

HERE THAR BE DRAGONS!

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I recognize, and indeed, am proud of the fact, that many of you think of me as being a bubble or two off of level—a sandwich shy of a full picnic. My encounters with space aliens no doubt tipped you off. But today, I come to you totally in possession of my facilities, because what I am about to tell you WILL change you life.

Let me begin by giving you my credentials to set to the tone for my talk. I am a Dragonologist. I am a certified professional breeder of dragons. It has taken many many years of intense study, hands-on work, and not a few close calls with a fiery death to achieve the status I have. I stand humbly before you today as the world's leading expert on dragon breeding and training.

This hard-won knowledge I will share with you today, in the hope that you may find answers to questions religious leaders and philosophers have been searching for millennia. And, most importantly, I will make an earth-shattering announcement.

But first, to properly set the stage, let me begin with some background into dragon fact and fiction. Dragons have received bad press throughout mankind's history, largely due to our own fear and ignorance. Dragons have been hunted down and murdered for no cause, or perhaps as an excuse for some thoughtless knight in shining armor to gather a reputation as dragon-slayer.

Early people believed that dragons represented the chaos of original matter, and so, with man's awakening conscience, he believed it necessary to destroy this "monster" guarding chaos in order to bring order to earth. Later, this dragon was transformed in man's mind into the Satan of Christianity. Man must continually fight against this Evil—destroy it. The church applauded any rumor of the destruction of a dragon. St. George gained his sainthood solely on the basis of his destruction of a dragon, who, in the story, was not even granted the dignity of a proper name. He was just "a dragon".

Dragons were believed to kidnap lovely virgin damsels and chain them in their caves. No one actually thought to consider what the heck a dragon would want with a virgin, an asset seemingly valued only by certain died in the wool Christians and anxious parents.

Dragons in ancient times were said to be the enemy of the sun and the moon. This was due to man's inability at the time to recognize the natural scientific reason behind solar and lunar eclipses. It was believed that dragons ate the sun and the moon, later spitting them out, after primitive prayers and dances and the occasional sacrifice were performed by man. Eating the Sun and the Moon? I don't think so. Let us consider here who is the smarter species—man or dragon?

Now, you're probably wondering why you've never seen a dragon. You no doubt believed all those stories were silly children's tales. But, let me tell you, dragons are as

real as you or I. You've never seen one, I'm sure, but believe me—they are real. Some things must be believed to be seen.

But the most likely reason you've never seen a dragon is this: As a result of all this murdering of dragons and all the bad press they received, dragons ages ago made a collective agreement to become invisible. They've always had this power, but up to that point had seldom used it. Dragons simply vanished into thin air, as far as humans are concerned. This is no doubt making some of you wonder how I became a certified and professional breeder and trainer of dragons if they are invisible. Today, because of the work of professionals such as myself, dragons are slowly agreeing to give up their act of invisibility and to live and co-exist with us.

Today, I'm going to show you some dragons. Visible, live and breathing dragons. Mothers, stay close to your children—these animals are not tame.

These dragons are one of many many types of dragons. To aid you in recognizing dragons as you may stumble across one in the future, let me briefly go into the various types and habitats of the modern dragon.

First, there is the Black Dragon, which is found typically in sandy desert regions, like Arizona. These are highly intelligent dragons. They are quite forward and officious and may approach you before you are even aware they are in the vicinity. If a Black Dragon should approach you as you tramp across the vast deserts of the world, remain calm. It is merely curious and wants to sniff you. If you become too alarmed and attempt to run away, it will blow a type of sleeping gas at you and disappear from sight. As these dragons are quite selfish, it is best to stand boldly and offer something rare and precious from your backpack. Perhaps granola bars.

The second type of dragon is the Bronze Dragon. These live usually underground near large bodies of water such as lakes or oceans, or the Rappahannock River. They particularly love wealth, but are generally gentle friendly dragons. They are not to be feared.

Gold Dragons live in just about any climate, but their homes are always made of solid stone—whether a cave or a castle or old church. They survive primarily by eating pearls—of wisdom—and are just and good dragons. These dragons are perhaps the most intelligent of all dragons, although an IQ test has yet to be developed to accurately measure this. These are fire-breathing dragons, although they do not employ it as a weapon, merely as a smelting or home building device. Mistakes have been known to happen, however, as, for example, when a creature in shining armor appears with a shiny sword in hand—the Gold Dragon may attempt to smelt the metal for its own use. This in no way should be taken as an attack on the knight inside the armor.

All of these dragons have the ability to fly extraordinary distances at amazing speeds. They are, however, not known for leaving the Earth's atmosphere.

None of them talk, as we would use the concept. They definitely communicate with each other and with other things in nature. And they communicate with humans, although perhaps in a form of telepathy. My dragons talk to me often, in fact, some nights you can't shut them up!

Dragons do not die unless murdered by man, or if they are killed in some bizarre accident, such as running into a flying saucer. They live forever. Consequently, dragon births are rare and are an occasion of great ceremony and wonder. One never knows for certain just how old any particular dragon may be, since to ask would be rude, but a conservative estimate would indicate that any dragon you may likely encounter would be at least 8000-9000 years old, with some much older than that.

Dragons are hatched as eggs and the incubation period is anywhere from ten years to a century, depending on climate. During the now-famous El Nino of a couple of years ago, when climate conditions changed a great deal, many dragon eggs hatched prematurely. Let us hope this continued drought the East Coast has been experiencing lately will not precipitate more premature hatchings, thus unwisely increasing the dragon population in the area.

And, of course, there are baby dragons. Baby dragons rarely have the same marking as their parents, until they age many many years. Instead they are born with a type of camouflaged skin and markings such that they can stay completely hidden from their natural enemy—man. You would not readily mistake this camouflaged baby for a dragon, would you? As they mature, however, their spots and plaids disappear and they take on the gold or bronze or black of the adult. Baby dragons also are hatched having two sets of wings. The smaller under-wings are training wings, which will fall off once the baby learns to control its flight. Usually this occurs on its one hundredth birthday.

Enough background information. Let me proceed with the real reason why I am here today.

As a result of the many millennia of a dragon's existence, a certain rare breed of dragon emerged. We know about them only from chance bits of conversation with these more ordinary dragons. These rare dragons no man has seen have gathered a great deal of wisdom. They have learned to treasure what is important in life and have learned to ignore that which is not.

These dragons generally fiercely guarded this large treasure of wisdom and were reluctant to share it with humans, who have throughout history turned that wisdom toward evil ends. These dragons I have shown you today are certainly not the source of all that dragon wisdom. It has been the ardent wish of all dragonologists, such as myself, that this treasure-trove of wisdom, safeguarded for centuries by dragons, could be discovered and mankind would benefit from their learning.

But where could these incredibly wise dragons be found? No one knew.

And, so, ladies and gentlemen, that brings me to the important announcement I promised you earlier. As you are no doubt aware, charts and maps of fiercesome dragon sightings were found as early as the third century. Those, alas, were destroyed during the Dark Ages. But, the knowledge of the existence of these charts survived, and, in the 12th and 13th centuries, rough copies were reproduced in map books for explorers and sailors.

I have here today a copy of one of those crude charts. Here Thar Be Dragons. But where is here? No one knew.

What we didn't know until just a few short weeks ago, is that these charts, these sketches, found in old old books, were, in reality, only a portion of the complete map to the location of the dragons of infinite wisdom and danger.

A text was discovered in the deserts of Egypt, buried 250 feet below the surface of the burning desert sands. How it got there, we do not yet know. But what it contained is astounding. This chart is only one-quarter of the original chart. Here Thar Be Dragons! But where is here?

Let me show you. [unfold chart]

Yes, folks, this is not a chart of a vast uncharted sea, but a drawing of the human head. Although the ancients possessed only elementary drawing skills, somehow they possessed the knowledge showing where the mysterious dragons of wisdom live. Within us. Each and every one of us. Each of us has a dragon of wisdom living inside us. Can you believe it? We don't know yet precisely where inside of us these dragons live.

The brain?

Does this dragon protect us from the limitless capabilities of our human brain? What more could we know that this dragon is keeping us from finding out? Is this dragon the Biblical snake that guarded the Tree of Life from Adam and Eve to keep them from knowing as much as God, and thus becoming God?

Is the dragon living in our hearts?

Is it this that prevents us from being really open with each other? Does it stop us from sharing our deepest emotions and from revealing our hidden private sides? Is the dragon afraid we will find its hiding place if we let our emotions go?

Is the dragon living in our souls?

Perhaps there is a link in our souls to a God figure, but our dragon keeps us from even knowing if we have a soul?

Is the dragon living in our stomachs, making us always hunger for more and more? More things, more money, more power? And as we grab for more and more, does the dragon only grow stronger?

All of these are certainly possibilities. but, here's another slant on this. Perhaps the dragon is lying in wait, deep inside us, waiting, wanting to be found, so that whatever it is guarding may be released for our use. Now, that's a thought we can work with.

Granted, this information is only a few weeks old. We haven't yet had time to fully digest the implication of this find. But let me share with you the few preliminary facts we are uncovering.

1. Don't panic. Do not attempt to surgically remove this dragon.
2. We believe these dragons within us to be very very dangerous. Their mission is to protect their vast wisdom. Even from those whose bodies shelter it.
3. Try to make friends with the dragon living in you. This can best be done by thinking calming thoughts. Positive thoughts. Preliminary tests show that feelings of anger or resentment or envy cause the dragon to react violently. Your body, guided by your dragon's violence, may last out even at those dearest to you.
4. Remember that this dragon is guarding a treasure inside of you. It is not your treasure, but you may, over time, learn to tap into this treasure. Be patient. On this chart was written in some ancient dialect, two questions. We believe we have translated them. Apparently, you are to begin each day by asking yourself, "What is it that could be most important for me to know?" Write down your answers. It is through this writing down, every day, one answer to this question, "What is it that would be most important for me to know?" that your dragon of wisdom will begin to speak to you. Each day you will find your answers subtly slowly changing, refining themselves, becoming less involved with small things. You will feel your dragon beginning to trust you, to guide you in your answers.
5. After several days, add a second question—"What is so unimportant in my life that I can let it go?" Write down your answers. And then, begin letting go of what you have written. It isn't easy. But then, that's why you have the dragon within you. For support. After some time, you will come to realize that those things you have written down in response to the first question—what is most important for me to know?—will become those things that are really most unimportant for you to know. And you will let them go. It isn't really all that important after all.

As you can see, these dragons are the most important dragons ever discovered. There is still much we have to learn. How do the dragons enter our bodies? Where do they go when we die? Can our dragons be tamed? Can we ever learn their full wisdom?

For now, all the experts can say is, proceed every day answering those two questions. "What is it that would be most important for me to know?" and "What is so unimportant in my life that I can let it go?" This is the beginning.

Good luck to you all.