

The Tide of Dreams

Waking in a World of Dreams, Part 3

“So, that all really happened last night?” Luke asked.

“Yeah, it did,” Max said calmly. “Trust me, it's all real.”

“So then maybe you two can give me a real explanation. Preferably in English.”

“I guess that means I get to do it, huh?” Elaine said in her heavy London accent.

“Oh, very funny, Elaine,” Max said coldly.

“Anyway, Luke, let's start with a little history lesson, shall we?”

“Fuck, I hate history.”

“Oy! Language. Now, the Dream Realm has been in existence nearly as long as mankind itself.

Naturally, that means that dream creatures have been coming through to our realm for as long as mankind has existed. To keep the dream creatures from destroying our realm, and thus destroying the Dream Realm as well, a group of denizens of the Dream Realm formed what is now known as the Council to defend both realms. The Dream Master is one of the more active members of the Council. It eventually became his duty to keep the dream creature crossovers to a minimum. However, at various points in history, the number of crossovers would increase beyond the capacity of the Dream Master's abilities.”

Max cut in. “Often times, these increases took place during time of war, famine, or general distress among the population. Hell, sometimes it's a bad alignment of the planets. Couple that with the growth and expansion of the population across the planet, and the situation would quickly get out of hand.”

“At these times, the Dream Master would call upon people in this realm to assist him in defending it, known as Guardians. It started out as a few people called every hundred years or so, but now there are 45 of us total.”

“45?” Luke asked. “That's it? Seems like a big job for so few people.”

“You'd be right,” Max said, “if it weren't for the weapons. As the dream creatures increased in number and grew stronger, the number of people called to fight rose as well. Many began to use various weapon along with the powers granted to the Guardians. Eventually, the weapons became infused with dream energy. They became the symbols of the Guardians, making their way into the hands of each new generation of Guardians. As of now, there are fifty known weapons of all types, including swords, bows, guns, shields,...”

“*One* shield,” Elaine cut in. “Yours.”

“Thank you for that.”

“Wait,” Luke said. “If there's 45 Guardians but fifty weapons, aren't five weapons or five Guardians going unaccounted for?”

“Kinda,” Elaine said. “Of the fifty weapons, 42 are regular-service weapons, meaning that they are almost always active and in use somewhere in the world. After that, there are the elite weapons. Those are our three; yours, mine, and Max's. They are extremely powerful, and have only awakened about ten times, doing so when things are seriously about to hit the fan.”

“And that fact that *all three* of them are awake,” Max said, “is not good thing. It was a bad enough signal when mine woke up, then Elaine's, and now yours. Something big is gonna happen.”

“Yeah,” Elaine said. “And that takes the total to 45 weapons, 45 Guardians. The remaining five weapons have just... disappeared.”

“Define 'disappeared',” Luke said.

“They're gone,” Max said, “simple as that. Four regular-service weapons and an elite weapon. They were last seen about 400 years ago, but no one has seen them or their wielders since. We can't find them. It's like they completely dropped off the radar. We know what they are, their powers, and who last used them, but it really doesn't mean anything unless we find them.”

“That sucks,” Luke said. “But what about our weapons?”

“Thought you'd never ask,” Max said with a smile. He raised his right arm up so that Luke could see the black leather strap around his wrist. “This here is the high shield of the realm, the Dream Crusher.”

Elaine reached into her bag on the floor and pulled out what look like a piece of wood wrapped in faded tan leather. It looked like it had, at one time, been attached to something. “And this,” she said, “is the great bow of the realm, the Dream Seeker.”

“Uh, no,” Luke said. “That is a leather strap and an old piece of wood. You two are nuts.”

“Oh, and did the Dream Master not turn that old, broken sword hilt into a full sword?”

Luke paused for a moment. “Point taken.”

“Don't worry, though,” Elaine said. “You'll see them in action soon enough.”

“How soon?”

“How's this afternoon sound?” Max asked.

“Let me guess,” Luke asked, “my place?”

“You know it.”

“Okay,” Luke said. “Now tell me about these dream creatures.”

Before Elaine or Max could say anything, the bell rang, signaling the end of their lunch period.

“Out of time, once again,” Elaine said. “But you'll get the full combat rundown during training.”

“Training,” Luke said as he stood up. “You make it sound so fun.”

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“Okay, so what's the first part of this 'training'?” Luke asked as he sat on his bed.

“Lay back,” Max said.

“Why?”

“Trust me, just lay back.”

“Fine,” Luke laid back and rested his head on his pillow. “So should I close my eyes and tell you about my hectic week, doctor?”

“No need,” Max said. “You’ll be out in a second anyway.”

“Dude, what?” Luke looked up and saw nothing but Max's palm and a smirk on his face before everything went black.