

There were only two ways that this experiment could go: exactly according to plan, or utterly disastrously. No wiggle room between the two, not with the kind of power being wielded by creatures like those. Shuijing set the bottle aside, having just finished the last step in activating its fluid contents, and stepped back for a few moments, allowing it to mix itself; there was a non-zero chance that it may just blow up in her face even with everything else having been done correctly, letting the mage breathe a sigh of relief once the cosmic dice were rolled in her favour. To their side, the dragoness she brought along to serve as her bodyguard-slash-legal witness scoffed, a deep, purple mist emanating from her open mouth before dissipating just as quickly; the larger creature said nothing, but it was clear she was enjoying the antics of her smaller friend, given that her hide was strong enough that a potion backblasting wouldn't do much to hurt them... of course, given the lack of courtesy in such a gesture, she found it best to look away and pretend to have done nothing, giving Shuijing the time she needed to call up her test subject.

Dracarna had been the one to approach her some time before, hoping to make good use of the mage's talents to satisfy their own curiosity; after she'd made a bet with a friend over whether or not it was possible for a dragon to turn into anything that wasn't a dragon, given their inherently magical nature, Dracarna opted to go with the more "bruteforce" approach and contacted Shuijing, the one person on the whole planet that she *knew* would find an answer to that conundrum, even if it meant blowing up several research labs before she did so. In fact, that was why the dragoness wasn't even there at all; as much as the one guarding the place was fine with playing the odds, Dracarna knew from experience that sticking around Shuijing for too long made it almost a certainty that at least part of her scales would be singed off when *something* went wrong. Therefore, she gave the mage a crystal that could be used to summon her whenever necessary, and trusted Shuijing not to abuse that power... mostly because it was one-use only.

Thus, when the dragoness felt the pull, she answered it immediately, finding herself outside what looked to be an abandoned shack in the middle of nowhere, right beside a large lake. Shuijing, already there waiting for her, explained that she had enchanted the place to look as inconspicuous as possible, while also surrounding it with so many protective charms that anyone actually coming in would be an immense surprise. Furthermore, the mage added, she had a surprise of her own: the transformative potion was finally complete!

What followed was such an immense display of joy that, if not for it being impossible, Dracarna would've shoved herself into the cabin and guzzled that thing down in under a second; lacking that option, she instead sat down and waited patiently for Shuijing to fetch her prize, giving the other dragoness enough time to teleport outside and show herself to her friend, simultaneously revealing that the "shack" was far bigger on the inside. The two had a long "talk", if it could even be called that, telepathically exchanging thoughts and ideas in a way that only made sense to dragons, bringing one another up to speed on the goings-on of the day, and a

little gossip on the side; it was no fun if one couldn't appreciate the more scandalous things in life.

A few minutes later, Shuijing emerged from her laboratory wielding a large, spherical glass container filled with a clear liquid, then told Dracarna to drink it all to the very last drop. Figuring it to be the safest way to accomplish this, the dragoness chose to grab the whole thing with two claws and shove it into her mouth, eating it, glass and all, and sending the contents of it flowing down into her stomach. The sharp shards wouldn't do anything to her body, and this way she wasted none of it, allowing the potion to start taking hold of her mere moments after she was done chowing down on its bottle. It was an odd, tingling sensation, not unlike what happened when she accidentally slept on a wing or leg, but spread throughout her whole body. Moving any part of her revealed her moments to be slow and uncoordinated, eventually ending up with Dracarna outright collapsing sideways, spared from the ground by the other draconic creature, Toxic, catching her with the end of her tail without even looking.

Shuijing, already panicking at the prospect of having screwed things up, ran towards Dracarna, shouting for her name, with the dragoness lazily waving a paw and telepathically letting her know that she was mentally fine, just not in full control of their body. A short explanation later and the mage was relieved; this sort of thing was normal when drinking those kinds of potion, hence why they were doing it on the grass outside rather than the cold, hard wooden floors of her laboratory. It was only temporary after all; a few minutes more and control of her body would return to Dracarna, after which she was free to do whatever she felt like!

Indeed, slowly the dragoness began to twitch her claws, then move her paws, before finally tumbling back to a sitting position somehow, before finally getting back on all fours and unfurling her wings, a gust of wind nearly knocking Shuijing flat on her back. The dragoness wasted no time telling the mage she still felt weird, like her body wasn't... *all there*. It was hard to describe, but she felt lighter somehow, like a simple breeze could dislodge her and sweep her away into the wind.

"That's usually how the effects are described," Shuijing explained, "that or feeling like a passenger, but that just means the potion is working as intended."

"Should I then...?" Dracarna asked tentatively.

"Go ahead! I'd recommend you stick with smaller transformations until you get the hang of it; even for a dragon, having full control of your body like that is bound to be hard to control, so *please* don't try to overdo it!"

Dracarna nodded, fully intending to ignore that piece of advice the moment she could get away with it. The dragoness wasn't there purely to settle a debt, but to explore her own limits and sate her own curiosity; assuming that dragons *could* turn into something that wasn't a dragon, then what were the limitations of that? Could she become much larger, much smaller, or was it just changing mass from one place to another? Was it all bound together by a "draconic" aesthetic or could she really go overboard and completely change herself? Whatever the case, it was important to know how far she could go, because assuming that it *worked*, then Dracarna wasn't going to stop there; rather, she'd commission Shuijing to keep providing an ample supply of the transformative, as it would be extremely helpful if her help was ever needed for... well, anything, really.

The first changes were kept simple though, as per the mage's request. There was something in particular that had been swimming in Dracarna's mind for some time, and quite literally at that: *orcas*. A few weeks prior, the dragoness had been flying around the northern seas, after sensing a magical disruption in the area. While scanning the geography for any signs of large-scale disruption, she couldn't help but notice these strange, whale-like creatures occasionally emerging onto the beach before retreating back into the waters; further inspection revealed them to be expert hunters, who lunged at prey outside their native environment and then dragged them back to a watery grave. Most of all, they were graceful and agile, despite their size, and thus the dragoness felt like mimicking the way they looked; she too was massive, and yet bore her weight as if it weren't there, as well as being an apex predator herself (or so she kept insisting; Dracarna wouldn't hurt a fly).

Focusing on her mental image of herself, the dragoness fell into a sort of meditative state, where her mind was dedicated fully to the singular pursuit of altering her physical form through sheer force of will. She envisioned a large dorsal fin, running across her back, she saw her claws and underside of her legs connected with membranes, her thick, stumpy tail elongating into a much more elegant, fin-tipped version of itself. And as she imagined these things, safely locked away inside of her own head, on the outside world both Shuijing and Toxic were wide-eyed at how quickly and seemingly *easily* their friend had taken to the potion's effects, effortlessly modifying her body to become something neither of them had ever seen before.

It was over after just a single minute, with Dracarna's eyes flickering open to see both of her friends staring intently at her, their expressions so befuddled that it was hard to tell whether she herself had accomplished or goal or did something so utterly ridiculous that the other two didn't know how to react. Wordlessly, the mage pointed at the nearby lake, and with her worry growing by the second, the dragoness walked towards it, hoping that the damage done to herself hadn't been too severe. Only after looking at her reflection did Dracarna breathe easily, content that her unfiltered magical power hadn't found a new and inventive way to ruin her dreams; in fact, the more she admired herself, the more the small changes seemed to complement her figure in ways

she hadn't assumed... so much so that the need to try them out became too great, and though Toxic shouted for her not to do it, Dracarna jumped into the waters!

The other dragoness had probably meant to warn her that the lake was freezing cold that time of the year, but it didn't bother the orca-dragon at all; her new body was well-suited for those temperatures, having apparently adapted itself to become more sleek and hydrodynamic in addition to just giving her a handful of fins spread all around. Her scales had smoothed out into a continuous, soft sheen that glistened off the reflected light, her tail became so nimble that it took her awhile before she could move it without entangling it on herself... but after a couple of minutes of practice, Dracarna was swimming in that body of water about as gracefully as she flew through the air, bringing such a wide smile to her face that it made her recall her first few days of flight, all those years ago.

After she had her fill, the orca-dragoness went straight up, emerging from the surface in a magnificent splash that covered her two friends in freezing cold water, while she spread her wings and flew off into the air, sprinkling droplets wherever she went. It made for such a sharp contrast that even her modified body protested against it, and thus Dracarna quickly landed back by the shack before the cramps forced her to crash onto it. She was still smiling like an idiot though, happier than she'd ever been, and immediately began telling Shuijing about *literally everything* going through her mind before her mage friend stopped her.

"First off, no more diving," she ordered, "secondly, *please* don't subject your body to temperature extremes like that, we don't know what it'll do to you. Thirdly, *what are you?!*"

The last question came so much out of left field that Dracarna could do naught but blink a few times and then burst into laughter, collapsing onto her side from how ridiculous it sounded, her cackling so genuine that even Toxic and Shuijing had to join in after a few more awkward stares. What did it matter what Dracarna was? The potion worked! She couldn't be happier, and indeed her friends had to contend with a *very* excited dragoness stomping about doing something that could charitably be called a victory dance, before Shuijing teleported away and Toxic wisely decided to back off and let her companion get it all out of her system; once she was the, orca-dragon cleared her throat, adopted a far more regal and dignified stance, then worked on returning her body to normal.

It wouldn't be worth pursuing the potion if it didn't allow her to go back to her usual self; as much as Dracarna wanted to be able to settle the burning question that led her there and be capable of adapting to any challenge that might be thrown her way, she was still a dragoness, and still preferred that form above all others. Thankfully though, the same process that turned her into an odd orca-dragon hybrid allowed her to return to her normal, draconic form, with only a few minor adjustments being needed after her tail refused to go back to its regular shape. Once

done, the dragoness sat back down and waited for the mage to make her next move; it *was* her alchemical concoction, after all.

Shuijing, meanwhile, was trying her damndest not to break out into joyful hysterics as well, given that this had to be the biggest achievement of her life; not only had she been able to solve a dilemma that had been plaguing chemists for decades, but she did so on a *dragon*, a creature of such unbelievable magical power that any attempt at altering it almost invariably ended in disaster. She'd be rightfully hailed as a *genius* the moment she published her findings, but... why stop there? Why stop at mere confirmation that her hypothesis was entirely correct, rather than proceed down that research path and see how far it went? After all, Dracarna just altered her body to be more hydrodynamic and then back without any apparent side-effects, so clearly she was ready to try something new, telling Shuijing that whatever it was the potion did, they hadn't gotten near its full potential.

"Alright, now that we got this out of the way," the mage declared, trying to make it sound as if she actually had a plan, "I think it's time we start experimenting with how strong the potion is. What I want you to do is..."

What followed was a long, complicated list of instructions that Dracarna nonetheless paid as much attention to as she could muster... which wasn't all that much, considering her mind was racing at the mere thought of the possibilities that the transformative potion gave her. The dragoness wasn't used to being so airheaded, much less when something important was being relayed to her, but it was hard to keep focused on minutiae when she could be transforming herself into new and exotic forms, far beyond the comprehension of any mortal mind. The only limit in place was her own imagination, or at least that's what she assumed was true, making it surprisingly difficult to decide what she should be doing next.

"... and then if we have time, we'll go for something weird, like an insectoid thorax," Shuijing concluded, having completely missed the fact that the dragoness stopped listening to her several sentences back, "did you catch all that?"

Dracarna nodded, not even bothering to come up with a telepathic reply as she knew that Shuijing would just repeat herself anyway; indeed, it barely took five seconds before the mage began to list off the first things she wanted the dragoness to do, in what was the first step in a long series of tests meant to ascertain the limits of potion the dragoness had been given. Initially, these were quite simple: turn a single one of her legs into something resembling another species, then turn two legs, then four of them all different from one another. It progressed onto her body, and then specific parts of it, such as giving herself bear paws while the limbs attached to them were catlike, all of this contributing to turn her form into a true patchwork of nonsensical insanity that only the oddest of scientific minds would find remotely interesting. It was like a

fever dream, albeit one where it felt *intensely* satisfying, and although it took a lot of effort on Dracarna's part, especially once the requests grew in complexity, it was still a wonderful experience for her. So wonderful, in fact, that she began to wonder whether she should even be limited herself to what Shuijing was asking for.

It's not that she didn't like the mage, or thought her ideas were bad, but much like they always did, their interests began to lean away from pure enjoyment and more towards a clinical analysis of variables and other such boring nonsense; she was a woman of science above all things, and that seriously conflicted with what Dracarna herself wanted out of the potion in the first place. She had asked Shuijing not so they could sit around and fill out a chart of transformative powers, but so that she, as a dragoness, could transform herself into something else whenever she so desired. And while she was happy to help her friend with whatever was necessary, she was starting to wonder if she didn't deserve a little bit of time to explore her boundaries on her own terms, away from the rigid structure of the scientific method. After all, turning into an orca-dragon had been surprisingly easy, and Dracarna certainly enjoyed it well enough that the idea of repeating the stunt seemed more appealing the longer she went without doing it, so why not go... further? It only felt natural.

"Dracarna?"

Her name being called out broke her back into reality, with both Shuijing and Toxic staring at her with the most worried expressions stamped on their faces. Did something happen while she was absorbed in thought?

"Dracarna, are you alright?" Shuijing repeated herself, "You froze up and your transformations just... stopped. Are you ok?"

There were a lot of ways that she could answer that without further worrying her friends and making them think she might be hiding something inside that head of hers, and not a single one seemed remotely appropriate; Dracarna made it a point of pride never to lie to anyone she cared about, so no, she wasn't ok... but not in the way that Shuijing and Toxic would think. She wasn't ok because she was *better* than ok, she was ecstatic, she was over the damned moon with excitement at the prospects of transformation! And all of this talk about scientific rigour and having to be careful and all that nonsense was, frankly, starting to tire her. Therefore, without a moment's hesitation, the dragoness shifted herself back to normal, by that point having become experienced enough that all it took was a single thought for it to happen, then turned to face the lake again. She had an idea, based on something she'd seen on the side of a long-lost temple several years ago, an idea that had stuck with her since then. It was colossal in scale and would probably scare her friends half to death before she confirmed that it was still her in there... but it had to happen.

Though Shuijing still called out for her, Dracarna's mind was set. With each step she took towards the waterline, her body began to change, this time in a far more coherent manner than before; her torso elongated, gaining feet at first and then yards, while her wings receded into her body, whose scales were becoming smoother to the touch, covered in a thin film and far more akin to those found on serpents than anything a self-respecting dragoness would normally put on display. Her tail fattened to match the width of her torso, adding to its length until she started looking far more snake-like than draconic, eventually capped off by her limbs also vanishing into her many elongating coils. Her face was rounded out, completing the picture she had painted in her mind, with her sharp teeth becoming more serrated, her canines growing outwards to be more pronounced, and her tongue lengthening and splitting at the end; it took until the final change, when a dorsal fin erupted from the top of her head and continued to expand all the way down the length of her body, for Shuijing and Toxic to know what had just happened: Dracarna had turned herself into some sort of gigantic sea serpent, one that continued to grow outwards in raw size now that her form was well-established, before slamming onto the surface of the water and creating a wave so high that it almost broke down the mage's shack from the impact.

Mere seconds later, the new, serpentine Dracarna emerged from the depths once again, only, rather than flying off into the air, she somehow held herself up from the waterline, exposing only half of her full frame. Her tongue lapped at the air, tasting things that she never thought possible; it was a second nose for her, able to detect even the faintest of tastes floating in the wind, perfectly capable of spotting Toxic and Shuijing's exact position even with her eyes closed. It felt positively heavenly, far more than she could've expected to, and that wasn't even all of it; somehow, her internal biology had been affected more than she intended to, so much so that when she opened her mouth to expel a gout of flame, Dracarna instead produced a hyper-pressurized jet of water, strong enough that when she angled it downwards, it pierced through the lake itself and smashed straight into the lakebed. Not only that, but her new affinity for the element somehow allowed her to control it far more finely, and within *moments* Dracarna (or was it Snakarna now?) was creating large, vertical pillars of churning water, flying at least as high as her head before turning into enormous spouts. She was a hatchling again, playing with a new toy, and it was clear to all that saw that she was now taken entirely by the sort of childlike glee that only a tired adult with a brand new loved hobby could ever display.

Though initially reticent to get anywhere close, the longer Dracarna played around with her new form, the more Toxic, the other dragoness, became convinced that her friend was actually completely harmless. It still took her a bit before gathering the courage needed to take off, but as soon as she was in the air and heard the quiet giggling for herself, she breathed a sigh of relief and began the approach, circling around that immense, serpentine neck of Dracarna's and almost hitting the dorsal fin after failing to realize it actually got *bigger* whenever her friend flexed it. She was utterly flabbergasted by how different the other dragoness had become, how far the

transformation had taken her, so much so that if it weren't for *them* paying attention, Toxic would've flown directly into one of the water jets flying up from below. It was hard to focus really; Dracarna was gorgeous to look at!

“You know, if you keep flying like that, you're going to end up smashing into me,” the sea serpent hissed, adoring the sound of her new voice, “and as much as I do like a good hug, I wouldn't want you to be hurt, so do be careful, hun~”

Her tone was perhaps a bit more seductive than she would've wanted it to be, but it was hard for it to remain as it was; to have that raw sense of power coursing through her was... intoxicating, like the best thing she'd ever experienced in her life failed to even begin to compare to it. Dracarna could see herself staying like that, or maybe turning into a dragon before returning to the serpentine form when next to the coast, spending the rest of her life terrorizing sailors with devilish-but-harmless pranks... but that, too, soon faded. For what would be the point of sticking with the first transformation she liked?

Why not experiment?