightning. I was shocked when I saw that. It was just like one of the magic spells told in history. That was when I began to test out my newfound powers, including the portal spell. So that's the story of how I got my magic."

Ronord replied in thought, "So that's where the humans kept our powers." The part about the mountain being unclimbable to humans would sound fictitious to some until one figured out that they used magic to get there in the first place. "I'm glad you found that place, Whitley. With this magic, my tribe will be able to fight the humans on equal footing, or better yet more." Having more strength than the humans sounded better if his species was going to win this battle.

Whitley chirped, "Oh ho, well aren't you the determined one. Very well then, I shall teach you all that I know. Come with me, I know a good place for us to practice." The two dragons went into the portal before it was closed up.

A M1 Abrams drove through the woods, searching for the rogue dragon named Ronord. Some of the troops had been deployed to aid the tribe in helping to find Ronord before he could foolishly start any trouble with the army. Soon, they saw something up ahead on the screen of the infrared camera. One of

the men asked, "Hey, what's that?"

The gunner looked at the shape on the screen, saying, "It looks like a dragon, probably napping. It might be this Ronord fellow. Let's check it out and see." The tank stopped near the dragon and the soldiers got out to see this beast.

They looked down at the unconscious dragon as the driver asked, "Is that him?"

The gunner answered, "No, this one's blue. We're looking for a black dragon. That's what we should find."

The driver looked at it in concern, "Okay, but this dragon. Is that how they normally sleep? It looks like it's been hit by something." He saw the mouth open with lump on the side of the skull.

The gunner said, "I don't know happened, but let's call in a striker just in case." He radioed his message to the base calling for an ambulance converted APC to come pick up the dragon.

Dylan and Luna continued their search for Ronord. Luna kept her eyes below her, looking past the branches and twigs of the trees to the very ground on the bottom. Dylan just looked checked his surroundings in the sky in case the black dragon was flying. Eventually, the pink dragon saw a member of her tribe lying down right by two soldiers and a M1 Abrams. Fearing something bad must have happened, she fretted, "Alex?"

"Who?" asked Dylan, wondering who she was talking to. The pink dragon spiraled down to where the figures were at. After she landed, the private saw the blue dragon and asked his comrades, "What happened here?"

The gunner responded, "That's a good question. He was like this when we got here." Dylan wondered that if they did not attack the blue dragon, then who or what? Luna approached Alex, going to check him for his injuries and life signs. She stopped just a foot away from his face when she heard the turning of wheels coming their way.

Everyone looked and saw an armored personnel carrier with the red cross symbol plastered on the front and the sides. The APC gunner popped out from the hatch and asked, "Alright, alright, where's the big boy at?" He patted the flat top of the carrier as he continued, "Put 'em up here, so I can go ride 'em back to the base."

The gunner knelt down and slid his hands underneath Alex's shoulder to lift. He told the others, "Help me lift him up, guys!" The others went to help, grabbing a hold of the blue dragon and carrying him over to the APC. They lifted him up onto the vehicle and the APC gunner handed them some ropes to strap

him on there.

The APC gunner told them, "Wrap him tight, boys. I don't want 'em to fall while I drive."

The tank gunner replied, "Yeah, yeah, I know." The men tied Alex to the carrier and made sure the ropes were secure. After they were set, the tank gunner said, "Alright, got him wrapped up for you."

"Good," said the APC gunner. He went back inside the vehicle as he told the driver, "Okay, time to RTB, boy! We got what we came here for." Then the hatchet closed and the engine began to start.

Luna said to Dylan, "We should go with them. I think Alex might freak if he saw strangers."

The private agreed, "You're right. Who knows what he's gonna do?" Alex had not been with them when the military and the tribe came to a truce. The blue dragon might think they were still at war. Luna got on top of the APC and helped her friend up and sit with Alex. The APC drove on back to the base.

Alex laid on the ground in front of the infirmary tent as one of the nurses placed an ice pack on the bump and bandaged it there to hold it in place. Luna and Dylan stayed and watched as the nurse did her job and walk away from the blue dragon. Luna asked her, "Is he going to be alright?"

"I believe so," the nurse answered. "The ice pack should reduce the swelling on his head in twenty minutes. As for when he wakes up, I don't know. Who knows how long he's been like that?"

The pink dragon looked at Alex with a frown, worried about him. Dylan comforted her by reassuring, "Don't worry, Luna. He'll wake up. Just give him some time." He patted her shoulder. He pulled out his cellphone and touched the YouTube app. With a smile, he offered, "Here, why don't we listen to that song you wanted to hear? Then we could watch some videos to pass the time."

Luna smiled, "Sure, let's hear it!" The private searched America's national anthem and touched the video for it. The people in the video began to sing the song the full version of the Star-Spangled Banner.

During the middle of the song, Alex began to stir. His amber eyes opened, blinking to the light of the world as his body prepared its energy to stand. Looking at the strange buildings around him, he thought, *'Where am I, and why does my cheek feel cold?'* Immediately, his brain finally processed his location and he realized where he was at, much to his shock and fright. He saw humans walking by him as he recognized this place as the humans' settlement. Alex's eyes went wide and his jaw opened, screaming, "Ahh, humans!" He bolted right up to his feet to make his getaway before he could get shot.

Dylan and Luna looked away from the phone to the blue dragon as soon as they heard him. As Alex spread out his wings and jumped to fly, the pink dragon told him loudly enough for him to hear, "Wait,

Alex! These humans helped you! They're not here to kill us!"

The blue dragon stopped and hovered. Turning his head to the female, he asked, "Huh? Luna?" What was she doing here?

"Yes, it's me," Luna replied. "I'm fine. These humans...they're not as bad as we think. They came to the king to talk and we're now on good terms."

"Huh?!" Alex cried out in surprise. "Just like that?!" That sounded pretty easy. He did not think that the king's idea would actually work.

The pink dragon nodded with a smile, "Yes, just like that. You can ask the king yourself if you don't believe me."

Alex landed back on the ground as he said, "Well call me surprised. I guess we don't need to fight and leave this island after all." Getting fed up with the cold object on his face stinging his face's scales, he reached for the thing and tore it off. The removal of the bandages stung his face a bit, but it was lighter compared to the longer lasting sensation of cold affecting his cheek.

Luna told him insistently, "Wait Alex, don't take that thing off. The human nurse put it on there to help with the bump."

"Bump?" asked the blue dragon before he touched his cooled cheek and felt that lump there. Surprised, he wondered how it got there.

Dylan said, "We think you were hit by something. What happened?"

Recalling the moments just before he lost consciousness, Alex answered, "Ronord..."

"Ronord?" asked Luna as she and Dylan thought that he might have something to do with it.

Alex told them, "He knocked me out. I tried to stop him, but he refused to listen and he hit me. Where is he now?"

Luna answered, "We don't know. We're all looking for him; the tribe and the humans."

"Shoot!" the blue dragon cursed through bared teeth. "He better not do something stupid, now that we're not enemies no more. We should check the portal, that's where he's headed for."

Dylan said, "We already got that covered. Some of our men are stationed there to protect it."

Alex suggested, "Then let's send a dragon or more to meet him there. If we're with the humans, he'll

understand." Suspecting the other outcome, he murmured under his breath, "I hope."

Luna recommended, "I say we three go there and wait for him."

Alex agreed, "Yes, that's a good idea. But where is the portal?"

Dylan said, "I can take you there. Just follow my directions and we'll be there."

The blue dragon said, "Alright, got it. Let's go!" Dylan rode Luna as the dragons took flight into the air. The private began telling them where to go to get to the portal. They soared over the sea of trees for a while and eventually, they saw a huge white light below in the distance with a few attack helicopters flying about. Alex asked, "Is this it?"

Dylan answered, "Yes, that's the portal. We're here." The dragons descended below the treetops and landed on the ground before the armed soldiers, the M1A2 Abrams and the portal.

The troops turned to the dragons as Corporal Krueger, who was sitting in one of the M1A2 Abrams, demanded the dragons through the tank's speakers, "Halt, identify yourselves!"

Dylan put his arms out, gesturing his comrades not to attack. "Wait! It's just us, Private Dylan and Luna. We're trying to see if we could catch Ronord here, that's all."

The corporal told him, emphasizing, "That's what WE'RE HERE FOR, private. Go back to scouting the other areas. We got this covered."

The private reasoned to get him on their plan, "Hold on now, we just thought having dragons around would get Ronord to trust us. Shouldn't that make your job easier?"

Krueger gave the idea some thought and saw how well this could go. "I like the way you think, private. We'll keep the blue one with us. You and your pink friend should go and check the other places for him."

"Understood, sir," Dylan obeyed. Luna took off and flew away, leaving Alex behind with the platoon.

Krueger said to Alex, "Alright dragon, I need you to help us keep an eye out for Ronord. Let us know if he's here."

The blue dragon replied with a nod, "Okay, got it." They all kept their eyes sharp and vigilant for the black dragon somewhere in the woods around them as well as on the screens of the infrared cameras. Just then, eight vehicles armed with 6-tubed towers came driving out of the portal.

The corporal and the dragon watched them as the former smiled, "Well, well, looks like our newest weapons have finally made it here." These 6-tubed tower vehicles were followed by six multiple rocket

artillery vehicles. Four of the 6-tubed tower vehicles stayed stationary around the portal, while the other four drove off to the base.

About a minute or so later, a Humvee came driving down the same dirt path that half of the 6-tubed tower vehicles took to get to the base. The Humvee parked itself by the platoon and coming out of its door was none other than Hercules. He did a salute and called, "Tank Commander Hercules reporting in!"

Krueger replied, "Good to have you here, Hercules. The more the merrier."

Hercules walked over to him as he said, "If it keeps me from getting cooped up in the base all day, I'm in." Then he noticed the dragon among them, "Who's this? A new friend of ours?"

The dragon spoke his name, "I'm Alex; we're just strangers. I'm just here to help watch out for Ronord."

Hercules asked, "Is that the dragon who's all the rage right now?"

Alex confirmed, "Yes, that's him alright."

The tank commander said heartily, "Well I'll help you all keep an eye out. I'll give you all a shout if I see that fellow. He'll never touch this portal as long as I'm here."

Krueger said, "Yes, you know you're going to do that, Hercules. Now get in your tank and help us out."

"Yes sir," Hercules replied and then he walked over to his M1A2 Abrams that was being manned by privates. Before he could get in, two large Oshkosh M1070 heavy equipment transporter trucks came out of the portal with covered tanks on each one.

The trucks stopped to the side on the broad dirt path. One man got out of the leading transport truck and went up to the platoon. He asked, "We brought in some new tanks for us. Which one of you is Hercules Flex?"

Hercules dropped down from the Abrams and went up to the man. He pointed a thumb to himself and answered, "That'll be me, sir. You got something for me?"

The transporter said, "As a matter-of-fact, we do. Commander Stevenson has just reassigned you with the newest model of the Abraham's."

The tank commander was stunned and very excited to hear this news. "Woo-hoo!" he cheered for himself as he did a joyful jump. "I'm getting me something better!" Eager to get to know his new vehicle, he asked, "Can I see it?"

The transporter permitted, "Of course, it's right this way." Hercules followed the man over to the transport truck containing the assigned tank. The transporter went over to one of the cables that held down the tarp that was over the tank. He unhooked the very front cable on the right side of the tank and pulled up the corner of the tarp. The model number on the tank was revealed to be M1A2 SEP V3.

When Hercules saw this, he yelled out his excitement, "Hallelujah, a SEP V3! That's the newest model that came out a week ago! Uncover that tank and let me see this beauty!"

"Sure, whatever you say, sir," the transporter replied. He and a few other transporters took the tarp off and revealed the SEP V3 in its entirety. The transporter began to explain the SEP V3's functions and capabilities, "Okay, so let me tell you everything about this tank, sir. Inside it is a remote-controlled commander gun which is a .50 caliber. The tank is also equipped with a specialized infrared camera that can go all around in any which way you want it to."

"Interesting," the tank commander commented. "Anything else about it?"

The transporter continued, "The tank also comes with some upgrades made to it. It's got an increased power generation and distribution, better communications & networking, a new VHMS and LRMs for improved maintenance, an ADL to use airburst rounds, an improved counter-IED armor package, an improved FLIR using long- and mid-wave infrared, a low-profile CROWS RWS, a NGAP, and an APU underneath the armor to run electronics while stationary."

Hercules beamed, "Woo-hoo! That sounds fantastic!"

"It also has more passive ballistic protections added to the turret faces, along with new Explosive Reactive Armor mountings: the ARAT, which is a Trophy Active Protection Systems added to the turret sides."

Hercules smiled, "Well now I'm glad I get to have a tank that doesn't need to act up as much like the old one. That dingy old generator on it would give me problems sometimes, you know? And now with a remote weapon station, I get to stay inside and shoot without taking a bullet." Then he asked one of the transporters, "Hey, lower the ramp, will you? Me and my boys got to go and test this baby out ourselves."

"Sure thing, sir," said the other transporter. He took the ramp down to let the tank commander and his crew drive the SEP V3 down. The crew climbed up on the platform of the trailer and got inside the tank.

Hercules got inside through his commander hatch, which was behind the CROWS, an abbreviation for Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station, which is a remote-controlled gun. He soon orders his men, "Alright boys, start her up!" Then the tank's whirling gas turbine comes to life, which took about a minute to start up to get to the amount of rpm necessary for moving. Then a *CLUCK* sound was heard as that was a sign of the gears shifting.

Alex watched the big metal beast reverse itself down the ramp. He had been listening on Hercules's conversation with the other human and did not understand all these strange terms that they used. But he did know that the monster carriage, patterned with different shades of green and brown, was called a SEP V3 and a tank, whatever that is. The strange part on the back of the tank released a little bit of light smoke. Was there a fire inside? The tank soon got on the ground and then the ramp was raised back up by the other humans. Then the SEP V3 shifts around and then stops beside Alex and Krueger. Hercules pops out halfway outside the tank's hatch, smiling with glee. The dragon comments, "You sure are happy to have this new thing."

Hercules grinned, "Of course I am! It's the newest tank model and it's more advanced than my last one." Alex is still a bit confused about all this, but he did understand that this was a more modern beast.

The transporter, who gave Hercules the new tank, said, "Just to let you know, this tank is at least about two tons heavier than the last model with all that armor the factory guys put on it."

Not worried about the little fact, Hercules said, "Eh, who cares? At least I can do more damage than I can take with this thing."

Soon, the other tank from the other truck rolls off and then meets besides Hercules's new tank. One of the men inside that Abrams told the tank commander through radio, "Commander Flex, we're going to take our new tank back to the base. Over!"

Hercules went back inside his SEP V3 to radio back his response, "Okay, you boys go on ahead. I'm going to stay behind with my new toy as backup for the good folks here. Over!"

"Roger that, sir. Over!" Then the Abrams rolled off over to the base.

Hercules ordered his driver, "Alright boy, put us beside the portal." The SEP V3 drove and settled next to the portal.

Alex was very surprised when he saw the small little platform on top of the tank. The long black thing on it looked like the tube weapons that the humans carried. This thing was supposed to be fired from inside the tank as opposed to being wielded by human hands. Thinking he had understood what he wanted to know about the tank, now he wanted to know more about the human's current arsenal and how they had advanced since the Middle Ages. Even now when Ronord was to be dealt with, Alex could go and start asking about their new technology. But for now, he would just stay here by the portal and wait. He thought, *'I wonder if the humans will be willing to share their secrets with us dragons.'*

Somewhere on another part of the island, Whitley was teaching Ronord how to do magic, giving him

every spell that he had knowledge of. The black dragon had summoned a transparent magic ball around him, which is the barrier spell. The white dragon knocked on it to test its durability, which he found to be more than rock solid. He praised, "Very good, Ronord! Now let's see you do the next spell."

"Sure thing," Ronord replied. He was more than happy to have this newfound power. He summoned some magic balls of light, which appeared out of thin air and floated up around him. Then he willed them to hurl themselves across the air like objects being thrown at the speed of sound.

Somewhere nearby, a sniper in a ghillie suit was trekking through the forest, having been deployed to find a black dragon named Ronord. His face was covered in mud and parts of it were painted with the colors, green and brown, for camouflage. He carried a sniper rifle to defend himself with should Ronord ever attack him. He had no intention to kill him though; all he needed to do was try to convince him that the army was not here to kill his kind anymore. Suddenly, something flew fast in front of him in a blink of an eye. The startled sniper halted and cried, "Whoa!" The light balls flew into a tree and blasted it into pieces. The sniper gasps at what he just saw. What was that and where did they come from? He went to go in the direction of where the strange things came from to see what was the source of them. He got to a small cliff where he saw two silhouettes on the lower ground in the far distance. He looks through the lens of his heavy M107 Barrett 50.cal sniper gun that was covered in camouflage nets and some fake bushes to get a closer look on what they are. There were two dragons, one white and the other black. The latter must have been Ronord.

Whitley nodded, "Very good! I see you're getting the hang of it and very quick at it, too."

Ronord smirked, "I guess I must have a talent for this kind of thing." Which is good, because he will need the proficiency for his mass destruction on his enemies.

"It certainly seems so," the white dragon agreed. "Perhaps you could even discover or come up with your own spells that I haven't seen yet."

"Perhaps I can," the black dragon replied confidently. Then he got an idea for a spell he wanted to test to see if it would work. "Speaking of which, have you heard of this?" It was a spell he had heard of during his younger days. He held his front feet firmly to the ground and sent magic into the soil to channel through the ground towards the trees in front of them. The roots of the trees came to life as some of them dug up out from the ground and wiggled themselves like worms. Even the branches above were swinging around, almost as if they were dancing.

Whitley looked up at the trees in surprise and awe. He admitted, "I never have. Goodness, this is amazing!"

"It is," Ronord said. "Those humans won't know what's coming to them by the time I've learned everything."

"Yes, right," Whitley said. "Anyway, let me teach you how to warp short distances."

The sniper's jaw dropped in shocked when he saw the trees come to life. What on earth was that? How and why did this happen? Then the next surprising thing that happened was the white dragon disappearing from his spot and then reappearing in another, just a few feet away from the black dragon. It did not take too long for the sniper to figure out that the dragons had made those trees move and sent those light ball things flying by him. He took out his walkie-talkie and went to get in touch with Sergeant Smith, "Sarge... You're going to want to hear this and you're not going to believe it. Over!"

Smith asked, "What is it, soldier? I want to hear this report of yours. Over!"

"Well..." Then the sniper began to tell him everything he saw.

Alex and the army were still on the lookout for Ronord, when suddenly a Humvee came out of the portal bringing a large square-like object on a wagon behind it. Corporal Krueger saw this and claps his hands gladly, saying, "I see you all got the sentinel?"

The men parked the Humvee close to him and came out. They saluted him as he saluted back. One of them answered, "Y-yes, sir. This is just in case if that black dragon ever tries to fly, this thing would at least be able to track him anywhere on our screens. He won't be able to know that he's getting tracked of course."

Krueger nodded, "That's a relief."

Alex looks at the strange-looking carriage with that rectangular-looking flat plate on it. He asks the corporal, "Hey, what is that thing over there?"

Krueger looked to where the dragon was looking and answered, "Oh that; that's an AN/MPQ-64 Sentinel."

The dragon asks, "An AN/MPQ-64 Sentinel? What's it used for?"

Krueger tells him, "It's a type of detecting system; it spins around and sends out little waves of what we call signals. These signals will bounce off of certain things like that a flying one and then they'll be sent back towards this flat plate right here." Pointing to the face of the sentinel, he continued, "It's called the radar dish. That thing there is designed to detect any kind of anomaly that's moving or not moving. Either way or not, this will not help us find Ronord. But it will show us on a certain type of flat surfaces called radar screens. That way, we'll know how far he is and where exactly his movement is. It can also detect surface ground targets as well." Alex was amazed that this kind of device could actually detect something even if it was an object one could not see normally. Knowing its purpose was for detecting

any adversaries, he wanted to know more about the humans' technology radar, which was the biggest thing that he has ever heard of. He wondered why it was called a radar? But he will have to ask that later. The Humvee carries the AN/MPQ-64 Sentinel to the base. Then two trucks came out of the portal with AN/TPQ-36 firefinder radars.

Alex saw that they were radar dishes as well, but they were bigger and looked more powerful than the other one he had just seen. He asked the corporal, "Are these the same thing?"

Krueger said, "They are, but they provide information about our targets to our weapons like those other there." He points to the C-RAMs.

Soon, a click sounded from Krueger's walkie-talkie and a voice from it said, "Corporal Krueger, Corporal Krueger, I have a report. Please respond!"

The corporal picked up his walkie-talkie and brought it to his ear, answering, "This Corporal Krueger, what is this report you speak of? Over!"

The man on the other end explained, "One of our snipers has just discovered Ronord. It looks like he's been doing something secretive with another dragon, a white one. Several minutes after leaving his post, he reported to Sergeant Smith about them doing some strange anomalies."

"Strange anomalies?" asked Krueger as his brows furrowed quizzically.

The man said, "He said, it looks like they were doing some kind of magic. They were casting some kind of energy balls, teleporting and even making trees spring to life. Their branches and roots were moving!"

"What?!" said the stunned corporal. This report was very much unbelievable. Sure, there were dragons and magic walls that hid the inhabitants of the island, but for dragons to suddenly use magic, when they had all this time to utilize that was confusing.

Alex, having overheard the conversation with Krueger and his little talking box, had dropped his jaw in surprise. He thought, *'But how? I thought our magic was gone. Who, what, when, where, how did Ronord acquire this skill?'*

Krueger asked, "That's quite the surprising news, soldier. Is there anything else our sniper discovered? Over!"

The man answered, "No, that's it. There's nothing else to report. That's all the sniper saw. We just don't know how the dragons are able to pull these off. Over!"

"That's true," the corporal commented. "Okay thanks for the report. Let me know if there's anything else, over and out."

The man on the other side said, "Rodger that, sir." Then the communication was shut off.

Soon the little radar dish on the little trailer, that the Humvee carried, came to life and started to spin all the way around again and again. Alex watched it rotate repeatedly as he wondered, *'Is it always supposed to spin like that? Are there any other ones like that one but maybe look different?'* Pretty soon, he heard some kind of *Klunk Klunk* and then he saw one of the 4 weaponized carriages, that were around the portal, starting to move. The dragon was more than just stunned, he was amazed at how fast they turned and moved. They probably moved more than 115 or so degrees per second. Then he saw the strange black tube weapon on it, which looks weird. This one had at least six tubes in one. Did they all fire at the same time when used? Then he saw some humans going over to it, carrying some big and heavy-looking boxes. Soon, they opened some kind of door when the strange-looking weapon system got on a necessary level for them to reach to certain things. It was on leveled ground, but then they started to take out the large chains out of the strange rectangular boxes. Soon, they put them toward the strength weapon system and then, to the surprise of the dragon's eyes, he saw the strange six-tubed weapon start turning. As it was doing that, it looked like it was starting to suck up the strange chains. As they were going inside as from what it seems like, Alex could get a good idea of what they were probably doing. Either they were feeding that thing with the strange chains or they were probably preparing for something. As soon as the humans got done with more than 4 boxes, they climbed down and closed the little door that was on the weapon system. Then soon, the weapon system started to turn once again and point up to the sky.

Then suddenly, one of the men shouted, "Clear area... Prepare for a test fire." Then a minute later, Alex saw it turn slowly and then suddenly, the six tubes that were on the weapon suddenly started to rotate a rapid rate just for a mere second before there was a sudden *BBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBRT!* The sound was so terrifying, the noise from that weapon made Alex's jaw dropped with awe and amazement. He saw the strange lights coming out of the six barrels and then into the sky like a stream of death before they stopped firing. Then it lowered its tubes and started to scan the tree line. The dragon had never seen such a weapon like that this. It was something different from the other weapons that the humans have, but the tubes on that strange system that they call.... What was it?

Krueger looked content with the vehicle's weapon system. He said, "Glad to see the C-RAMs are still working."

"C-RAMs?" asked Alex, wondering if the man was referring to the six-tubed weapon.

The corporal told him, "Counter Rocket, Artillery and Mortar. It shoots down anything the radar dish finds."

Alex said no more as he thought about Ronord. *'I wonder how he's going to stand up against weapons like that. Will his magic beat them or will he fall like all the others before?'* Either way, he hoped that it would not come down to either side killing one another. Whatever the case, he just hoped that the

humans will spare him, but he understood why they would have to use such a weapon since somehow magic has returned. But he will have to put that aside for later as he just waits beside the corporal.

The sniper had been approaching Ronord carefully, hoping for the black dragon to know and understand that he came in peace. Though he came with weapon in hand, which would potentially cause a misunderstanding, he felt the need to defend himself should things go wrong. After he got within the hearing range of the dragon, with enough distance for safety, the sniper called calmly, "Ronord?"

Ronord turned around to see the sniper as Whitley looked to him, too. The black dragon glared at the man and yelled, "Human!" He cast a ball of light at the sniper, but the spell missed and blasted the ground closely next to the sniper. The explosion flung the screaming man in the air as bits of dirt and burned leaves flew in the air before they all fell back on the ground. The sniper landed hard face front and then groaned as he began to lift himself up. Ronord got over to him with light balls floating beside him, ready to be used for the kill. He growled, "Today's the day that you and your kind will be exterminated!"

The sniper turned his head towards the dragon with eyes wide in fear. After turning his body around and scooting back, he quickly told like no tomorrow, "W-wait! We've met your king! There's not going to be a fight no more! Honest!"

"Silence!" yelled Ronord, refusing to believe the man's words. "There will be no peace until all you humans are gone!" Instead of blasting him with a magic ball like he first intended, the dragon created a rift on the ground below the sniper. The rift soon opened wider into a chasm, which the sniper fell in screaming for dear life. Ronord turned his back on the chasm and said to no one in particular, "It's time for the portal to be closed. No more humans must come in!" He took off and flew to find the portal.

Whitley stood where he was at, watching the black dragon go as he thought about the human's words. No more fighting? Did the humans not want to slay dragons anymore? Just then, he heard a shout, "Nick!" The dragon looked to where he heard the voice from and saw a pink dragon carrying another human on her back. The pink dragon flew into the chasm, going after the falling human. She reached him in time as the rider grabbed Nick's arm. The pink dragon began to ascend back up as the rider helped the other man settle onto her back.

Luna came out of the chasm and landed on the ground. Dylan asked the frightened sniper, "You alright, Nick?"

Nick P. Ferry let out a few fast breaths before answering, "I'm fine... Thanks for the save." Then he got off of the pink dragon's back.

Luna looked to where the black dragon had flown, his silhouette disappearing into the sky. She said,

"That was Ronord, wasn't it? And he was using magic?" Magic must have returned to this world somehow. If so, the army could be in serious danger. That is, if they do not have the right equipment for this.

Dylan said, "I thought you said the magic was gone, Luna. What happened?"

"I don't know," the pink dragon answered unsurely.

Whitley looked at the trio, observing them. None of them appeared to be hostile towards each other. Perhaps there really was not a war going on anymore after all. To be sure, he asked them, "Pardon me, but do you mind explaining to me what's going on?"

They looked to the white dragon as Dylan asked, "Who are you?"

The white dragon answered, "The name's Whitley, my good sir. I come from another dragon tribe."

Luna asked, "Another tribe?! But how did you get here? There's nothing but water all around this island."

Whitley answered, "Portal magic, young one. It's a spell I've been testing out." Looking from side-to-side at the humans and dragon, he asked the latter, "So anyway, is it true that the dragons and humans are on good terms now?"

Luna answered, "We are, but Ronord hasn't gotten the news yet. That's why we've been trying to find him before he tries to fight the humans."

It was at that point that Whitley began to feel guilt and regret about Ronord. He frowned, "Oh dear, it seems I have made a mistake."

Dylan asked, "What mistake?"

Whitley explained, "I was the one who taught him magic. With these powers he now has, who knows how many humans he's going to kill." Looking away in shame, he apologized, "I'm so sorry..."

Luna tried to comfort him, "Please don't blame yourself. You couldn't have known what was going on."

Dylan agreed, "She's right! We can't just stand here in self-pity. We need to catch up to Ronord fast!" He was not sure what dragon magic was like, but he was not going to chance on army surviving easily just in case these powers were too strong.

Whitley hoped to fix his mistake by helping them, even if it was not much at all. He told them, "Well if you're going after him, I heard he's going for that portal I made."

"The portal!" the private repeated. "Of course, he'll go for that." He ushered the pink dragon, "Come on, Luna. We need to get going!"

"Right!" Luna replied before she took off and quickly flew back to the portal.

As they left, Nick radioed on his walkie-talkie to issue a warning to Krueger, "Corporal, Ronord's on the move to the portal. Over!"

Krueger was on his walkie-talkie getting a message from the sniper, Nick. The corporal replied, "Alright, we'll have our stations ready for when he shows up."

Alex looks to him and asks, "Who's showing up?"

"Ronord," Krueger answered. "He's making a beeline to this place right now."

"And do you all know how to handle a dragon's magic?" Having a mage here would make countering Ronord's powers easier if the new weapons could not do it. But what did Alex know of the capabilities of these things?

Krueger did not know what the dragon's magic would be like. For all the possible outcomes, these powers could be too much to handle or they would be simply nothing to worry about. He replied, "I don't know, but we got to do whatever it takes to protect the portal and ourselves."

The dragon said, "Okay, I sure hope you know what you're doing." He looked back to the space far into the woods, anticipating Ronord's appearance pretty soon. Within a minute, all of the tanks got started up. Alex could hear their engines coming to life.

Soon afterwards, some M3 Bradleys came out of the portal. One of the foot soldiers went up to Krueger and questioned, "Sir, do we really need this much tanks here? I mean it's just one dragon. How hard can it be?"

The corporal told him, "That dragon you're talking about has magic powers. You can't be too careful with him. That's why we need reinforcements."

The soldier reasoned, "Yes, but our bullets fly pretty fast, don't they? All it takes is one shot and he'll be dead."

Krueger told him sternly, "Damn it, soldier! We're trying to get him to reason, not shoot him dead. That's a last-ditch effort the king wants us to take."

The soldier, unfazed by the tone, asked, "Yeah, but how's he going to think we don't mean any harm when we have all these tanks and helicopters around?"

"That's just to discourage him from trying anything funny. A big number makes the group look pretty intimidating."

The soldier shrugged, "Well, I guess I get your point." Soon, the men inside the tanks switch the cameras to infrared mode and the top of Bradleys' cameras started rotating around. Alex was surprised as he watched them turn around again and again. He wondered if that was what the soldiers used to see around on the inside of these metal carriages.

Ronord saw a white light far, far away down below the treetops of the forest. This must be the portal that Whitley had left open. The black dragon was going to rectify that mistake and put an end to the invasion once and for all. He descended down below the trees and continued his way to the portal on land. He kept his brown eyes on the light far ahead, going closer to it with each step he took. But when he was halfway there, a long stream of fire that caught him by surprise with a sudden sound *BRRRRRRRRRRRT!* The dragon let out a heart-jumping roar as he was flown off from the ground. After a hard landing, he groaned in pain as he got up and thought, *'What was that?'* Had he been discovered by humans? He searched his surroundings and found the weaponized carriages guarding the portal. He barred his teeth in a grit and thought, *'Curses! They're keeping me away from the portal. I need to fall back and ambush them.'* He backed off and then got about 1000 feet away from them. But when he did, there was a massive explosion that happened near him. It was so powerful that it threw him off his feet. Ronord was lucky; if the explosion had boomed any closer, it could have injured him or kill him. Then he saw something moving towards him, it was the thing that had just tried to shoot him. It was a large monstrous metal carriage with the biggest tube weapon that he had ever seen. The carriage turned and there was a miniature one as well on the top right side of it.

Hercules was in the SEP V3 shooting at the black dragon. He shouted, "Yeah! Scram ya overgrown lizard! This portal's not for you!"

Suddenly, the little one on the right top side suddenly opened on Ronord. *TAKA TAKA TAKA TAKA*. The stream of explosions made him fly off his feet. Having enough of this, he then used his magic to make a small, but strong shield. The attack pellets bounced off as it looked like the monster was trying to immobilize him. He thought, *'Well it's not going to work this time.'*

Hercules grimaced, "Shoot! His barrier's too tough." He told his driver, "Fall back, boy! We got to get back-up."

Soon, the monstrous carriage reverses rapidly and then disappears past the thick bushes. Ronord

smirked, pleased to see that the carriage found out that its weapon can do nothing to his magic shield. *'I am unstoppable!'* He tried to follow the carriage and then it ended up leading him to the portal, where he only saw just more of the metal carriages. But what did that matter? The more kills, the better. The dragon also saw what looked like the little defense carriage that shot at him earlier with that BRRRTing sound. It turned toward him and then he realized this was his chance. Ronord roared and then got behind a massive boulder that was about the size of a two-story house. He summoned up magic balls and then looked past the boulder to throw an insult at his foes, "Die, you little nips! And this is for my tribe, you two-legged demons!" He cast the energy balls at the carriages before taking off into the sky and going for the portal. He was sure that his spells would obliterate the humans.

Suddenly, the system in the C-RAM carriage picked up the oncoming projectiles on the radar. "Incoming! Incoming!" said one of the men from the C-RAM carriage that was on the right. Soon, they saw 3 big energy blue balls coming straight at them at a pretty good speed of over 100 or so mph. That man shouted, "Everyone take coverrrr!" The men scrambled to save themselves. The AN/TPQ-36 firefinder on the truck started to turn as it sent out waves to detect the magic balls.

Alex and Krueger had taken cover behind the small metal barricade for protection. They saw Ronord attacking and having a magic shield in front of him for protection. The blue dragon could not believe that he was actually seeing another dragon actually using magic. The report was true after all. The corporal said, "We need to get him immobilized somehow and lure him away from the portal. Then we'll deal with him from there."

Alex had a better idea as he suggested, "Or I could just go up to him and tell him that the war isn't happening." He did not see a reason for violence if Ronord would be willing to hear the good news from another dragon.

"Good idea," Krueger agreed. "Talk some sense into him, will you?"

The blue dragon was going to do just that. He flew over to the black dragon and stopped before him halfway in front of the portal, both hovering face-to-face. Alex pleaded, "Ronord, stop! You don't need to kill the humans anymore! They've talked with the king; we're at peace now!"

"Peace you say?" asked Ronord, feeling skeptical about this.

Alex nodded, confirming, "Yes, we're all on good terms here, so we can all go home."

Ronord growled, "Nonsense! The humans are our enemies and have been for centuries. We cannot trust them so easily!"

Alex insisted, "But Ronord, if they're still just as bad as ever, then why is Luna still alive?"

The black dragon rebuked, "And why did they kill Heaton?" The fates of the other prisoners had not

been brought up, but it was highly possible that they were dead, too.

Alex looked away, ignorant and unsure about the reason behind this. "I don't know," he answered. Come to think of it, he never heard anything about Ashley and Cyril either. Who knows where they are now?

"You see?" Ronord replied as if he was in the right. "They're still just as cold-hearted as ever. Now get out of the way and let me do what I have to do!" He used his magic to blow away the blue dragon with a powerful gust of wind. Alex's body fell and skidded across the ground, collecting dirt onto his blue scales.

The weapons officer spotted the spells on the AN/TPQ-36 firefinder radar and shouted, "Unknown three plasma balls targets inbound!"

The man that was in control of it said, "Alpha, alpha, alpha! Blast them with the C-RAM!" Soon on the outside of the weapons system, the sentinel turned at its full capacity.

Alex lifted his head off the ground and saw that Ronord's spells were more than 500 ft away from the tanks and they're closing in on them fast. But fortunately, the weapon system pointed its six black tubes at the three balls and began to shoot them. The tubes rotated in less than a mirror of a second as there was a *BBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBBT!* The C-RAM depleted its faster-than-a-blink-of-an-eye metal pellets at the first ball, which then exploded into a blast as big as the size of a 20lbs box. Then as it continued with its rapid shooting, it quickly turned to the second one and it blew up, too. Then it turned to the final one, which blew up as well upon being shot. In less than a second, the weapon stops and its black tubes came to a stop as well. Alex was stunned; he now saw the full purpose of this defense system. He heard Krueger somewhere behind him, saying, "Looks like my men's got it handled." The blue dragon turned his head to see the corporal smiling proudly.

Alex now let a small grin escape his scaly lips. "That was....awesome," he said to himself. Then some helicopters came from the portal and from the humans' base. They soon turned to the location of Ronord.

The black dragon watched with frustration as his perfect moment to destroy the humans and seal the portal had ended in failure. The strange dome-looking carriage with its rotating tubes had obliterated his spells with no problem at all, which was startling and surprising. He gasped, "What? But...no! That should have worked!" He was about to lose his mind when he saw the carriages. He was about to target them with a different spell, when suddenly, there was a *Tak Tak Tak* from the flying carriages. The strange stream of fire exploded around him and injured him with the degree of metal. Ronord soon realized that he was outnumbered too much and that the monstrous carriages were coming after him. He growled, "I'm going to have to figure out how I can dispel the portal before destroying the carriages." He soon turned around and flew away. But as he was getting chased down by the fast and the surprising speed of the monsters, their strange weapons opened up on him and shot around him. One nearly hit

him, which he thanked luck that he was not shot. The ammo hit a nearby tree and it exploded. "I will get my revenge!" Ronord roared and he raced over the forest.

Alex watched the other dragon go as he frowned, "I can't believe he didn't listen to me." Well maybe he can, since Ronord has always been the stubborn one, even when he was a baby dragon.

Krueger shook his head, "Well I don't know what to tell you, but if he's not going to listen to reason, then expect the worse."

Then Luna and Dylan showed up as the former landed on the ground by them. The private got off the pink dragon's back and went over to the corporal. He asked, "Corporal Krueger, has Ronord shown up yet?"

"He did," the older man answered. "The blue one heard tried to talk some sense into him and it went out the other ear. We had to chase him off to save the portal."

Luna answered, "So where did he go now?"

Alex looked off to where Ronord had flown, answered, "He went that way. You should hurry up if you don't want the flying carriage to get him."

"Helicopters," Luna corrected him.

The blue dragon asked, "Oh, that's what they're called?"

Dylan said, "Come on, we got to catch up to him!" He went back onto the pink dragon's back.

"Hey wait!" Krueger tried to stop the private, but Luna had already taken into the air and flew off to catch Ronord.

Ronord kept getting tracked down and pursued by the humans and their metal carriages. He was trying to get to where Whitley was at for help, but with the rate of how fast the carriages were, it was very likely the humans would kill him before he could even get there. Soon, the army catches up to him and there was a surprising sound of *TA-TA-TAK!* The dragon was shot in the legs and wings. He roared out in pain as he dropped from the air to the ground with his body getting scratched by the tree branches. Then a huge armada came out of the woods and circled him. Ronord growled and used his magic, in the form of white lightning bolts, to take out two of the ground carriages, three of the wheeled ground carriages and two of the flying carriages. They all stopped moving as the flying carriages fell with one of them landing in a tree and hanging from there.

Inside a M3 Bradley, a driver looked at the tank's systems and saw that they were all dead. He cried, "We've lost power!" Before he knew it, lightning appeared inside, flashing around and zapping the crew members dead as they let out their final screams. This was the fate of each of the affected vehicles.

Ronord looked at the halted carriages. He may not have destroyed them, but perhaps he killed the riders inside. Hopefully that was the case at least. Then he saw to the right, on the top of one of the other metal carriages, a black tubed weapon turning to him. The dragon tried to cast a magic shield to protect himself, but it was too late, the weapon begins to him up with a deadly sound of *TAKA TAKA TAKA* from it. He was shot on his feet, his legs, and in his beautiful wings, which left the membranes with holes. The black tube held its shots and then there was silence. Ronord began coughing up blood from his mouth, which splattered onto the ground below, painting it with splashes of red. He was very dizzy and his mind was getting heavy. He could try to use his magic on them with his mind, but he was in so much pain right now that he could not. Soon, the effects of dizziness and such drifted off when he heard a sound from above. He saw more than a dozen flying carriages circling him. He thought he could beat the humans and be able to do some damage to them, but it seems like his magic alone was not enough. Now he was surrounded by the many metal carriages that could end him at any second now. How foolish he had been to think he could take them on like this. He thought, '*Cursed humans! They knew how to block me from using magic.*' Indeed they did, because now with his talons shot and bloodied, the ability to use magic was incapacitated. Now he was just a helpless, overgrown flying lizard. Ronord braced himself for the deadly fate that was to come.