

## The Tide of Dreams

### Waking in a World of Dreams, Part 2

“There's a lot to explain Luke, but let me be the first to formally welcome you to the Dream Realm.”

“Then you might want to get to explaining,” Luke said. “*Before* I pass out from blood loss.”

“Let me fix that,” the Dream Master said. He pointed the Dream Weaver toward Luke, and it started to glow.

“Hey, no, wait, shit, whoa!” Luke exclaimed as he reeled backward. “Don't point that thing at me! Fixing my arm does not involve blasting it off!”

“Calm down,” the Dream Master said. A number of small orange energy strands emerged from the blade of the Dream Weaver and floated towards Luke, eventually surrounding him. They latched on to Luke and began to glow themselves, this time in red. Luke's head began to swim from fatigue and blood loss, and he dropped to his hands and knees. After a few minutes, the dizziness was gone, as was the pain in his arm and the cut there. He stood up, feeling like he had just woken up from a good night's sleep.

“Wow. I feel a lot better now.”

“Good. I took the opportunity to stabilize you while healing your arm.”

“You keep talking about 'stabilizing' me. What are you talking about?”

The Dream Weaver sighed. “I'll start from the beginning. This is the Dream Realm, a dimension that runs parallel to your world. As the name may suggest, this world is created, modified by, and maintained by the dreams of people in the real world. Well, your world. Here, come with me.”

The Dream Master walked outside with Luke following close behind.

“Look at the sky, Luke.”

“Not much of a 'sky' if you ask me,” Luke said as he looked up.

“Regardless, each one of those strands up there contains the raw energy of people's dreams, flowing to every corner of this dimension. We call it the Dream Tide, and that's where you come in. Under normal circumstances, when a person dreams, only the subconscious connects with the Dream Realm, allowing whatever dreams a person has to flow into this realm. In your case, the Dream Weaver has pulled your consciousness through as well, using your dream energy to construct a physical body. Of course, in pulling your consciousness here, it brought everything, including the ability to feel pain.”

“Which is why that cut on my arm hurt so much. Or at all, for that matter.” Luke said.

“Right. The problem was that your energy was still a part of the Tide, and could have been swept away at any moment. Stabilizing you meant drawing enough of your energy out of the Tide to give your body a solid existence.”

“So let me get this straight. This place, the Dream Realm, is made up of people's dreams, right?”

“Yes.”

“And I was brought here, by a *sword*, for some reason.”

“We'll get to that.”

“But I'm not supposed to be here, just my dreams. So you basically pulled my dreams, as well as the rest of my mind, out of that big dream pool in the sky to keep me here.”

“Put simply, yes.”

“So then what about my body, the real one? How do I get back to it, or *in* it, or whatever? And how can I see my own body if I'm in a parallel dimension? And could you *please* explain that... that thing that was out here, and why it was after me? Or why I'm here?”

“About your body, don't worry. It's still safe, in your bed, in your home, in your own dimension. When I pulled your energy out of the Tide, I only used what was necessary to solidify your existence. For the moment, that is all that is necessary. The rest is still up there, flowing from your mind into the

Tide. That is you link to your real body. When you wake up, the flow, which is normally one way, will reverse temporarily, pulling you back into your own body.”

“Okay, I'm not watching *The Matrix* ever again.”

“As for seeing your body here, it's nothing more than an intangible reconstruction based on the real world, just like this house, this street, and most of this realm.”

“Most?”

“Yes. This entire street, your house, and almost everything in this realm are a reconstruction based on the dreams of people like you. The bodies, like that of your mother, are the same, nothing more than markers for the sources of energy coming into the Tide.”

“Okay, that makes a little sense.”

“As for the creature outside, that was a dream creature. They are much like the rest of the world here, a manifestation of people's dreams. They can range in size from bugs to pet cats to elephants to dinosaurs. I've even seen a few dragons. Of course, there are creatures we call chimeras, like what attacked you. They are usually the crazy things people dream up in nightmares and generally weird dreams that don't fit into conventional categories. Chimeras tend to be bigger, stronger, meaner, and more dangerous. And one was after you because it was looking to feed. Your unstable energy would have allowed it to grow far stronger than it could on regular dreams.”

“So that thing was a carnivore, hunting on dream energy?”

“Yes.”

“Thank God you showed up then.”

“I had hoped to be here when you arrived, but I was tied up.”

“Either way, thanks. So, why brings me here? What makes me so special?”

“You know all the ghost stories, UFO sightings, and such? Well, barring some UFO sightings, they aren't real. The Tide is supposed to be one way, your world to ours, unless someone is waking up.

Sometimes, the Tide surges wildly, what we call an energy surge, and some energy makes its way through to your world. This happens for a variety of reasons, and is usually the cause of those abnormal sightings. It takes too much energy to try to bring every bit of dream energy back, and it has minimal affect on your world, so we leave it there. The problem comes from the bigger creatures. They can get caught in an energy surge and make their way into your world with more than enough energy to stabilize and wreak havoc.”

“What? Bull. If people saw something like... *thing*, there'd be chaos. And it'd be all over the news. There's no way in hell you can keep something like that a secret.”

“You would be right, but it's been my job to contain these creatures, bring them back, and repair whatever damage they do, keeping people oblivious to the interference from this realm, thus avoiding said chaos. However, more creatures, big and small, have been slipping through, and I can't keep up anymore. I need help, and that's where you come in.”

“Wait, what?” Luke asked with a dumbfounded look on his face. “You want me to help you take down creatures like the thing that attacked me?”

“Yes.”

“How? With what? I'm a normal teenage, what can I do?”

“You have a vivid imagination, and you have the Dream Weaver.”

“You mean the sword? I don't even know what you did to get that blade to appear. It's just a worthless sword hilt to me.”

“You'll learn to use it, in time,” the Dream Master said, looking up at the sky. “But at the moment, let's meet the other two who have been helping me. Look behind you.”

Luke turned. What appeared to be large particles of dust were raining down for the Tide, a column of blue particles and a column of yellow. After a few seconds, there were two flashes of light. From the light emerged two people that Luke recognized immediately. From the blue light was the tall,

muscular form of his childhood friend, Max, who's long blond hair was recognizable before his face could be seen. The other person, from the yellow light, was Elaine, a friend who had moved to his city from London when they were in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She had light caramel skin and curly brown hair, which, coupled with her London accent, made her one of the most beautiful and popular girls Luke knew. They were dressed like him, black boots, pants, and overcoats, Max wearing a blue shirt and Elaine a yellow shirt to his white.

"Holy shit. There's no way."

"Hello Luke," Elaine said. "Glad you could finally make it."

"I bet this is a huge 'What the fuck?' moment, eh Luke?" Max said.

"That's an understatement," Luke said. "But what about you guys? Why are you in my dream?"

Elaine looked at her watch. "Oh, sorry, love. We'd like to explain, but..."

"Do you guys have a manual I can read or something?"

"Funny, but it's almost seven o'clock. We're all about to wake up."

"You sure? There's no sun, the sky is still...purple."

"We'll explain everything at school. Bye." Elaine began to glow, and then disappeared in a cloud of yellow particles which floated back up into the Tide."

"Elaine!" Luke screamed. He ran to the spot where she stood only moments before. "No, Elaine! Max! What... what happened to her? Please, tell me she's okay."

"Don't worry, bro, she's fine," Max said as he grabbed Luke by the shoulders and started into his wild, frightened eyes. "She woke up. She's safe at home. It's okay. And now it's your turn."

Luke stepped away from his friend. "What? Max, you..."

"Dream Master?"

"Right," the Dream Master said. Luke had forgotten about him as he turned to the mysterious man holding the Dream Weaver. He pointed the sword at Luke and it once again began to glow.

“No. Hey, wait!” Luke said. Then, in fear, he shouted, “What are you doing?!”

There was a brilliant flash.

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Luke woke with a start, sweating, heart racing. He was confused about the dream he'd had, which he remembered clear as day. He looked at the clock on the nightstand. 7:01 am. And the hilt was still there, as though it had never moved.

“Oh, man,” he groaned. “Hell of a dream last night.”

Luke started to get out of bed when a sharp pain ran up his left arm. He stopped, wide eyed, and looked at his forearm. His heart sank. There was a long bruise running across his forearm.

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Luke found his friends in the lunchroom at their normal table. He sat his tray down and took a seat.

“Max, Elaine,” he said, not bothering with pleasantries. “You will not believe the dream I had last night.”

Max and Elaine looked at each other, then at Luke, smiling.

“Try us,” Max said.