

Days went by as the humans continued to build the runway and other infrastructures. Some companies from America like Tesla had come to help with the construction. Today, they were making a 95MW battery for the base, so that in case the military lost power here or the ability to gain electricity from solar panels and wind turbines, the system will have something to use for the time being. A company called Big Top Fabric Structures, which had worked with the military since 1971, were also making two dozen erect hangers with fabric-made roofs to protect the aircraft's' electronics from 99.95% of the sun's UVA & UVB rays, which also prolonged the paint life, and can anchor to just about any foundation, including asphalt. Their products were very good in that they were cheap, durable and low maintenance. Due to their mobile design, the hangars and sunshades can be relocated, if needed. For military purposes, Big Top's sunshades and hangars can help ensure mission readiness. The companies were working to get the base set up in final touches. The airport and the runway were coming along nicely. The dragons watched from a distance as they saw some unusual equipment coming from the portal that functioned as an entry point between America and the island. One male dragon said, "You know, I heard the humans saying that eighteen sunshades cost less than one airplane metal hangar and are significantly faster to build."

A female dragon replied, "Yes, and I also heard that these hangers can also hold strong against fearsome weathers." The rip-resistant fabric was secured to an industrial-strength steel frame and can be engineered for wind and snow loads to shelter planes and helicopters from storms. Protecting aircraft, the fabric is NFPA701 flame-retardant in accordance with International Building Code. The crew will be able to work in comfort under the fabric structures, which maintained an interior temperature on average of 15 degrees cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter than the outside climate. Plus, the fabric is translucent and will let in plenty of sunlight for crew to work without the need for electric lighting, saving money on energy costs. This was good for the humans, since they had limited energy to make.

Another male said, "I wonder what else they're going to build after all this." Seeing how the army has built their base & camp and now the airport, he would not be surprised if a third structure was built in the future. Humans always like to expand their settlement.

A dark blue dragon said, "Hopefully, they don't take too much land to the point where it's going to look like the humans own this island."

A green female optimistically said, "Well they're only making this place for the president to come. I don't think they're going to go any further than that."

The dark blue dragon replied, "I hope you're right about this." Hopefully, the humans would remember whose island this is.

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Ronord was now released from the infirmary. The dragon had bandages wrapped around on places where he had been shot. He laid outside on a clear patch of grass underneath the rays of the warm sunlight. It has been a while since he's been in the daylight. It was a nice feel after being cooped up in the infirmary for days. Just then, someone came walking by, approaching him. Ronord looked to see that it was Commander Stevenson. The man greeted, "Hey there, Ronord. Enjoying the fresh air?" The dragon could only give a curt nod. "That's good, because I have a son who wants to see you. You see? He likes dragons and I'd thought I'd get you on FaceTime for him to see and maybe even talk to you." Ronord felt peculiar about what he just heard. A human liking dragons before he ever met one? How odd it was. The commander told him sternly, "I know you don't like humans, but you better be nice to him. I will not tolerate any bad attitudes towards my kid. Is that clear?"

Ronord rolled his eyes and sighed, "Fine."

"Good," Stevenson replied. "Now get ready to meet little Timmy." He touched the FaceTime app on his smart phone and contacted his wife. Today was Saturday, which means their son should be home if they were not out doing anything.

Within a few seconds, Miriam answered the call and greeted, "Hello dear, are you doing okay?"

"I sure am as always," Stevenson answered. "Listen, is Timmy around? I have a dragon here I want him to see."

The wife answered, "He is, I'll go get him." Then she looked away from the camera to call her son, "Timmy, your father has a surprise for you."

Their boy could be heard asking like he was expecting a gift, "What is it, mommy?"

As the phone moved over to Timmy, who came over, Miriam told him, "Talk to your father and see what he has to say."

"Okay mommy," Timmy said as he took the phone from his mother.

Stevenson greeted with a smile, "Hey sport, are you having a good day?"

"I am!" the boy beamed.

"That's good!" the father said. "Anyway, I have a friend here I want you to see." Ronord shot the man a disgruntled look. Them? Friends? What a lie! Sure, Ronord was beginning to tolerate the humans, if by a minor margin, but he and the commander were not even that close.

Timmy curiously asked, "Who is it?"

"Timmy," Stevenson began. He panned the phone over to the dragon as he continued, "Meet Ronord the dragon."

The boy's excitement showed on his smiling face. "Wow, a dragon! A real dragon!"

Stevenson told the dragon, "Say hi to him, Ronord."

Ronord sighed through his nose, disliking being told what to do by a human. But he decided to go along with it for now. "Hi," he simply said in a deadpan tone.

"Hi," the boy happily said to the dragon, not paying attention to the tone spoken to him.

Stevenson turned the phone's camera back to him. "He's kind of distant with people, but with time, he might warm up to us." Looking to the dragon, he asked, "Isn't that right, Ronord?"

Ronord reluctantly answered, "Right." It probably will not become true in the future after the treaty, but he had to give that answer to feign niceness for the child.

The commander said to his son, "He's not the only dragon here. There're also others I can show you that are nicer than him. Like Luna; she'll be very happy to see you."

Ronord thought with a frown, *'Then why didn't you go to them, instead?'* Then Timmy would have had a much livelier and happier encounter than he had with Ronord. The human kid seems nice; he would surely get along well with the tribe.

Timmy, eager to see more dragons, asked, "Can I see them?"

Stevenson answered, "Sure when I find one. Anyway, you take care and have a good day, son."

Timmy said, "Okay bye, daddy!"

"Bye son, I love you." They hang up and the commander pocketed his smart phone. He said to the dragon, "Alright Ronord, I got what I came here. Now I'll just leave you be."

As the man was just walking away, Ronord decided it was now time to bring up that one issue he wanted to discuss with the commander. He called, "Wait, I need to talk to you."

Stevenson stopped and turned back to him, asking, "What is it?"

"My tribe," Ronord began seriously. "The males who came to attack you and perished for it, as well as Heaton. They all lost their lives and I want you; no, demand you and this army to make up for this."

Stevenson thought of this as insane as he argued, "Us repay?! I'm sorry, but you're the ones who attacked first." He pointed at the dragon in accusation. "We were only minding our own business until you came, trying to torch us to the ground. Besides, weren't the vehicles you wrecked and the men you've killed enough for?"

Ronord snarled back, "Those carriage things can be easily replaced, but not lives. You humans have taken more of that away from us than I did your army. These dragons had others who loved them. Others who cared about them, grew up alongside them, raised them and were raised by them. Tanks and dragons cannot be compared!"

The commander knew the dragon was right about that, but he was still offended by the dragon's demand for compensation in spite of the circumstances. He yelled back, "And my soldiers also have friends and families of their own, too. What? Are we supposed to take it like weak little pushovers? We're the goddamn army; we fight back against anything and anyone that tries to hurt us!" Who was the dragon to be entitled and pull out the victim card anyway?

Ronord growled, "That may be true, but because of what you and your army did!"

Stevenson silently retorted, *'What you started!'*

Ronord continued, "My brothers will never be able to fly with me again! I'm all alone now and I want justice for this!" He loudly emphasized the last part.

Stevenson yelled, "You want your freaking justice? Why don't you talk to your king about it? He's smart enough to understand that no one's to blame here." Then he sneered, "Oh wait, you can't, because you're stuck here with us for another week!"

The dragon let out an angry growl in response. Then he snapped, "Fine! Then I'll just have to wait for him to return here."

To rub more salt onto Ronord's wound, Stevenson reminded, "Yeah, you do that. I'll just tell him that you've been a rotten piece of crap. Clearly, you've forgotten the deal I've made with him about you."

Ronord's heart jumped with realization. That is right; he was supposed to be on good terms with the humans by the end of this week. He lowered his head to the ground and clutched it with his talons, cursing quietly, "Shoot..." How could he forget that?

"If you want things to go smoothly, you better fix that attitude of yours or it's a long-time house arrest for you. And you don't want that, do you?"

The dragon let out an annoyed sighed before he reluctantly and quietly apologized, "Fine; I'm sorry."

The commander pressured him, "Say it like you mean it!"

Ronord gritted his teeth, humiliated. He did not like being under the power of his tribe's killer. But for his sake, he might as well offer a humble apology. He forced himself to swallow his pride and say, "I'm sorry."

Stevenson smiled, having enjoyed putting this bad boy back in his place. "Much better. Now no more yelling at people or demanding paybacks, okay?" Then he walked away without another word from either of them.

Ronord watched him go, his narrowed eyes burning with vengeance onto the man's back. He hoped King Gregarios would agree that the humans need to repay for all the dragons they have slain. Then another dragon nearby greeted, "Hello Ronord, were you talking to that man just now?"

Ronord looked to see Whitley approaching him with his ever-so-friendly smile. His answer was a tired and frustrated one, "I was."

Whitley sat down next to him and asked in concern, "You don't sound too happy. What happened?"

The black dragon answered, "I have to learn to be nice and tolerant to humans by the end of the week. If I don't, then I'll be stuck at my tribe's home for a few years."

Whitley understood the severity of the punishment. He sounded his sympathy, "Oh my, that sounds tough."

Ronord said, "It's easier said than done. You see? I'm angry at the army for the slayings of my fellow dragons. You probably think I should have let go of that anger, since humans were only defending themselves." Whitley has heard about that. The black dragon was known in the army base as the one who cannot stand humans. "But still lives were lost and I'll never get to see them again. How does anyone forgive the humans so easily? How can I warm up to them, knowing that they won't make amends for the deaths? Some of my tribe is okay with the humans, but not me. I don't think I'll ever stand the humans unless make up for this somehow."

The white dragon was not sure how to relate to this, since no human alive has caused him any grief. But he did try to understand the black dragon's point-of-view. He noted, "You sound like you want your tribe avenged."

"I do," Ronord said. "But not through violence or death. I need a good deed that holds equal weight to this, but I don't know what it is." It was impossible to fight the humans after all, even with the use of magic.

Whitley said, "Well try and use all this time left to think of something good. I'm sure it'll come to you eventually." But when he remembered the deadline, he changed his suggestion, "Actually, my good friend, maybe you should try working on forming a better relationship with the humans first. There will always be time for good reparation ideas."

The black dragon asked, "But how? I just told you that I won't forgive humans until-"

Whitley nodded as he interjected, "Yes, yes, I quite know that. But you don't have to be friendly with all the humans in one day. Just maybe start with one, try to spend as much time with them and perhaps maybe that'll help you grow a bit more cordial with the humans."

Ronord gave the white dragon's suggestion some thought, '*One human.*' Who in the army would he befriend? Certainly not that Commander Stevenson after what happened today. He would rather another human. Private Dylan came to mind. Yes, he was the first one who befriended a dragon, Luna, and was the one along with her behind the peace that happened between the two races from what Ronord heard. Plus, Dylan was the one who was willing to look after him during his stay in the infirmary, despite the dragon's detestation towards him. Out of all the humans he knew, the black dragon felt that the private would be the perfect choice. He hoped that this would work.

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Luna was busy practicing her portal spells. She was taught by Whitley yesterday on how to cast the kind of spell. With every portal she made, she would go through it and see where they took her. She had seen deserts, grasslands, and even other forests outside the island. The defective few she made never warped her anywhere; she just simply passed through them. Practice made perfection, which was why Luna was training her portal magic, so that she would be less likely to make mistakes. Dylan was walking by when he saw what his friend was doing. He asked, "Playing with magic, Luna?"

The dragon stopped what she was doing and turned to see her friend. She replied, "Just trying out my portal spells. It seems I can only make two at a time." Every time she made a third one, the first one would disappear. It seems like magic has its limits when it came to certain spells.

Having observed that just now, Dylan said, "Yeah, looks like it."

Luna told him the reason for this, "I want to get this right, so that I can meet the other tribes and tell them the good news about our magic and the humans." Whitley has already told his tribe. If there were any other hidden dragon tribes out there around the world, which she wanted to see, then once they learn all that, then they would have no need to hide themselves anymore.

"Sounds like a nice plan," the private commented. "How's your portals coming along?"

Luna answered, "I've gotten most of them right. I can use them to go to wherever they take me."

"Wherever they take you?" Dylan repeated in question. "You mean you can't control where they go to?"

The dragon shook her head, "I can't and Whitley hasn't figured out how to either. So these portals are all just random."

Dylan frowned, "I guess finding a tribe is going to be tougher than we thought." The tribes could be anywhere on Earth. One would have to scour the whole planet to see where they were at.

"Yes, tough," agreed Luna. She smiled with optimism, "But not impossible. I'm going to go look for the other tribes, no matter how many days or years it takes me."

The man asked in concern, "But aren't you afraid that something or someone out there would hurt you? I mean we do have lots of good people out there, but not all of us are going nice and friendly." He thought of men dangerous to her such as criminals, poachers, and even people of certain cultures who would view her as a monster that needs to be killed for the good of everyone. As progressive as some of the countries are, the world was still a dangerous place. "You sure you can handle yourself out there?"

Luna confidently replied, "Well if I have you around, then I'd be a lot safer." Her friend did have advanced weapons after all; he could easily protect her.

"Yeah," Dylan agreed, though he was still hesitant about this. "But I can't be away too long from the base. You know? Schedules and all."

She propounded, "Then we'll just look for an hour each day and come back. What do you think of that?" An hour was not too long, so maybe it would suffice for enough time away from the job.

Dylan replied, "With the commander's permission. I guess it's alright."

"Great! Then call him and ask."

"Okay, I will," the man replied before he took out his walkie-talkie to contact his superior. "Commander Stevenson, this is Private Mark. I'm requesting permission to help Luna search for more dragon tribes. It'll only take an hour. Over!"

Stevenson permitted, "Alright, just don't take too long out there, is that clear?"

"Understood, sir," Dylan replied. "Over!"

"Good, Commander Stevenson out!" Then the communication line ended.

Dylan confirmed to his friend, "Alright, we're good to go."

"Great!" Luna was lit for adventure. "Alright tribes, here come! I sure hope the place the portal takes us to is safe." She dismissed a portal, so that no unwanted intruders would come here, before the pair began walking towards the other one.

Just before they stepped into the portal, they heard a dragon calling, "Wait! Where are you going?" They looked behind to see Ronord, who had just gotten here.

The pink dragon answered, "We're going to look for the other tribes."

The idea of finding out if there were others besides his and Whitley's tribes intrigued him. It would be nice to know that they were more dragons out in the world than he thought. Ronord asked, "Then can I come with you?" If they went searching together, then that would be time spent with Dylan and getting to know him. With Luna here, she could make that easier for him.

Dylan and Luna looked to each other, uncertain as to whether to let the black dragon join them or not. They turned back to him as the former asked, "But Ronord, aren't you supposed to be in confinement?"

"I know that," Ronord snapped. He noticed his tone sounded rude and quickly fixed that by changing it to a more calm and passive voice, "U-uh, I mean, I know that. But I want to know if the other tribes survived. Gotta make sure we're not endangered or anything. I promise not to take too long. Can you trust me?" The time limit he set on himself would weaken the plan of his bonding with the man, but hopefully he could still get the chance to do that after they have returned.

Luna decided to let him join, "Okay, you can come with us. Just don't stay with us the whole time, alright?"

"You got it," the black dragon replied. Then they went into the portal and came out into a different forest, one with pine trees, firs and spruces. Ronord looked around at the place, asking, "Where are we?"

The pink dragon answered, "I don't know, but let's get going." They traversed through the forest, keeping an eye out for any dragons they would find.

As they went, Ronord took the opportunity to start befriending the private. He began, "So Dylan."

"Yes?" the man asked.

Ronord asked him, "How exactly did you meet Luna?"

Dylan answered, "Well it all started when Kurt and I were deployed to capture a dragon alive. The researchers wanted to study everything about the dragons."

"Did they learn everything?"

"Yeah, just about everything Luna told them." Ronord narrowed his eyes at the pink dragon disapprovingly as she kept her eyes forward. She could have gotten the tribe destroyed then if the humans never turned over a new leaf. He looked back at the man, who continued the story, "Anyway, so after we split up to cover the grounds, I found Luna and fired a tranquilizer at her, just to make her sleep. She ran away and I chased after her. When I caught up to her, she looked scared. I calmed her down and told her that I wasn't going to hurt her. That's when I found out she could talk like people do."

Ronord scowled offended as he thought, *'What? Did you think we were just big dumb animals?'* He kept that thought to himself so as not to ruin this chance.

"We chatted for a bit and I told her what my things were and what humans used them for. She was very curious about them."

Ronord stated, "Well she was always the inquisitive one, always wondering what the new things she finds are."

The man commented, "She seems to enjoy learning alright."

"Yes," the black dragon replied. Then he changed the subject, "So what about you? Does she ever tell you anything about our kind?"

Dylan recalled what Luna said about her species, "Well, she said that you guys can breathe fire, while the girls can't. And that you all only eat meat."

"That is true," Ronord stated. "Because of this, our fighters were all male." But now that magic returned, the females can fight and defend themselves easier than before.

"So I've noticed," the man commented.

The three had searched for 15 minutes, but so far, they had found nothing. Ronord knew how long it has been and told the others, "Looks like it's time I head back. I don't want the humans to think I've disappeared on them."

Dylan said, "Okay, good luck finding your way back."

Luna said, "If anyone asks, tell them what we're doing."

Ronord replied to both their words, "Don't worry, I will." He walked away, tracing their scents back to the portal. The talk with Dylan was not bad at all. It was a first step, but the dragon still had a long way to go before he could accept humans. For now, he would just have to wait for Dylan's return.

Dylan and Luna continued the search on their own for the rest of the hour. Unfortunately, nothing turned up for them. It was all just trees and fleeing small animals they could find. The pink dragon assumed, "I guess they're not here. We should like go back now."

The man agreed, "Yeah, we've been here long enough already." They walked back to the portal and returned to the base.

They found Ronord lying down nearby as if he was waiting for them. He asked, "So did you find any dragons?"

As Luna closed the portal, Dylan simply answered, "Nope."

The black dragon felt a bit disappointed with the result. "Well, hopefully next time will be better. We'll just have to keep on looking; no matter how long it takes."

Dylan asked both dragons, "Does anybody have any idea where the other tribes could be?" Some clues could help make their quest easier and less tedious.

Luna answered, "No." She wished she knew exactly where they were.

Ronord reasoned why, "All the tribes we knew used their own portals to warp to parts unknown. No one has any idea where they could have gone."

The man slowly shook his head, saying, "This will totally take like forever."

Luna confidently suggested, "But if we had more dragons to help, then this would be easier."

The man and the black dragon found the benefit in her idea. Dylan commented, "That's a good idea, Luna. Let's see if we can get the tribe in on this, too."

Ronord added, "And get Whitley's tribe in on this, too. The more the merrier!"

"Right on, Ronord," Dylan agreed with him. To the pink dragon, he said, "Let's go talk to the king." He got on her back and they flew away to the tribe's mountains.

Ronord watched them go with a disappointed frown. Once again, his time with Dylan had been cut abruptly. He hoped that it would not continue to be this way with the human. His time depended on it. For now, while they went to meet Gregarios, the black dragon went to play his part in helping by looking

for Whitley. He wondered where the white dragon was at now. Soon, he came across a familiar private walking across in front of him. It was one of Dylan's human friends. The dragon grabbed his attention, "Hey, Kurt, was it?"

Kurt stopped and turned to him. He asked, "Oh hey, Ronord, what's up?"

Having seen this man before, Ronord knew him to be a lively and amiable type. He seemed like he was approachable just like Dylan. In fact, he could make Kurt his alternative, when Dylan is not around. The dragon asked, "Have you seen a white dragon around?"

The man answered, "Nope, can't say I have."

Ronord stood there in silence, wondering what to say or do next, now that this man was not going to be any help in finding Whitley. But maybe he still can in another way. The dragon asked, "Want to help me look?"

Kurt looked at him, confused. He asked, "You want me to help? But I thought you hated humans."

*'I still do,'* Ronord thought. He admitted it in milder words, "I may still do, but for you, I'm not above seeking your help. You seem like someone I can tolerate, so I need you to help me look for that dragon."

"Okay, if that's what you want. Sure, I'm in." The two walked together around the base as they searched for Whitley. As they went, Kurt had something in mind he was curious about. So he asked, "Ronord?"

"What?"

"Why do you hate humans so much?"

Ronord looked away, wondering if the answer and topic could lead tensions between them. He murmured, "My brothers and friends."

"Huh?"

This time there was no anger in his answer; just a low tone hinting sadness. "They're dead. You humans killed them."

Kurt felt sorry for him as he said, "Er, sorry for your loss. I'm not sure what I can say, but just to let you know, I didn't mean to make you sad or anything."

"Thanks," Ronord replied. At least one human showed understanding and sympathy, unlike that blasted commander. "I just wish I could take my mind off them."

The man frowned in pity, "But you can't, huh."

"Exactly." Every time the dragon thinks about them, he is always reminded that they would be just memories forever.

"Well sorry for bringing up the sad stuff. How we about we just look for that white dragon, eh?" Kurt hoped that would cheer Ronord up and take his mind off the pain.

"Yes, let's do it." Maybe focusing on his task would help ease his mind, if even a little. They kept on searching for Whitley together.