

Tide of Dreams

Trial by Fire, Part 4

“Crap, not again!” Max yelled. He knew he didn’t have the time to launch the Dream Crusher over to Luke, so he leaped off of the building at the griffin, hoping to distract it. About midway through his jump, the beast fired. Max could only watch in horror as Luke disappeared behind the ball.

Luke knew he was up a creek at this point, having just enough time to hold the Dream Weaver out in front of him, close his eyes, and pray the somehow the sword would protect him. He waited for the impact, but nothing came. He opened his eyes and found himself in a field of white. In front of him stood the same knight as before, holding the Dream Weaver in one hand and a large shield in the other.

“What? Where...where am I?” Luke asked as he looked around, seeing nothing but white.

“What is going on here?”

The knight said nothing as he held up the Dream Weaver and the shield and brought them together. They began glow brighter and brighter until Luke had to shield his eyes. He opened them again and found himself back on the rooftop. The Dream Weaver was glowing red, and holding the energy ball in place a few inches away. Luke knew what he had to do.

“Okay, let’s end this,” Luke said. “Here, this is yours!” He pushed against the energy ball as hard as he could, sending it back toward the griffin.

Max landed on the griffin’s head and dug in, looking up just in time to see the ball of energy coming back at the griffin.

“Give me a break!” he yelled as he jumped again. The ball caught the griffin in the side of the head and exploded. The blast knocked the griffin into the buildings Max had been standing on. Max, caught in the blast radius, was blown to the ground headfirst, rolling a few times before coming to a stop facedown about ten yards away.

“Damn it,” Luke muttered as he jumped down to street and over to Max. He helped him to his

feet.

“Max, are you okay?”

“Yeah. What... no, how did you...?”

“I’ll try to explain later. Right now, I need the Dream Crusher. I have an idea.”

“What?”

“Just give it to me.”

“Fine, here,” Max said as he handed over the Dream Crusher. “I hope whatever you have planned works.”

“Yeah,” Luke said as he turned to the recovering griffin and readied the Dream Crusher in his left hand. “Me too.”

Luke stood there, concentrating against the slight resistance the Dream Crusher was putting up as he tried to connect with it. There was a small jolt as he connected with it.

“Here goes,” he said. He held the Dream Crusher across his chest, and then brought the Dream Weaver up to it so that the sword crossed the shield. Both began to emit a blinding light, enough that Max had to look away, and Luke had to close his eyes. When the light subsided, Luke was no longer holding the Dream Weaver or the Dream Crusher, but a combination of the two. Attached to his right arm was essentially the Dream Crusher with two noticeable differences. First, the Dream Weaver was attached to the opening of the Dream Crusher in a katar-like fashion. The blade was six inches shorter, about four inches wider at the base, lining up with the front edges of the shield. Second, the middle edges were extended, but the ends near the front of the shield were extended about an inch, while the other ends were extended four. From the triangular section flowed purple energy, give the impression of wings. Luke could feel the energy draining out of him slowly just holding the weapon.

“What.. is that?” Max asked.

“Its name,” Luke said as he connected with the new weapon, “is Titan's Bane.”

“Nice.”

“Now to finish this,” Luke said as he eyed the beast. It gave another roar that Luke cut off with a quick Shockwave Blade. This time, the blast had the desired effect, knocking the griffin on its back. As it struggle to get to its feet, Luke jumped into the air, leveling out at the same height as the buildings around him. He began to pump energy into the Titan's Bane, making the blade glow red and the wings begin to expand and push forward like an airplane engine. It was all Luke could do to hold on to the grip of the shield as he aimed it toward the griffin.

“Firefly!” he yelled as he let go of the grip. The Titan's Bane zipped through the air and hit the griffin in the stomach. With a small explosion and a final screech, the griffin dissolved away. Luke landed lightly next to Max.

“That was for Elaine,” Luke said. The fatigue hit him just then, and he dropped to his knees. Max rushed over to help him.

“Hey, you okay?” Max asked.

“Yeah, I'm fine. I think.”

“Good. So, how did you do that?”

“I'm not entirely sure, but the Dream Weaver gave me the idea.”

“Really? Well, I don't expect you to be using the Titan's Bane too often. It looks like it drains energy like crazy.”

“Yeah,” Luke said as he slowly got to his feet. “It really does.”

The two watched the dust around the impact zone clear, revealing their now separated weapons planted into the ground. They walked over and withdrew them from the ground.

“So now what?” Luke asked as he looked up and down the street. “This has got to be a couple hundred thousand dollars in damages. I doubt any of us can afford it.”

“Watch,” Max said. He held the Dream Crusher up. “Dream Crusher, restore!”

The blades of the Dream Crusher opened, and from it emerged a dull purple flow of energy that reminded Luke of the Aquarius Shield. It expanded outward until everything within Elaine's barrier was covered. Luke watched in amazement as the craters in the street began to repair themselves. The buildings also began to repair themselves. After a minute, the entire block appeared as though the battle had never happened.

“Yeah, no, I'm all out of smart ass comments for the shit we've pulled tonight,” Luke said. “Just tell me what you did.”

“Our weapons are our keys to the Dream Realm, and when the door is open, instead of being pushed into the Dream Realm, we can pull energy out to repair any damage done by dream creatures. Or us.”

“I'm too tired to get that. I'll think it over in the morning.”

Max looked to the sky, where the sun was just beginning to rise. “You know, technically, it...”

“Don't you dare say it.”

“Okay, okay. Well, we're done here. Time to go.” Max waved his hand, and the barrier disappeared.

“Finally,” Luke groaned as the two Guardians began to fade away. “I wonder who would dream up something like that anyway.”

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On a rooftop a quarter mile down the street from where the battle took place, the Dream Master watched as Max and Luke dissolved away, returning to their normal bodies. Behind him, a figure in a long black hooded trench coat with the hood up watched as well.

“You pitted the three of them against an S-class?” the hooded figure said, her feminine voice as cool as ice. “You're as reckless as I remember.”

“You and I both know that they have to get stronger as quickly as possible. This is the calm

before the storm. Something is coming, and if they can't stand up to it, we are all in serious trouble.”

“You're right,” the woman said as she turned and started walking away. “Dark times are coming.”

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“So,” Elaine said as she sat down at the table and started unpacking her lunch, “how did you manage to survive a fight like that without the Dream Master's help?”

“A kick-ass new weapon,” Luke said.

“Oh, really? Tell me all about it.”