Chapter 8: Geb; The Ruins and Sacred Beasts

Will woke up feeling very refreshed, almost as if the day before there had been no 'jump'. He took a long deep breath, drawing in the various energies of Geb. 'It felt so much like mist, Will thought, 'only more wild and untamed.' Turning, he noticed Jack had already left for his morning scouting. Will wished Jack had at least offered to take him along, there was so much to see.

Taking off his covers he noticed a slight chill and quickly changed into his clothes. He'd need a new outfit; the jeans he'd worn from Earth were in need of a good cleaning. It would also be nice to see what other options he'd have for clothes on Geb.

Walking down the stairs into the main eating hall, he saw that Kadde was sitting enjoying a few nuts and a hot drink. Kadde was glad to see Will up so early, there was still so much to discuss.

“Come have a seat Will,” Kadde called to Will as he left the stairs. “Certainly.” Will took a seat across from Kadde and looked around for a bite to eat.

“Hungry Will? I can ask for a menu if you wish.”

Once settled, Will decided he just felt like toast and tea.

“Ah, if only I could enjoy tea like you. However, the beak does prevent sipping, sadly.”

“What are you drinking?” Will thought Kadde was already drinking tea. “Tea. Like I said, I can't quite enjoy it like you.” It made Will wonder what other things he might be taking for granted. “No worry, no worry, Will. Tea is still tea.” Kadde said as he carefully picked up his drink in his clawed hand and carefully poured some into his beaked mouth.

Will had some of his toast. It was very unlike Earth's or Myrah's bread. On Myrah, he remembered it was a bit gritty and sour from the type of yeast they used. Earth's was softer, finer, but very sweet. This bread was kind of chewy and rough, more like a toasted biscuit. A second bite and he noticed that it had small seeds that had a slightly buttery taste. It was kind of a simple earthy tone, very nice.

“I'm sorry if I speak so much. It's just that I've never met anyone from another world, much less two people from two different worlds. It simply rattles my mind.” Kadde said excitedly as he cracked open a nut in his beak with a sharp 'crack'!

“Aren't there other worlds beyond Mist, and Durat that you know of?” Will said as he started on a second slice of toast. “Certainly. Many thousands actually. However, traveling to another world is beyond this world's magic so far. Maybe one day… Anyway, we have plenty to do today; Re-equipping, re-stocking, and probably seeing where we are on the roads.”

Will was glad Kadde wasn't pressing the point of other worlds. He secretly didn't want people to know he had something that assisted his jumps. He worried that if he lost the stone, he'd be stuck forever on a world.

Kadde cracked open another nut and started flipping through the pages of a small leather book. Will glanced at the various notes Kadde had taken. There were several small maps marked with strange red

and blue symbols.

“There is always so much to think about on these expeditions. Routes, supplies, cost of assistants, oh… the list goes on.” Kadde lamented.

“So where are you headed? What is your team looking for?” Will asked as he finally had some of the tea. It was a bit hot, but not bad. Will had never had much taste for tea, it all seemed to taste the same to him.

“I found some new information a while back, and it's been a dream of mine to learn more about Geb's 'World Clock'. I mean, I've seen the clock and all, but I want to find more about its origins.” Kadde explained.

“What is the 'World Clock'?” Will asked. He had another piece of toast and settled into his chair a bit. “ The clock itself is a marvel of ancient engineering. It keeps track of the hours, days, weeks, months, and years of its entire operating life. It tells time, obviously, but it also records all the arcanic activity of Geb. “Truly amazing!” Kadde said excitedly. “I've always wanted to know more about how it was made. Who made it? and Why?”

After a little while Miila and Julia came down stairs and joined Kadde and Will. “I take it 'Vul' will be digesting today?” Miila asked 'matter-of-factly'

“Of course. He is our porter and strongest member. I couldn't make half the progress I wanted if I didn't have his size and battle prowess.” Kadde answered as he motioned for 2 more menus.

“Hey Will, feeling better?” Julia asked with concern. She knew, that for better or worse, she needed Will to help get her back to Earth. “Yeah. Much better. You?”

“Still getting used to the whole 'another world' shock, but otherwise not bad.” Julia said nervously. “Oh, you'll be fine. Just act like yourself and you'll be okay. With so many different cultures and peoples on Geb, most don't mind the everyday weirdness.” Miila said as she stretched out and looked for something meaty on the menu.

After a nice conversive breakfast the group finally got down to the day's business. “It'll be 3 days before Vulgurutt is up for the next leg of the journey.

So, while we're here we need to prepare you two for the road, that is if you'll be coming.” Kadde said, glancing back and forth between Will and Julia. Julia's stomach felt a bit knotted up, she wasn't sure she'd like spending the next several days on the road. She was worrying how far behind she would be on her assignments for class and the possible test dates she'd miss.

Will finally spoke up and mentioned the need for more appropriate attire. “Of course. You'll need equipment for the road, as well as some type of weapons.” Kadde said. Julia's heart sunk at the mention of weapons. She'd spent the past several years studying medicine, and now there was the prospect that she may have to inflict harm on another living thing.

“Will, you are a magic user - are you not?” Kadde asked point blank. “Oh, Yeah. I have some training.” Will answered. “Hmm,” Kadde turned to Julia, but felt uncertain of her skills. “Julia, what are your talents?” Kadde asked.

“Umm, well, I'm not really the talented type, I guess.” Julia wasn't sure what 'talents' she had. She'd spent so many years in school she'd never really taken the time to hone skills beyond the academic.

“I can do first aid or medical care.” Julia was at least confident about her abilities in caring for others.

“I guess a healer then? Usually that's my area of expertise, but it would be nice for some more hands-on assistance.” Kadde was a bit uncertain about Julia's ability to hold up under the rigors of the road once things got moving.

With breakfast finished they set out into the village to find what they would need for supplies. In the mid-day light the village was larger than they had originally expected. There was a black smith, at least 2 tailors, and a market for all the essentials.

Miila took Julia to the tailor for a fitting and something more 'functional' as she explained the rigors of travel. “You see,” Miila explained as Julia was being measured by an Avian-humanoid, she looked similar to Kadde, but had a softer grey and brown feather pattern.

“Most of us adventurer/traveler types have heavier clothing than say your average villagers. It's a 'rough' world out there with creatures and such that would love to take a bite out of your pink, fleshy torso. It pays to have some level of protection. I wear padded leather, as well as protection on my extremities, since I like to get up and personal in the fray.”

Julia tried not to feel nervous as the Avian tailor finished the measurements.

“Which material do you want; leather, scale, chain-mail, or simple cloth?” The tailor asked as she turned to her stock room. “Probably a cloth/leather mesh. Easier for wear.” Miila said. With that the tailor started to work and Miila took Julia out around the village.

“So what do you plan to do, you know, after you're done adventuring and stuff?” Julia was feeling better after a simple lunch of fruit and bread to chat with Miila about other things.

“Sometimes I don't know for sure. Somedays I feel like I want to do this until I can't go anymore. Other times I want to save enough to settle down with a nice mate and raise a few children. I don't know. I'm only 25, I still have several good years left I guess.” Miila said in a slightly more dreamy voice. “How about you, Julia? Big plans? Settling down?”

Now that she'd heard Miila open up about her thoughts, Julia was kind of lost. All her adult life had been one single goal after another; graduate high school with honors, get into a good college, work on a medical career and diploma, find a great job and nice boyfriend… it was all nice, but the last week or so she'd started to question that plan. “I guess, I'm not totally sure anymore. I wanted to get my degree from school and find a good job. But, after meeting Will, there was part of me that didn't know. Maybe, there's something more meant for… me…” Julia said thoughtfully.

”…or you see something about Will that you want to see in yourself?“ Miila said with a catty grin. Julia blushed. “It wasn't like that!”

While Julia and Miila were out getting some supplies and Julia's new travel outfit, Kadde took Will out to the edge of town to see what magical skills he had.

“This should be far enough away. Don't want any bystanders to get hurt.” Kadde said as he took a step

back from Will. “Well, show me what you can do.”

Will took a long deep breath and reached into his arcane reserve.

He held out his hand and initiated his lighting spell. A quick snap of energy crackled from his hand and a bluish orb of light manifested like before. It hovered an inch or two above Will's hand for several seconds before he allowed it to burn-out.

“Hmm, basic but practical. How long can you maintain the orb?” Kadde asked.

“Probably a decent while. I've never had trouble setting it for several minutes.” Will said.

“Any other spells or incantations?” Kadde really was curious what different aptitudes Will had.

“I can use a deflection spell.” Will breathed deep again and summoned his deflection shield. It was quite a bit harder to maintain due to its size; roughly as large as himself.

“Impressive. Can you hold it for just a moment?” Kadde rushed to a place 20 paces from Will and threw a rock at the shield. The rock struck the shield with a sharp bang as the shield held. Kadde could clearly see its reverberations and it covered almost enough for 3 people.

“Splendid form!” Kadde was thoroughly impressed with its size and strength. “How long can you keep up the shield?”

Will took a deep breath to recover a bit. “Probably a few moments if I'm lucky. It's a bit heavy,” Will replied.

“Have you ever considered scaling it down, maybe just enough to cover an area the size of a soldier's shield?” Kadde suggested.

“On Myrah we were only ever taught standard spells. They served military purpose, but there hasn't been a major riot for many years. Mostly it's outdated rhetorical spells.”

“But could you make it smaller?”

Will took a moment to think over the mechanics of his shield spell. At the academy, his instructors had always emphasized the size to be big enough to protect other people from injury, but the efficiency of spells was left to advanced combatives; reserved only for Myrah's select corp of secret police.

“Since Geb can be a dangerous place at times, versatility is highly valued. How about this; project your shield again, but only use one hand. A smaller projection point.” Kadde explained as he took some paces back. Will relaxed and just focused his energies through one hand.

The shield spell activated, though this time it felt a bit lighter. The strain was half of what it used to be, and Kadde threw a small stone at the shield. The stone connected with the repulsing energies and outlined an area about the size of Will. The decrease in output also made it easier for him to hold the shield in place.

“Better?”

“Better.” Kadde came back next to Will and asked him to continue his demonstrations. Will hadn't had the chance to cut loose for such a long time, and it felt good to wield his magics so freely finally.

On Myrah use of magic was usually reserved only for classes and exercises. Use outside the academy brought too much attention. Actually, the only group known to use arcana completely unrestricted were terrorists or insurrectionists. Will had heard distant rumors of magi turning against the civic “order” of Myrah.

There were people, usually like Will, born into the lowest tiers of the magi-society who fought against the rigid system set up by the 1st and 2nd class magi. In the distant reaches of Myrah's mountainous sections, the only place the police had real difficulty clamping down, there were whispers of covert rebels striking back from the shadows.

Before Will had left on his adventure, he'd started to wonder why hadn't the secret police simply clamped down on all 3rd class magi citizens? Until now it hadn't occurred to him that maybe there were too many 3rd classers to be completely watched or controlled. Myrah had a population reaching almost a billion people. Probably only about 5 percent were actually first or second class magi-citizens. With over half of all people being non-magic, that meant the other 40-ish percent were probably like Will, third class magi. Powerful enough to be useful, but maybe too numerous to be left uncontrolled.

“Beg your pardon, Will…” Kadde snapped Will back to attention. “Do you have any offensive spells? It would be nice to finally have someone in our little team who could use spells with a bit more kick.”

Will thought for a moment, there was at least one particular spell he had that he had been working on, but the occasion had never popped-up for its use. “Kadde, you'll want to stand to the side, this one is a bit 'wild'.”

Will stepped up and made sure the road was clear for a decent distance. He'd practiced all the mathematics for this one, all the theoretical parts, but this time he could finally put it to the test. He pulled in the required energies and rose both hands up to the sky. The energies followed and he remembered the next step was to create a crackling orb of miniature 'stars'.

He'd experimented with his light orb for years in secret. It was a simple practical spell, but it also had an unusually nasty side-effect; it burned on touch. Not just a simple spark-burn either, a sharp crackling, explosive burn that could cause serious damage. In time he learned to create several mini-orbs all at once and string them together. That 'mega'-orb was now floating in the air over his head. He launched the orb out in front of him and as it flew forward he had it split into dozens of small clacking, crackling balls of energy.

The balls hit the ground and exploded loudly as they touched rocks, stones and bits of grass. Dust and debris flew in all directions under the force of the miniature blasts. When the dust had died down Kadde and Will inspected the blast site carefully. There were tiny craters where the orbs had made contact and either blasted the rocks to pieces or burned grass to blackened spots.

Kadde was still a bit shocked by the force of the numerous crackling explosions. “Wow! Serious firepower my friend. That should be useful if we need to level the numbers game.” After a few more minutes of inspecting the damage, Kadde had an idea for Will to try out.

“Will, can you split-off individual orbs one-at-a-time, and direct them at individual targets?” Kadde knew the explosion had multiple parts, so maybe it could be used on multiple targets.

“I don't know, Kadde. Each orb is very sensitive to impact. I'd have to have a smaller number. The reason I use a large spread is to make sure I can hit my target. It's tricky controlling individuals.” Will explained while recovering his arcanic energies.

In the distance the sun was starting to dip bit-by-bit as the afternoon began to pass. They both took their seats on a few large rocks and discussed the various techniques Will could use for increasing his arcane arsenal. Originally Will had thought his selections of spells was quite nice as it was, but after listening to Kadde he knew that there was so much more.

“On Geb alone, there are at least 200 different known spells for elemental magics alone. Not to mention various non-elemental types of energy bending, magics used by creatures, or even the sacred beasts. That's the wonderful thing about being a scholar; you never stop learning about all of the surprises life has in store.”

After a while of discussing arcana and its nature on Geb, Kadde had convinced Will to try his attack order again. “Remember, two fingers, one hand up should reduce the output to a much smaller number.” Kadde said from behind Will. He didn't want to be in the way.

Will did as Kadde had suggested and allowed the energies to flow through only two fingers on his right hand. Only 5 small orbs could be seen. Will selected a single target, a rough rocky lump, and directed his spell at the lump of rock.

The result was a gnarled crackling and hissing of explosions. Bits of rock and ground were flung in every which way. The lump was reduced to a decent sized hole by the road.

“I think we're making progress, Will.” Kadde said as he patted Will on the back. They inspected the small crater carefully, it was several inches deep, with bits strewn all around. Will was a bit divided, he was glad to be able to learn more about arcana, but not if it made him this worn out.

“Well, that's enough today. There's still much to do before we set out.” Kadde looked up as the sun was starting to reach that point in the day where it began to turn towards the late afternoon.

They began to head back to the village together. Will was feeling tired from the day's practice. It felt like lunch had been so long ago. He wondered how Julia's day had gone. She was not just on a very different world, but she had a life of her own back on Earth she was probably missing…

The late afternoon sun had begun to reach the tree-line by the time Will and Kadde returned to the inn. Outside Julia and Miila were waiting, with Julia in her new travel outfit.

“Well boys, what do you think?” Miila said as she nudged Julia forward.

Julia felt a bit awkward in her new clothes; they seemed a bit stiff and heavy. Miila had told her it took a while to 'break-in' travel gear. Julia had small padded shoulders, a padded tunic, wrist guards, light gloves, travel pants, boots, a belt with several pouches and a satchel.

They began to head back to the village together. Will was feeling tired from the day's practice. It felt like lunch had been so long ago. He wondered how Julia's day had gone. She was not just on a very different world, but she had a life of her own back on Earth she was probably missing…

The late afternoon sun had begun to reach the tree-line by the time Will and Kadde returned to the inn. Outside Julia and Miila were waiting, with Julia in her new travel outfit.

“Well boys, what do you think?” Miila said as she nudged Julia forward.

Julia felt a bit awkward in her new clothes; they seemed a bit stiff and heavy. Miila had told her it took a while to 'break-in' travel gear. Julia had small padded shoulders, a padded tunic, wrist guards, light gloves, travel pants, boots, a belt with several pouches and a satchel.

She felt it was all a bit too much, but Miila had told her that travel gear wasn't meant for fashion, it was meant for the road. Days, weeks, maybe months of wear and tear. One had to be prepared.

Will thought she looked nice. The clothes from Earth were just not his 'thing'. They all seemed a bit too, showy at times. As if the whole point of clothes was to be a way to show-off to the opposite gender. Maybe it was because his world, Myrah, was so repressive. Most people on Myrah wore maybe a handful of different colors, mostly dark 'earth-tones'.

“What will I do with my 'Earth' clothes?” Julia asked. She didn't want to lose her only possessions from home.

“Don't worry, Julia.” Kadde reassured her. “We'll pack them with our extra clothes. Nice and clean just in case. Don't let it bother you. We always have some space, just in case.”

They all headed into the inn for dinner. Jack was already waiting for them at a decent sized corner table.

“Well, well. Looks like everyone had a productive day”.

Jack was enjoying a tray of bread and cheese as he waited. He was ready to give them his daily report of the area.

They sat down to their meal as Kadde and Jack went over the details of the next leg of their trip. “The road will be another week before we get to where we want to go.” Jack explained. “It goes on for at least 5 days to the East, then turns North east.” He said while showing a rough map of the local area to Kadde.

“I thought we could just go straight East to the ruins?” Kadde asked while taking a bite out of his salad. “The map I have shows a road through some hilly area.”

“I heard the hills are not the best route.” Jack leaned in. “Local problems along the roads. Best if travelers stay away. The 'sacred beasts' are in a shift. Maybe a Behemoth on the move…”

At that, everyone stopped and thought about the implication. Will and Julia were a bit confused still. Kadde simply sighed and accepted the recent turn in fate.

“Guess maps can't predict that, now can they?”

“Not yet.” Jack replied.

“Sacred beasts?” Will finally asked.

“Tomorrow, Will. It's best to talk about that someplace… safer.”

They all ate a slightly more subdued meal that night.

The sleeping arrangements hadn't changed, and Will was ready to ask Jack about the expedition. Kadde always seemed to have ways to evade his questions, or carry on with lengthy explanations. Jack was sitting awake in his bed as Will had finished changing into his sleeping clothes. Jack's skin color had shifted to make him appear almost the same texture as the backboard of the bed.

“Alay,” Jack said as Will slipped into his bed.

“Evening.” Will said. “Jack, I have some things I want to ask.”

“Guess that's natural.” Jack said as he shifted his skin color to a light tannish color. “Hopefully nothing about beasts or creatures. Bad luck at night.” Jack said quietly.

“No, Kadde said he'd tell me tomorrow.” Will straightened up. He felt that Jack was always a little on the suspicious side. “From everything I've heard from Kadde, it sounds like you guys are similar to treasure hunters.” Will said with reservation in his voice.

“I guess you could call it that. We look for ruins and information concerning the ruins. If there's some thing of value though, it's usually handed over to the institute where Kadde works. They pay well for the trouble of finding their trinkets.” Jack answered.

Will tried to wrap his head around the different facets of Geb. It was likely a world older than his own, or at least it seemed like it. Myrah had some ruins, but the ruling elites had done so much to erase any

relics that might have told a different story than the one they wanted to tell. 'Victors write the history books.' The Earth phrase came to mind.

“Jack, how is it you can change color? Is it magic or something?” Will was curious if Jack had a special skill or art to change his appearance.

“Nothing magic about it. I'm a mutant.”

“A mutant?”

“Yeah. We naturally can change our skin color to whatever shade or texture we need. Very useful for stealth work.”

“What about the other races of Geb, what can they do?”

“Well, the Animal traits are usually obvious. Flight, senses, healing factors. But, there are a few races I'm not too sure about. Sprites and Dark elves are generally very secretive about their gifts. Some races actively avoid contact with eachother.”

“Forgive my prying, Will. But, how and why did you come to Geb?” Jack asked, but Will by this point was very tired and was starting to slip into a deep rest.

“I… want… to… understand. Myrah, Mist, Earth, Geb…. I don't understand yet.”

That night Will could swear he felt a cold presence in his room as he slept. Eyes from the shadows, scurryings in the walls. The smaller ones didn't bother him, but tonight some thing was there. It was the same aura that had tried to push Will away from Geb before.

The feeling lasted mere moments, but Will could have sworn it had been there half-the night. Finally after getting back to sleep he heard its voice. It had to be its voice, he was asleep!

“Much weighs upon your mind, child. Too much, alas. Geb has too many secrets for you to find peace, Will. You have much to learn, and so little time. Rest for now….”

The voice sounded deep and old. It was like a chilly winter breeze, with clasping hooked fingers. Will tried to resist, but soon he drifted into a dreamless sleep.

Will woke to Julia's voice. “Will, get up. You've been asleep way past day-break.”

Kadde and Vulgurutt were absent, but Jack and Miila were both chattering in the door-way.

“You were totally out of it this morning. No pulse, no breathing, its like you were dead.” Julia said in a stressed voice.

“I had a really strange night. Something was here. I don't know what it was, but it was…. can't think of the words. Great, ancient….”

Will explained his dream and feelings to Julia as Jack and Miila listened from the hall. Jack left to find Kadde as Miila stayed to keep guard.

Will and Julia went down for breakfast, after Will had changed into his clothes for the day. Kadde, and Jack were waiting at the table nearest the stairs. both had serious looks on their faces. Jack was slowly eating bread and cheese while Kadde sat in the center chair of the table.

“It felt like a 'monster' last night, Kadde. Swear on my great grandfather's bones. The unshakable aura. I can't use magic or feel it like you magi-types, but this 'thing' was raw power.” Jack whispered to Kadde.

“Guess that complicates things a bit now.” Kadde said with a heavy sigh.

Will and Julia sat down, just then Kadde leaned in close and asked for Will's attention. “Let's eat quick. I have a lot to tell you.” Will for one was open to finally getting to the core of the issue.

Everyone was out of the inn almost before finishing their breakfasts. Kadde led the group to a forest clearing a good way from the village. Miila kept constant watch as Jack was sent into town for a few errands.

“Let's all have a seat.” Kadde said as he sat down cross legged under the shade of a young tree. “We shouldn't speak in town about 'monsters'. Scares the locals.” He started.

“Is that what came last night?” Will said.

“Seems to be the case.” Kadde answered.

“What is a 'monster' exactly?” Julia knew of various creatures back on Earth; Dracula, Wolfman, the Mummy, the recent rash of Zombie movies and T.V. shows. But, they were all just fiction.

“Guess I should clarify a bit,” Kadde took a deep breath before beginning. “The term monster usually refers to 8 specific creatures that inhabit Geb. They are very unique and much of our world's magic history involves them.

It is said that when a person dies on Geb, their soul will be reborn into a monster. It is a cycle of birth - death - and re-birth. A second chance to help keep the balance of Geb.”

“Why would your soul return as a monster?” Will asked. Curious about its reasons.

“I'm not 100% certain, but a good point made is that 'monsters' don't intentionally harm people of any race. They are like the silent protectors of life.

“It was said, there is a King of the monsters. There isn't much besides some old references, but it states he is their lord and ruler….

“When life began on Geb, eons ago. The first man created the first spell of Arcanic arts. Giving rise to a multitude of millenia of mystic forces. When he died, he was reborn as the first monster.”

“Kadde, you read too much.” Miila said from nearby.

“Snark it you must, but it is a possible explanation,” Kadde returned.

“I'll agree that 'monsters' don't intend us any harm. Behemoths and Leviathans could easily level cities if they wanted.” Miila noted.

“Why would your soul return as a monster?” Will asked. Curious about its reasons.

“I'm not 100% certain, but a good point made is that 'monsters' don't intentionally harm people of any race. They are like the silent protectors of life.

It was said, there is a King of the monsters. There isn't much besides some old references, but it states he is their lord and ruler…

When life began on Geb, eons ago. The first man created the first spell of Arcanic arts. Giving rise to a multitude of millenia of mystic forces. When he died, he was reborn as the first monster.”

“Kadde, you read too much.” Miila said from nearby. “Snark it you must, but it is a possible explanation,” Kadde returned.

“I'll agree that 'monsters' don't intend us any harm. Behemoths and Leviathans could easily level cities if they wanted.” Miila noted.

“Behemoths, and Leviathans?” Julia asked. These words were familiar to her home world.

“As the name implies; very large things with immense power.” Kadde said. “Though, they tend to mind their own business. We simply are of very little interest to the large ones.”

“What about 'creeping shades'?” Miila asked.

“Well, they seem to need us as much as we need them. Shade for the creepers and they watch out for potential threats.

“But, Last night I felt a terrifying aura. Was that a monster, too?” Will interjected.

With a great sigh Kadde finally came to the point he'd hoped to avoid.

“There is one, one that I don't like even going into details about… A Nightmare.” Miila shuddered at its name and Kadde's feathers bristled.

“Very little exists that even mentions them, they are rare and terribly mysterious. No one is even sure what they look like. Something about a protective 'glamour' that is imbued in their bodies. They take the form of what-ever the seer fears most. Its a very powerful illusion, made nearly unshakeable by their natural fear-inducing aura.

Add to the fact that they actively avoid any human type species, they are simply incomprehendable.” Kadde ended.

It had occurred to all of them that as Kadde ended his explanation, Will had most likely been visited that night by a nightmare. A very ghostly honour indeed.

“It spoke.” All of them looked at Will as he continued. “He… He spoke. It was a male, if they have genders. Something about the questions I have. He sounded… sympathetic, like he understood something.”

“Amazing. He spoke!” Kadde would have asked a hundred questions but Will cut him short. “In my mind.

It explains why Jack didn't wake up.”

“I can't shake the feeling that all of this is happening for a reason.” Will said calmly. “When I left Myrah, I had no desire to return to it. The journey I've taken thus far is my own, but it is showing me so much. I think 'he' understands something I don't and he wants me to continue.” All were silent for a while.

The trees and grasses wavered in the light mid-day breeze. “Arcana, Magic, Magi, there is so much to it all I want to understand.” Will said in a slightly tired voice.

Julia was starting to see how this was all troubling Will greatly. From her conversations with Will over the past weeks she'd learned much about Myrah.

How a select elite controlled the majority of an entire world and its civilization. Used their gifts to benefit only themselves and maintain an iron-grip on the world's culture and history. 'Deplorable' was the best she could come up with for words. She just hope Will would be able to find his own conclusions to his questions.

“Those thoughts aside, we will be ready to leave in one-more day. Vulgurutt is starting to wake again and will want to be on the move.” Kadde announced.

“Miila my dear, would you be so kind as to help our new travel companions prepare?” “Certainly!” Miila said as she hopped to her feet. Both Will and Julia, uncertain what to expect.

“We're going to teach you to fight. There are some nasty creatures out there that will think you may be tasty. I'm going to give you the basics… best we can do in two days time.” Miila said this while she pulled two long batons off of her back guard and fit them together into a quarter-staff.

She then pulled a wooden sword out from her travel pack and handed it to Julia. “I hope you don't mind. Everyone has to have some training.” Julia took the practice sword, unsure what to do next. “Will, your staff at the ready, okay?”

Continue to Chapter 9…

//Author's Notes: //

- Tweak: When Will is visited by the Nightmare and feels the freezing cold aura, have Julia wake up shivering in her room, or have her experience a fragmented, confusing dream that mirrors what the Nightmare is telling Will.
- Tweak: When Julia is feeling anxious about her lost Earth future at the tailor, have Will inexplicably feel a sudden pang of homesickness or existential dread, even though he hates Myrah.
- Tweak: Make the toll of Will's magic more apparent, and hint that Julia's proximity acts as an anchor. Perhaps when she stands near him during his magic demonstration, the physical strain on his body lessens, or she instinctively knows how to soothe his arcanic burnout without using magic herself.
- Tweak: During the training, show that individually, they struggle. Julia is too defensive; Will is too reckless. But the moment Miila forces them into a 2-on-1 sparring match, they naturally cover each other's blind spots without having to communicate. They should fight as if they share a single

nervous system.
- Tweak: Have Julia express a thought to Miila about feeling “lost,” and later in the day, have Will use the exact same highly specific phrasing when talking to Jack or Kadde. It hints to the reader that they are pulling from the same internal well.

© 2018-2026 Marcus Davenport. See Site_Notice for licensing info.

From:
https://home.woodchuckhunters.com/wiki/ - **DavWiki1**

Permanent link:
https://home.woodchuckhunters.com/wiki/story:chapter_8

Last update: **2026/03/14 15:02**