

Chapter 7: Geb; World of Monsters and Magic

"Geb? So we just crossed the universe to some planet that you have never been to?" Julia's voice had a hint of panic in it. She had been in such a hurry to catch Will before his departure, she hadn't considered the possibility of being taken in by the 'Jump'.

Will kept trying to stay focused. Take long, deep breaths. He knew he'd need every bit of arcana he could call upon if something happened. Recalling what Hiram had said about Geb, he remembered that it was a world that was a bit more primitive than Earth or [Myrah](#).

People hadn't quite advanced to heavy machine industries - or even regional unification. It was a world more medieval than his own. More brutal. Magics were frequently used in combat between peoples and the myriad races of indigenous species. Will kept trying to keep calm. He needed to stay focused on recovery.

"What should we do, Will?" Julia took a long look around their surroundings. There were various trees; fairly well spaced and all looking fairly healthy. There were no major track ways or paths of any sort here. She wanted to go back to the path she'd left, but not until Will was feeling better.

"When I arrived here, I was on an old path. Should we head there once you're feeling better?"

"Probably." Will knew they'd need to find shelter or some type of settlement before night came. He didn't know what creatures were most active at night on Geb.

So Julia sat next to Will, keeping a constant watch for Danger. Despite their fear on an unknown world, Julia started to feel more relaxed as she took in the surroundings.

Julia had always been a city-girl. The country was nice and all, but the convenience of the city was just so... convenient. No traveling for miles to find something, it was all within relatively close proximity. Maybe she'd taken it for granted, now that she was so far from her home.

As Geb's arcane energies coursed their way through Will, he felt out through the vibrations created by the energies. There was a lot more activity or at least magical activity on Geb than Earth, possibly more than Myrah. On his own world the use of magic had always been restricted. Only a minority of citizens had access to the ancient arts.

Geb however, it felt far more active and unrestrained. A constant bubbling of arcana, the world was rich with various waves of energy. Will was feeling better the longer he was connected to the magical energies of the world; his headache continued to weaken.

There was the soft crush of dried leaves underfoot. Will snapped to attention, looking for anything that could have caused the noise. Julia was wondering what was wrong, the forest seemed empty. Will looked around carefully, slowly, but nothing came to his attention. It was unsettling.

There was a soft purr behind the trees that finally drew both Will and Julia's attention. It sounded fairly large, so Will grabbed hold of his staff, ready for defense. Julia was a bit unsure what to do so she picked up a rock nearby, just in case.

After several tense minutes the purring stopped and out from the trees stepped, well they weren't quite sure what it was. Julia was shocked initially, but realizing that they were on a totally different world made her a little less surprised after the first tense moments. It looked built like a human at first.

The shoulders, the torso and hips. At first it was the hair that set Julia off. Its body was entirely covered in a fine, short hair, almost like cat hair. Then she saw the feline tail swishing about calmly as the creature approached.

Its face had most of the 'regular' human features; the eyes, mouth, nose and.... ears? Its ears were exactly the location they would have been on a house cat, top of the head, twitching from side-to-side.

"Ah, ha.... guess you've never seen a felinoid." It talked as the creature walked closer to Will and Julia.

"You talk?" Will said.

"Obviously." It answered, "Shall I assume you are lost? Or perhaps having a picnic? It is quite the fine day for it."

"Guess I'll make introductions then... I am Miila." She took a long slow bow. Miila had seen humans act like this before, dumbfounded. Par for the course.

"I'm Will, and this is Julia."

"Pleasure." Miila continued to walk closer to Will and Julia. She was fairly sure they were harmless, a bunch of lost kids, out for a stroll.

"Is this Geb?" Will finally asked.

"I guess. This world is called Geb, but the continent is Klthusser. Are you two lost?" Miila took a seat on a rock and decided to humor them.

"There are cat-people on Geb?" Julia said incredulously.

"There are many types of people on Geb. Cat, Dog, Bird, Reptilian, and several types of what we call non-animals."

Miila thoughtlessly re-adjusted her leather armor. She double checked her leg-guards and shorts. Better take them to Kadde she thought. He was the scholar. He could probably set things straight here. He always liked explaining things.

"From your smell, your not from around here are you?" Miila wanted to be certain before bringing them along.

"Not really." Julia wasn't sure what to do, but she was fairly certain they would be safe, for now. She tried to help Will up, but he was still fairly sore from the magical drain on his body.

It took several minutes longer than expected, but Julia finally helped Will to his feet. Will used his staff as a crutch to get to the old road. They cautiously followed Miila through the trees.

Miila kept alert as they exited the trees. She knew it was getting dark and soon being out on the open

road would be a dicey proposition, even for her. Miila let out a raspy roar that frightened Julia and made Will stumble forward on his staff.

“Sorry, I'm just calling for the rest of my team. Best to stay together, you know.” Miila said as she sharpened her claws on a nearby tree.

“Probably a good idea until Will is back to normal.” Julia said.

“Why is Will so tired?” Miila inquired. She could feel that Will was probably a magic-user given his appearance; cloaks, staff, relatively loose garments always reeked of magic users. She never understood the need for ostentatious display.

(10-1-2015) In the distance they could hear a group of 'people' pick up their pace. After meeting Miila, Julia wasn't about to rule out anything. Miila's group soon came into view. Julia was surprised, but she had expected something like this. There were 3 other individuals in her group, each as different as the other.

Julia could swear she had landed in ancient Egypt. Miila's team were all roughly “humanoid”, though only one looked completely human.

“Allow me to begin introductions.” Miila started. “This is my team of friends and allies.”

Julia stepped back. Their appearances were all a bit “shocking” to say the least.

“The large reptilian is Vulgurutt.”

At that Julia felt a horrible shiver down her spine. Vulgurutt was easily over 7 feet tall, covered in thick reptilian scales and what looked like osteoderms, the most terrifying thing was his face. His snout protruded easily a foot from his eyes. And his jaws were lined with pointy, conically shaped teeth, at least 60 of them.

“A croc-o-man!” Julia thought.

Vulgurutt's 'crocodile' smile was very unnerving to both Julia and Will. Will had a bit more relaxed perception of Vulgurutt. Though large, Will could feel the arcana in a patient, calm, even cool aura around him. Vulgurutt may have looked hostile, but there was a sense of deep peace and serenity.

“The one with wings is the leader of our expedition, Kadde,” Miila said.

“Pleased to make your acquaintance” Kadde said in a soft and refined tone.

“And the blue skinned human is Jack.” Miila said in a slightly bored follow through.

“Thanks a lot.” Jack replied peevishly. “Always leaving me for last.”

“If I may,...” Kadde interjected. “We will need to begin finding cover soon for the night. Miila could you graciously take lead?”

Miila turned and started down the path as the rest of the group followed at a slightly slower pace.

"Sorry we are in a bit of a rush. Dark around here is a bit,... hazardous. Best we find a place to shelter for the night." Kadde explained as they all began hiking.

"Thank you for letting us go along with you." Will said. "We just arrived, and as you can see, I'm not quite 100% yet."

"Indeed." Kadde could feel a kindred feeling about Will.

"Oh, where are my manners. My name is Will, and my friend's name is Julia."

"Charrmed..." Vulgurutt said in a deep, grating voice as he hefted a large equipment pack.

"Wow! You speak!?" Julia blurted out. She'd thought she would have been ready for anything before the 'Jump'. But now, she was starting to regret her impulsiveness. There was simply too much to take in.

Vulgurutt simply eyed Julia and kept walking. He was pretty used to surprising people. He easily towered over most people, and his appearance was less than 'cuddly.' Part of being a reptilianoid. You develop a very 'thick-skin' to judgements and opinions. As the group got on their way down the road, Will and Julia began to loosen up. They observed Kadde and Vulgurutt talking very conversationally about their expedition as Jack kept constant watch from the rear of the group.

After a mile or so Kadde took up walking beside Will and the two began the inevitable questions. "You're a magic user, no?" Kadde asked politely. Kadde felt almost certain, but wanted to be sure.

"Yes. I take it there are people who use magic here. Actually, where is here? Is this Geb? I'm having trouble remembering." Will responded.

"This is indeed Geb, Will. World of Magic. This world is alive with copious amounts of energy. Unlike the dead moon, Purit." Looking up Kadde pointed up in the sky to a grey orb that was equi-distant from a faint glowing green orb, high in the sky.

"Mist?" Will asked.

"Yes... How did you know?"

"Long story." As they walked on Kadde was looking forward to a sit-down with Will.

Julia was feeling left out as Will and Kadde continued to talk about magic and worlds and things. Boys!

"Jealous a little?" Miila appeared beside Julia, and she jumped a bit. "Whoa. I don't bite."

"Sorry, Miila. I'm just a bit overwhelmed. Too many things to take-in right now."

"Like what? Do tell." Miila was usually the only female of the group and it became boring at times listening to a bunch of guys talk. Always directions, instructions, or plans. She really didn't need much help finding anything, part of being a feline; that strong sense of independence. Only Vulgurutt really grasped solitude like she did.

"I just decided to go with Will on a whim really. Like, yesterday I was a student, and now today I'm farther than I've ever been from home. I didn't even pack my most essential things. It was all so fast. I didn't

think this through..." Julia said in an unhappy tone.

"It happens to all of us Julia. We live life in a comfortable norm, until, Boom!! Life happens!"

"But I thought I'd be better prepared for it all."

"You have your sense of smell right?" Miila asked.

"What? My sense of smell?" Julia responded quizzically.

"It's an old cat saying," As long as you have your nose about," It meant as long as your senses about you - you'll be able to handle whatever life throws at you. Besides, you've got Will with you. As long as you have a friend on an adventure, then things will always work out."

Julia thought for a moment about it. 'Will is my friend.' Julia said in her mind. She'd never thought about it that way. 'A friend.' When we get older it seems we don't think about making friends anymore. But now that she was so far from home, she was glad she at least had Will.

"Mmm..." Miila let out a deep growl as she ran ahead of the group to the top of a distant rise in the road.

"Guess we're getting close to camp?" Vulgurutt said in his deep, guttural voice. He took a long deep sniff of the air and could smell the distant use of spices used on meat. "Always the spices."

"Miila! What do you see?" Kadde yelled. He and Will picked up the pace as Vulgurutt re-gripped his giant pack and sped up. Jack came out of the shadows of the trees and asked Vulgurutt if they had found a place to bed down for the night.

"Not sure. But smells like it."

"If it's this late, we may be sleeping in the barns again." Jack said.

As it turned out, they would not have to spend the night in the barns. Coming down the hilly forest path they saw a village along a stream and beginning to light its night-lamps. Round dusk most villages began lighting their lamps. Mostly to attract late night customers, but also to ward off unwanted creatures of the night.

The sun had passed below the horizon before the team had selected an inn and settled down for a meal. But, it felt good. Julia and Will hadn't eaten since the morning before, and the 'Jump' had really taken its toll.

Despite being an alien world, the food was quite delectable. Julia was so hungry she was tempted to try every item on the menu. Vulgurutt let out a hearty laugh at that. He had enjoyed a challenge, someone who could eat as much as himself.

Finally they all selected their meals for the night; Kadde enjoyed a fish dish with steamed fruit of some sort. Will had settled on a stew with what looked like poultry, but was later revealed to be a type of boar. Julia opted for a salad, but was only half finished before asking to try some of Miila's roasted winged beast. 'The seasonings were too much to resist a bite.' Julia said later. Jack had a solemn noodle dish with a fishy broth. "Always the same... nice and bland." Jack had simple tastes regarding travel food.

The big surprise was Vulgurutt. He simply ordered 2 shanks of roast yak. The entire rear legs, only lightly braised. Naturally he had a whole table to himself. Julia watched in astonishment as he tore through the first shank down to the bones.

"Whoa. Does he eat like this every day?" Julia asked as she finished one of her fried roots.

"Vul? No. He only eats once every week or so. It's really quite handy, he can go days without eating if he needs to." Miila explained as she finished her wings.

"All in the metabolism actually." Kadde said. "You see, being a reptilian, Vulgurutt is usually slower in his life pace. He doesn't need to be active like most of us. In truth, he's probably the oldest here, possibly in the entire village."

"Fascinating." Will had never heard of such creatures or beings who resided on Geb and was very interested to learn more. "How old is he? If you have an estimate..." Will inquired.

"Hmm, I met Vulgurutt probably 10 years ago or more. And he hasn't changed much at all. Probably over 100 years old, give or take a decade."

As Vulgurutt finished the last bites of his meaty entree the rest of the group decided on sleeping arrangements.

"Since, Vulgurutt will need a few days to digest, we'll stay the next 3 nights here." Kadde told them.

"And I go to ground?" Jack said from his corner seat in the shadows.

"As usual. Any information you can get from the locals about this road and its ruins."

"Naturally. That's what you pay me for." Jack's job had usually involved some level of spying or paying informants, digging dirt and the like.

"So, for tonight, Miila and Julia are you comfortable sharing a room?"

"No problem. I think it'll be fun." At that they set off up the stairs to their room.

"Hmm... I guess that means Will and Jack will be rooming together tonight, since Vulgurutt can't be left alone. He can get a bit twitchy at night. Old habits." Kadde looked at Jack and hoped he would be amiable today.

"Hey. I got no beef. Besides, at least I'll have some conversation away from work horse." Jack didn't seem happy about any of the arrangements, but these adventures were his bread and butter.

As Will changed into a set of night clothes, Jack simply laid down in his usual clothes.

"Not sleepy, Jack?"

"I don't wear sleeping outfits. Too light. I like my own clothes just fine."

"Okay."

"Don't take it personally, Will. I just don't like changing into strange clothes."

Will tucked into his bed and Jack lay on his blanket as the light went out.

"I guess we'll just see what tomorrow brings." Will said in the dark.

"That is all any of us can do. Hey Will, don't worry. We've got your back. I'm sorry if I'm not the best conversationalist." Jack said.

"That's alright. We can't all be good at everything. Night, Jack." Will said in a sleepy voice as he drifted off to sleep.

"Rest well, Will." Jack said as he closed his eyes. Tomorrow would be there soon enough.

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