

Dimension Master

#Chapter 41: Broken Bridge Pt 1 - Read Dimension Master

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Drake led his friends down the long dirt road. Ahead of them was a bridge that looked like something large had crashed into it, breaking it into pieces. He could see no way to get across the bridge. On each side of the ravine, there was a remnant of the bridge; there were only the first few planks to walk on. The center of the bridge was missing completely.

The bridge had been broken for a long time, and the old wood was already turning gray and brittle. Even stepping on the small portion of the bridge that was left could mean disaster; the wood would turn to dust from extra weight, causing an endless fall into the deep, dark depths of the ravine.

The ravine stretched as far as the eye could see. Even on the map, it extended off the parchment and out of sight. It appeared never-ending. Drake could see no possible way to cross the broken bridge.

"So, now what? How do we cross it?" Mike asked, staring at the skeleton of what was left of the bridge. "The gap between the two sides is too wide, so we can't jump across or throw something to pull us over. The wood is too brittle, and the ravine is way too deep. We can't even see the bottom. If we fell, there is zero chance of survival. What do you want to do?"

Drake pulled out the map and studied the area where the bridge was. The ravine stretched across the map as if there was no ending. He could see no other bridges along the ravine. The broken bridge was the only one. It was as if they didn't want anyone on the other side of the ravine. He knew that wasn't the case; there was a town somewhere on the other side. It was called Storm Town. It was on the map.

As he studied the map, the thought of the town, still in his mind, a revelation flashed through his head. The town on the other side of the bridge had the same name as the power that Mike had. The second town that wasn't that far away was called Chadwick town, which would be for Chad, and the one they had stayed at was named after him. Something told him that the three towns were named after the three of them. This, in his mind, confirmed that they were on this quest together. It was their quest, too.

Another thought formed in his mind. 'I wonder if Mike is the key to crossing, considering his town is on the other side.' Shaking his head and releasing that thought, he turned back to the map to see what options he could find.

"I don't see any option," Drake grumbled as he studied the map, trying to come up with a plan. He looked over at Renn, "Any chance you can fly?" It was more of a sarcastic statement. He had no idea what to do. He was pulling the proverbial straws, trying to figure out a way across.

Renn gave her half bark, half howl. Her green eyes were glowing faintly as she watched the Ravine. She was guarding it in the same manner as she did the forest around the clearing they stayed in.

"I'll take that as a no," Drake said dryly. "I wish you had wings."

Letting his eyes glow a bright emerald green, Drake looked at the bridge and then the surrounding area. A thought had crossed his mind. Things in this dimension are not always as they seem. The main example he could think of was the clearing of illusion. It looked like they were in the middle of endless water, but it turned out to be an illusion. Drake wondered if that was the case here. He had the lamp of truth on his belt, and even without his magical sight, everything should appear as it really was, cutting through any illusions that may be present.

'No, it's what it looks like. I have my lantern on and my sight. It looks the same either way you look at it.' Drake thought, then picked up a rock and tossed it over the edge where the bridge should be. It fell to the ravine's dark depths with no resistance. There was nothing to stop its fall.

"I'm open to suggestions," Drake said. He was frustrated. He wished that things wouldn't be so messed up. He already hated this dimension. This place was filled with life-or-death situations, and he hated living like that. He couldn't wait to get home to the ordinary world. He liked the new skills and the cool new familiar was nice, but he almost died twice, Chad once. He prayed that none of that would happen to Mike.

Mike frowned. "I got nothing." He was frustrated as well. They couldn't seem to catch a break.

Chad studied the bridge. "Maybe it's a puzzle." His brows were knitted together in thought as he tried to figure out the solution to getting across. He thought of scenario after scenario from the movies he had watched, with the characters in the same situation.

"How can a bridge be a puzzle?" Mike asked. He couldn't think of any possible way that could be true. It looked like an old bridge with no way across. He knew it was real because he watched Drake test it. The rock fell, disappearing into the ravine.

Chad turned to Mike. "I watched this movie once. It had a bridge. I don't remember the movie's name, but in it, there were invisible platforms that you had to walk on to get across. If you missed one, you would fall. They were positioned in different locations, so

it wasn't a straight line. Anyway, I was wondering if this bridge could be something like that."

Drake, hearing his friend's suggestion, picked up a handful of dirt and started walking toward the bridge. When he reached the edge, he looked down into the endless ravine. It reminded him of a crack in the world, where if you fell through, you would fall into the expanse of space. He could see no ending, no bottom; there was only darkness.

Flinging the dirt that he had in his hand, he let it fan out; it soared out from his hand, spreading out as it flew farther, then started to descend. There was no resistance, no invisible platform, there was nothing. The dirt kept falling into the abyss, vanishing out of sight.

He turned to look at Chad. "Nothing. Any more ideas? We have to remember that things in this dimension are not always what they seem. I think a puzzle is a valid option; we would just have to figure out what that puzzle is." He was hopeful. If they couldn't get across the ravine to the other side, they would not be able to complete their quest and go home. He had thought about all the games he had back home. When you came across a broken bridge, you would have to collect items to repair it. He didn't have any tools to cut wood or build with. He also needed something like nails or rope to attach the wood to extend the bridge. He had no idea where to start.

Mike started to chuckle for no apparent reason. Chad and Drake turned to see what was so funny. Seeing his friends look at him, he explained. "I was just thinking, it's too bad you couldn't tame a flying beast. Then I thought. We haven't seen any beasts other than wolf-type. Gargoyles aren't beasts, so it's not like you can tame them. Then I had this image of gargoyles flying us across because you tamed them. It was funnier than it sounds. I mean, they're trying to kill us, why would they help us?"

Drake sighed. "I guess I would have to see the image for myself. Either that or you are going insane laughing at things that aren't really funny from being in this dimension too long."

Mike shrugged. "You would have to see the image for yourself."

The sound of Renn growling caught their attention. Her green eyes were narrowed, focused on the ravine. Glowing green saliva began to drip from her fangs. Her claws extended.

Drake immediately uncoiled his whip, letting it fill with energy. He prepared his spells in his other hand, ready to fight.

Mike pulled his sword, holding it in a firm grip. The spikes of his gauntlets glistened in the light of the twin suns.

Chad held his bow, with a glowing arrow already notched.

Staring at the ravine that Renn was focused on, they prepared for battle. They waited for something to happen. Everything was quiet. They knew something was coming. If there weren't, Renn wouldn't be acting the way she was. A sudden sound echoed in the ravine. As every second passed, the sound became louder. It sounded like massive wings, and there were a lot of them.

Chapter 42: 42: Broken Bridge Pt 2

Drake and his cohort waited as the sound of wings grew louder. The rhythmic beating of large leathery wings, clapping against the wind, was rapidly approaching the rim of the ravine, growing louder. The sound rose to a deafening volume, threatening to shatter their eardrums. It was a terrifying sound that vibrated the ground around them.

As the first forms ascended out of the ravine, breaking through the darkness, Drake tensed, ready to defend himself and his cohort. The others were doing the same.

A cloud of darkness broke through, bursting into the sky above, rising in a fluid flow of bat-like beasts. There were hundreds of them. Chad released his first arrow, then quickly notched a second. He fired in rapid succession, hitting one after the other. His arrows were nonstop. Fear gripped their hearts as they witnessed what was coming out of the depths of the ravine.

Drake slashed his whip, releasing his ethereal whip, slicing through several at once. He kept repeating the process. The longer he fought, the brighter his eyes glowed. He was getting stronger with each kill.

The bats were large, but not too large; they were the size of an eagle. They resembled bats with large leathery wings and large ears. Red eyes pierced through the darkness as they flew up and into the clouds, making room for more to ascend. They were fighting level 3 beasts. They didn't seem too difficult to fight; it was the quantity. There were just too many of them. Drake feared the moment when the bats would begin their descent to attack them.

{You have slain...}

{Your cohort has slain...}

{You have slain...}

{Your cohort has slain...}

{You have slain...}

{Your cohort has slain...}

The messages kept coming; they were taking out dozens as Drake and Chad fought. Mike had no idea what to do. He was a swordsman, and he needed something that could kill at long range. He stood watching his friends do all the work, but only for a moment. He remembered a skill he hadn't been using.

Renn was jumping up, catching, and eating those she could reach. Her massive fangs biting through their dark bodies as she bit them in half. Unlike those Drake and his friends fought, Renn's didn't turn into light particles. She was able to devour them as she snatched them out of the air with her powerful jaws. The bat-like creatures stayed away from her, but not far enough away. There were enough beasts close enough for her to reach so that she could pull them right out of the air.

Mike filled his sword with a white glow of energy, forming the white, razor-sharp blade. He shot the sharp energy blades up at the bats. He was finally able to contribute. He shot them as quickly as he could, killing them one after the other. Each blade killed several as it passed through the dark cloud of wings, fangs, and bright red eyes.

{You have slain...}

{Your cohort has slain...}

{You have slain...}

{Your cohort has slain...}

{You have slain...}

{Your cohort has slain...}

Drake kept hearing the soft voice as the system messages kept going. All of them could feel their power growing: their powers, strength, and speed. The cloud of bats was giving them power, making them stronger. The problem was, they weren't sure if they could survive so many. The bat beasts were still flying up, seemingly with no end in sight.

The bats kept coming. They were an endless stream of blackness ascending out of the ravine in a dark cloud of flapping wings. They knew they could never kill them all.

The sound was high-pitched. Strong enough to shatter glass. The cloud was still ascending; The massive cloud of darkness growing larger with every second that passed.

After what felt like hours, but was only minutes, the end of the cloud was seen. The beasts gathered in the sky, forming together as if they were becoming one. Drake's eyes widened as he realized what was happening. They were becoming one. They were forming into one large beast.

As they began to form together, the screeching started. Drake and his cohort fought the urge to cover their ears. The sound pierced their eardrums. Blood poured out of their ears as the screeching continued.

They couldn't stop fighting. They had to keep the bats from forming into one massive, towering beast.

Drake abandoned his whip and pulled out his bow. Using his explosive arrows, he shot at the merging bats. As he did, he kept looking at Renn. He wanted to make sure she was safe. His friends were still uninjured, fighting with their respective powers.

His eyes widened as he realized what needed to be done. It was a gamble, but it would solve more than one problem.

Gritting his teeth in frustration, Mike decided to try something. He wasn't sure if it would work, but there was nothing else he could do. The white energy was fading. He was running out of it, unable to refill his sword. Filling his sword with electrical power, he shot lightning into the sky. It was a constant stream of lightning. As it touched the cloud of bat-like beasts, it struck several all at once. The lighting in the cloud spread like wildfire as bat after bat fell back down into the ravine.

The Dimension Master watched as the trio fought the bats. It was no easy task. He had remembered when he had fought them during his own ascension. If they didn't prevent the bats from merging, the fight would become nearly impossible.

His two companions had left to retrieve an artifact, to see what he could do to prevent Drake from destroying the dimension. The Dimension Master knew that there were two sides to the prophecy. He didn't know which side Drake would follow. He feared that his heir would destroy what they had been fighting for so long and hard to protect.

He hoped that the artifact could tell him how to keep his heir going on the right path; the path that led to saving the dimension.

Drake would be the last dimension master, his friends the last cohort. If he passed the trials, which there were seven of, he would become immortal, something that no other dimension master had ever achieved. They all had passed the trial, but they just never became immortal. Only the beast master would become immortal.

He knew the boy's heart. He was a good person with a gentle soul. However, many things can change people. One of those things is the hardship of what he is going through now. He was afraid that if what Drake was going through kept up, he would hate the dimension so thoroughly that he would rather destroy it than keep it safe. If Drake were the one in the prophecy, he was the last dimension master who would have a legion of beasts that he would use to either destroy or save the dimension.

Pulling him out of his worries, his eyes widened as he witnessed what was happening on the screen.

Chapter 43: 43: Broken Bridge Pt 3

Lightning flashed around the merging bats. The crackling faded in both the sword and the massive, condensing cloud. Mike's attack had taken out nearly one quarter of the giant bats. With no more energy or lightning to use, Mike was out of the fight.

Chad's arrows grow thinner; His energy was waning rapidly. He was nearly out of the fight as well. They were running out of juice to fight, and by the looks of the merging bats, the fight had just begun.

"Come," Drake commanded his familiar. His eyes never wavered from the merging bats.

Renn immediately moved forward, positioning herself only inches away.

He placed one hand on her head, letting his eyes glow brightly. Their minds merged. He was trying to figure out why Renn had imprinted. With their energy evaporating like water, they were as good as dead.

An image formed. He understood.

Replacing his bow on his back and coiling the whip on his wrist, he stepped forward. Chad, stop firing. Back away.

Chad looked confused but listened.

"Mike...Chad, hide in the trees. Regain your energy. You can't fight without it. I still have some left. Just in case, remember we still have one life token left."

When Mike and Chad realized that Drake was going to face the beast on his own, they began to panic. "No, Drake, that's suicide!" Mike choked out.

Drake looked down at Renn. When looking in her mind, he discovered that beasts didn't fight each other unless they needed food. The funny thing was, they didn't need food very often. When they did, they preferred to hunt ordinary animals, instead of beasts. He also discovered why the beast had chosen to come to him without aggression.

"Stay in the trees. Don't come out!" He called, watching the beast form itself into one giant bat.

The loud screeching had stopped as the beast finalized its final form.

Drake stood tall, walking several feet forward before stopping. He forced his glowing eyes to shine brighter, creating a nearly blinding green light. Renn followed, staying close to his side.

The large bat landed in front of him, its sharp fangs dripping with blood like saliva as it looked down at Renn and Drake. Drake's hand was resting on Renn's large form as he looked up at the towering bat.

In the trees, Mike and Chad could only see the glowing green light. The bright glow consumed the two figures. Only the top of the bat could be seen as it glared down at their friend.

Drake maintained his stance, trying to appear calm. "I think you need a name," Drake pondered aloud. "Do you want me to give you a name?"

The beast blinked in confusion, his large ears twitching. It appeared to be listening. "You protect the bridge, don't you?" Drake asked calmly, trying to sound soothing.

The beast screeched softly.

"I will call you Protector," he stated, his eyes not wavering from the beast. "Do you like that name?"

The beast screeched softly, bowing its massive head slightly.

"Then you are named Protector, the protector of the bridge." Drake smiled softly. He was still trying to be soothing. It wasn't something he was used to. "You will decide who crosses the bridge and who does not."

The massive bat screeched again, its ears twitching. It appeared pleased, but he couldn't be sure. He had to rely on Renn's behavior. If she sensed something terrible, her change in behavior would warn him.

The beast stayed where it was, so Drake continued. "I wish to cross your bridge. Will you allow me and my cohort to pass?" he asked. "There are four of us. That does include Renn here," he said, stroking her thick fur.

The beast's massive eyes widened as it looked down at Renn. It made a soft screeching sound, then lowered itself to the ground, resting on all fours. The bat pressed its chin to the ground. Drake slowly reached out and stroked the bat's giant head.

{The Level 3 Beast, Protector, wishes to become your ally. Do you accept?}

{Yes or No}

Drake mentally answered 'yes.'

{You have gained a new ally. Protector, Guardian of Broken Bridge}

{Your cohort grows stronger. As an ally, your cohort will benefit from the conquest of 'Protector'}

Drake continued to stroke the beast's head. The red in its eyes slowly changed, turning green. The same color as Renn's.

Drake allowed his eyes to dim. They still glowed but faintly. It was enough for anyone looking at him to see the glow in his eyes. He was relieved that his plan worked. He wasn't sure if it would. The bat beast was different. It was a massive gamble to do what had just been done.

The beast stood tall again, then walked to the bridge, stopping briefly, waiting for Drake to follow. Drake motioned for his friends to come out of the trees. They did, but slowly, which gave him some measure of relief. He wasn't sure what the beast would do if someone suddenly showed up out of the forest.

Protector cocked its massive head, watching the boys approach.

"That's my cohort," Drake told Protector.

Protector blinked its large eyes and then continued to the bridge. When it arrived, it placed one of its winged limbs on the skeleton of the bridge.

The boys watched in disbelief as the bridge began to prepare itself. It was like a slow-motion movie, every board, every bolt, every rope, floating up and going back into its place where it all belonged.

As the last piece went into place, Protector gave a soft screech. Drake turned and looked up. The bat bowed, then motioned for them to proceed.

Drake moved first, leading the group. Renn followed behind him. Mike and Chad rushed to keep up as they made their way to the opposite side of the ravine.

On the other side, Drake waved, then bowed, thanking Protector, before turning and continuing on their journey.

Behind them, Protector touched the bridge again, reversing back to its broken, damaged state.

The Dimension Master watched in disbelief as Drake stood toe to toe with the bat beast. He didn't flinch or show any fear. He stood tall with confidence. His wolf beast stood beside him as Drake rested his hand on its black fur.

If that wasn't enough, he spoke to the beast, giving it a name and title. Protector, the Broken Bridge Guardian. Unbeknownst to Drake, giving the beast a title gave it power to control every aspect of the bridge. It had never done that before.

Normally, it was up to the storm-wielder to find the way to get across the bridge. In this case, it was Mike. Lightning was the beast's weakness. It always tried to prevent others from crossing to the other side. You had to defeat it to use the beam to cross the ravine. It was the lightning attribute that opened the hidden beam, which, after the beam extended, provided a way to cross the bridge. Lightning was essentially the key to operating it.

Drake had bypassed that altogether. After he completes the quest, he wouldn't have to worry about crossing the bridge; he could use the staff instead. It appeared it didn't matter anymore. The bridge was essentially his.

Drake led his friends away from the bridge. He finally allowed himself to breathe. He had stood in front of the most terrifying beasts he had ever encountered. He was nearly paralyzed from fear.

He knew that his friends were out of energy. They would die if they tried to keep going. He had kept an eye on Renn, and that's what gave him the idea. He figured that if Renn was his familiar, he might be able to see his memories. It was like instinct, not knowing how he even came up with the idea.

When he understood what the beast was looking for, he attempted to give the bat beast the same. IT worked far better than he had imagined.

Once they were far enough away from the beast, Mike stated, disbelief still in his features. "How did you do that?"

Drake kept walking; they had a clearing to go to. "I'm not sure," he answered. "I used information I got from obtaining Renn as my familiar and attempted something similar with it. I knew you two were out of energy. We would have all died if we continued fighting, so I figured if we're going to die anyway, I had nothing to lose."

"And you called me insane," Mike mumbled.

They all laughed.

"Now that we're on the correct side of the ravine, we can get this quest finished. We need to rest up, though. We all used a lot of energy in that fight. Hopefully, we won't have any issues getting to the clearing. It's not far from here. I know it's early, but I'd rather get some rest and be at full strength while we travel, than try to continue and get into another fight that we're too weak to fight at the moment." He paused. "We're in level 3 beast territory, so the beasts in this area will be tough if we have to fight any."

Chapter 44: 44: Emotional Storm

The trio walked into the small clearing. Like all the others, it was surrounded by thick trees. The clearing was a blanket of thick grass with wildflowers sprinkled on it like confetti. There was nothing else. No bushes or trees, just thick grass and wildflowers.

The light breeze brushed through the clearing, gently swaying the grass. The smell of the wildflowers wafted through the air, producing a sweet scent. The mid-afternoon heat of the twin suns bathed the field in a gentle warmth.

Drake sighed as he looked around the small clearing. "If I didn't know that this place is so dangerous, I would have thought it was magical. Then again, magic itself is truly terrifying."

Mike chuckled, the sound echoing through the clearing. "And you are terrifying yourself when you use it. At least we can attempt to protect ourselves."

Chad scanned the area for beasts. He didn't have Drake's magical vision, so he had to rely on what the ordinary eye could see. He didn't see anything. There was no sound other than the light breeze whistling softly through the trees. Thinking of beasts, he turned to Drake. "Are we done fighting beasts? Are you going to be taming or talking to the rest of the ones we find?"

"That depends on the beast. If they attack us first, we fight."

Drake looked around for the perfect spot. When he found what he was looking for, he quickly placed the cabin so they could enter. Renn chose to stay on the porch, to keep watch while Drake, Chad, and Mike entered.

After filling the bucket for Renn, Drake started the fire and began cooking their dinner. "We need to find a way to refill the water. With Renn, we're using too much. I can't leave her without water."

"I think we can get to Dragon Head Mounting in a day and a half if we don't have any issues. I think the bridge is the halfway point. At least it looks like it on the map," Chad said as he studied the dimension map.

Mike stretched over toward the map, looking where Chad was. It looked like it to him, too. He nodded, agreeing with his friend.

Drake was quiet as he cooked the stew for his friends. After nearly twenty minutes, his friends noticed that something might be bothering him.

"Is there something wrong, Drake?" It was Mike who asked. His question prompted Chad to look up from the map. He was busy watching the little dots indicating beasts move around the map.

Drake slowly pulled the pot off the fire and placed it on the table. After sitting down, he looked between his two friends. "I have a dilemma and I don't know what to do about it."

Chad reached over and started filling the bowls. "What kind of a dilemma?"

Drake sucked in a long breath. "It's Renn. Once the quest is complete, what do I do about her? I can't take her back with us, and I want to keep her. I like her."

As if the thought angered the dimension, the wind started to blow violently. A loud crashing sound boomed through the sky as the clouds collided. Lightning flashed, then the rain fell.

Drake immediately got up and opened the front door of the cabin. "Want to come in out of the rain, Renn?" he asked his wolf beast familiar. She padded through the door, having to squeeze through. Her size was too large.

Drake went out and got her bucket, bringing it inside before shutting the door. The storm blazed through the clearing. Rain pounded on the roof, thick drops slamming violently, threatening to crash through.

Thunder rolled through the sky as lightning flashed.

"I don't get it," Chad started. "A little bit ago, the sky was clear, the breeze was gentle. There was no sign whatsoever that a storm was coming. Now, all of a sudden, we're in the middle of what sounds like a hurricane."

Drake stood up and allowed his eyes to glow brightly. They glowed a bright emerald green. He stepped outside and looked around the small clearing. The clearing was clear of beasts. There was no sign of anything amiss. He looked up at the sky, but found nothing strange there either. Shrugging, he reentered the cabin. "I don't see anything strange."

Not thinking anymore about it, the trio continued their meal.

The Dimension Master watched the boys as they finished their meal. The violent storm worried him. There was only one reason and one reason only why there would be a

storm. He needed his friends to return with the artifact. He needed to prevent Drake from destroying the dimension.

Just as he had that thought, the blond man walked into the room with his muscular friend behind him. The archer was holding a small device. It looked like a crystal ball; only it was made from a liquid metal that maintained a spherical form. When touched, it dented and bounced back like gelatin.

He handed the spherical object to the dimension master and sat in his normal chair in front of the computer monitor. The other man sat in his own chair, watching the screen. The boys were still eating their meal.

The newcomers' faces paled, drained of all color at the sight of the violent storm.

"What happened?" The blond archer asked. "What's with the storm. The storm is bad this time. It's even worse than the last one."

The dimension master looked between his two friends. "I don't know. Nothing happened. The storm came out of nowhere. Drake was cooking the stew while Chad and Mike were studying the dimension map."

"Could something that Drake was thinking about start a storm like that?" The muscular man asked as he stared at the scene before him. He saw nothing that would prompt a storm of that severity.

The dimension master thought about it. His green eyes were glowing brightly as he thought. "Drake was silent long enough for the others to notice. Mike asked if there was something wrong. Drake had said he had a dilemma he couldn't figure out how to fix. Chad asked what the dilemma was. Drake had explained that he needed to figure out what to do about his beast, Renn. He stated that when they completed the quest, he didn't know what to do about her because he couldn't bring her back here. He wants to keep her," he summarized.

Sighing, the dimension master set the sphere in front of him. Glowing green runes left his palm and entered the sphere. The liquid ball reshaped and formed. When it was completed, A metallic version of Drake surrounded by beasts appeared. His two friends stood beside him.

More glowing runes appeared in the dimension master's palm, then entered the sphere. The metallic forms seemed to rewind, as if a three-dimensional movie was going backwards in time. When it stopped, it was a scene of a battle in Draco Town. The form of Nelly, a bit older, had been killed by the gargoyle king.

"We have two options that I can think of. We either kill the gargoyle king or do everything we can to keep Nelly alive. This scene is the turning point where Drake

changes and chooses to destroy the dimension. What can we do to stop it without interfering with the quest?" The dimension master stated.

The muscular man stared at the metallic scene. "Is this after the quest is complete or before?"

"The artifact can't show that. By the age of Nelly, I would say yes. Due to the difficulties they are facing, they may take much longer than normal. He may choose to destroy the dimension before the quest is complete."

The blond spoke next, his tone subdued. He worried about the boys. Mainly, the young archer who was his own heir. "Are there others that can complete the quest if the boys fail?"

The dimension master looked at his friend. "Yes. The dimension will pull three boys into the dimension and force them to complete the quest. Drake, Mike, and Chad can receive a little bit of help from us because they are our heirs. Those chosen by the dimension to start a new line won't." Then he paused. "Our priority is to the dimension, even if it is eliminating our own heirs. Is that what you're thinking?"

"I don't want it to come to that. I know the laws of the dimension; we may be forced to kill them. Yes, that is what I was thinking."

The muscular man stood up, his own face solemn. "Then I suggest we find a way to intervene without breaking the rules of the dimension. I don't want anything to happen to the boys. I want to protect them."

The dimension rippled in apprehension. The time of the prophecy had begun; its own existence hung in the balance. It was a balance between existing, nurturing the lives that lived within, or vanishing in the winds of time.

Chapter 45: 45: A Familiar's Vision

Mike washed the bowls after their meal. Renn was lying comfortably on the floor in front of the door while Chad and Drake sat at the table, pondering their next move to complete the quest.

The storm was still raging outside. Thunder rolled across the sky as lightning flashed. The rain pounded the roof as if trying to destroy it. The wind howled through the trees. There was a distant sound of cracking wood as the wind tore trees out of the ground or split them in two. Creaking followed as the torn branches fell to the wet ground. Then the crash as they hit the ground in a tangle of mangled branches.

Renn suddenly whined, distracting Drake from the map. Getting up from his seat, he went to Renn, setting his hand on her large head. "Show me what's wrong, girl," he told her gently.

Images flooded through his mind in torrents of blood and decay. In her mind were scenes of destruction and death. Three men faced him, with their weapons in their hands.

****Renn's Vision****

Drake stood in the center of a clearing. On the ground around him were his friends, Chad and Mike. Renn was there too. There were hundreds of beasts surrounding him. They had all been killed. Limbs severed, bodies burned. There were rivers of blood flowing around him in the dirt.

Drake wondered why the beasts didn't turn into light particles. It's what happened when the beast died. These beasts did not, however. Was it the vision making a point, or was it real?

As Drake's gaze swept around him, he realized he was surrounded by three men with their bloodied weapons aimed at him.

Drake looked at the three men. One of them was wearing the robes of the dimension master. He recognized him immediately. This was the first time he had ever seen hatred in his eyes. There was so much killing intent that it nearly brought him to his knees.

Beside him were two men. One with blond hair and a bow in his hand pointed directly at him. He knew this man as well. He looked exactly like his friend. His heart hurt as he saw the same bow his friend used, pointed at him. He looked at his friend, the one this man resembled. Chad had been slain. There was a hole through his chest. He turned back to the man. The killing intent coming from him was just as strong as the others.

The second man had a sword, glowing brightly with currents of lightning passing up and down the blade. The crackle of electricity was pointed at him. He knew this man as well. He turned to his friend Mike. He had been slain also. His charred body lay still.

As he looked at his friends, slain and bloody, he looked at the three men. "Why did you kill them. Why!" he yelled.

"Dad? Why, why did you kill them?" Drake asked in confusion as he stared at his father. Beside his father were Mike's and Chad's fathers. All three of them had faces like stone. Their eyes were hard. Their killing intent washed past him, making it hard to stand. He didn't understand what was going on.

Through the memories of himself in the vision, they had just shone up with no reason whatsoever and started killing his beasts, his friends, and now they were going to kill him. He could feel it. They were going to kill him, and he didn't know why.

Slowly, the men fanned out, ensuring he couldn't escape. Their eyes narrowed, glaring at him.

Without saying a word, his father cracked his whip toward him. The ethereal whip slashed first, its metallic counterpart followed, cutting at his limbs. He fell to the ground in pain. Looking down at himself, he was missing one of his legs. His own father injured him. He wouldn't fight back. If his friends were gone, it was because he existed. He didn't need to exist either.

He at least wanted to know why. Why did they kill their own sons? "Why?" Drake cried, unable to contain his sobs. He hadn't sobbed since he was six. He had always been close to his father. He wondered why this was happening. What had he done for his own father to attack him with such violence?

His father didn't say a word as he cracked his whip again. He didn't bother filling it with energy. The whip flew through the air, slicing his neck. The scenery around him went dark as his head fell to the ground.

Drake bent down and hugged his beast. "I won't let that happen...I won't," he promised.

Drake turned to his friends. His face was pale. The vision had shocked him. He no longer wanted to go home. If he went back, it wouldn't be to his childhood home. He swallowed hard before speaking. "I know who the dimension master is. I know who you are heirs to," he said stiffly.

This got Chad and Mike's attention. They looked up from what they were doing and stared, waiting for Drake to tell them. Drake stalled for a moment, then went to the front door. Flinging it wide open, he went outside into the rain. He fell to his knees sobbing uncontrollably, then puked his guts out. He couldn't bring himself to stop.

The vision was devastating. He couldn't handle it anymore. As he continued to sob, Renn squeezed herself out of the door and wrapped her large body around him, trying to comfort him. He wouldn't be comforted. The vision, he couldn't handle it. His fear rose. It rose for his friends. It rose for his familiar. It even rose for the hundreds of beasts that had clearly been part of him.

"The dimension master is my father, and you are the heirs of your own fathers," Drake sobbed.

"But that's good, isn't it?" Chad asked. Not sure why it would affect his friend like that.

Mike bent down, looking Drake in the eyes. "Why is that bad. It's good, isn't it?"

Drake shook his head. "They are going to kill us. Not just us, but everyone."

Drake's father looked at the screen. He was watching the scene unfolding in front of him. The boys were huddled on the porch. Drake was sobbing uncontrollably as his friends and beast tried to comfort him.

Chad's and Mike's fathers were standing behind him, watching as well. They heard everything Drake said. Their faces were pale.

"Why would we kill them along with everyone else. I don't get it." Drake's father asked. His green eyes shone. He was confused.

Chad's father folded his arms. "Which clearing are they staying in?" he asked.

"It's the first clearing on the left side of the road after the broken bridge. Why?" he asked. His green eyes were dimming. He was feeling sick about what he had just heard from Drake.

"Remember when we did our ascension, there was that one clearing by Chadwick. I thought maybe they ended up there. That clearing has that enchantment on it to make you paranoid. I wonder if that one does that as well."

"I don't think it has an enchantment on it." Mike's dad stated. "Is there a way for us to find out for sure?"

The dimension master stood up and paced. "Could the gargoyle king be planting visions in his beast's mind? Drake was touching the beast before he went outside. I think his beast showed him something. Gargoyles can plant visions in beasts; it might be from him. I know Drake is linked to the beast, which means he can see in its mind."

Chad's father stood back against the wall. His face was going pale. He was already pale, but it only grew whiter. In a shaky voice, he looked at his two friends. "What if the vision was real?"

Drake was pulled back in by his friends. Renn squeezed her large body through the door, following. Chad quickly went to the hearth, adding wood to the fire. It was getting cold from the storm. He was afraid it would turn to snow.

He wasn't even sure if it snowed in the dimension they were in, but it was getting cold enough to do so.

When he was done adding wood to the fire, he remembered the water. The paralyzing fear. He wondered if this clearing was doing something like that.

Chad bent down, close enough for Drake to hear. It was a low whisper; even their fathers couldn't hear. "Drake, it's not true. Like the clearing of illusion, it's not true. This could be an enchanted storm aimed at you. All I know is that our fathers would never do that. Never... don't believe it. I don't."

Drake looked over at Chad. His eyes were red from crying. His voice was low as he hugged his friend for his words of wisdom. "Thank you. Thank you for reminding me. It's not true. I don't believe it; they would never do that... It was just another attack." He whispered.