

The Dam

Hours later the world around them seemed to get darker and darker. Flashes of lightning flew across the sky illuminating the dead world all around them. They hadn't seen any more of the Meta Humans since their last encounter, but Arueshu knew they couldn't be too far behind. Vana sat with her hands fidgeting over her satchel and her eyes wandering around surveying their surroundings. Arueshu knew that their encounter with the Meta Humans had left her shocked, but then again she knew this was to be expected on their doomed mission.

As hours passed more and more of the desolate land passed all around them. Arueshu knew they were not far from reaching the cursed city that hosted the evil that caused all this sorrow. The road had led them high atop the mountain range just south of the city, and not far ahead from their location lay the historic Hoveran Dam. A landmark of their people's technologic advancements. As Arueshu looked to Vana once more he could see the fear and unease in her eyes. "Would you like to see something?" Arueshu asked her. Vana turned to look at him confused. "What?" she asked. "A simple yes would suffice," he responded mockingly. Vana eyed him with confusion but nodded her head.

As the remnants of the old road continued to wind around the edge of the mountain tops Arueshu took a detour along a dirt path leading into the mountain range. Brush covered all sides of the road making it even darker than before. As the road grew ever rougher Vana looked around more and more nervously. "Where are you taking us?" she asked. Smiling Arueshu replied, "Don't worry you'll see when we get there."

The bumps on the dirt road made the trip uncomfortable for them. Especially since their vehicle wasn't designed for such roads, but they pushed forward for nearly an hour. "Where are we going?" Vana asked once again. Arueshu saw the road ahead of them coming to a clearing, "Look," he said pointing forward. As they came out of the brush the dim light of the moon illuminated what lay before them. Carved between two mountains made of solid rock stood the fabled Hoveran Dam. Its structure stood nearly intact despite the cracks and damages caused by time. Near its top southern corner a large part had crumbled away and a water fall spilled down its side, yet the remainder of the structure remained in place standing proudly as a symbol of their peoples power. A power that had long since faded.

Arueshu turned to look at his companion and was pleased to see her fear vanished from her eyes. Admiration and disbelief now covered every edge of her face as she looked upon the wondrous sight. "The Hoveran Dam," she nearly whispered to herself clutching her satchel tightly. Arueushu guided their vehicle down the path carefully making their way towards the damn. "A brief stop will help," he thought to himself. "I havent heard any sound of the meta humans for a good while."

They found themselves on the southern side of the mountain and the damn would be their bridge across. "Just need to get over that waterfall," Arueshu thought looking around for anything they could use to cross. Vana continued looking around in disbelief. "I had hear stories of this place," she said. "But I thought it had crumbled away long ago." Arueshu looked around and remembered all of this from the last time he had come. At the time it had been he and the final fifteen knights who had taken the journey

to destroy the evil responsible for all of this. He also remembered the journey back when only he and two others returned. "Its still here," he said solemnly.

As they drew nearer and nearer to the damn it sheer size and magnitude became evident as Arueshu lead their vehicle to the edge of the mountain side where the dam was broken off and the waterfall showered down. Nearly three hundred feet down the river flowed quietly, almost invisible in the low light the thin line of water made its way west through the canyon. Arueshu brought their vehicle to a halt at the edge of the mountain. It was a twenty or so foot drop to the rushing waters below, and about thirty feet across to reach the damn that remained intact. As Vana analyzed the path before them she realized there was no way to get across the waterfall to the dam that served as a bridge between the mountains. "What now?" she asked, looking to Arueshu confused. He smiled knowing she was about to see something only the Jadai Knights where allowed to witness. Reaching towards the vehicles door handle he said, "Walk with me." Vana's eyes widened in disbelief. "Are you joking?" Arueshu didn't reply he only smiled and exited the vehicle. He rubbed the soreness from his stiff legs as he stretched them for the first time in days. The air blew softly and smelled stale with a hint of sulfur floating around them.

He looked back and saw that Vana remained inside the vehicle. With his hand he gestured for her to join him, but she remained inside too scared to oblige. After several minutes she at last exited the vehicle and joined Arueshu on the mountain side looking down into the abyss. He took her hand and pulled her closer to the edge of the mountain. Arueshu could see the nervousness in her eyes even as a small smile crossed her lips. "What are we doing?" she asked chuckling. Arueshu let go of her hand

and held his index finger to his lips to silence her. For several moments there was only the sound of the steady breeze and the rushing water. It was almost peaceful. Almost beautiful. He reached into the side pocket in his utility belt and withdrew a thin chrome tube. Gliding his fingers across the smooth surface he felt a small indent on one of the ends. With just a click the tube ignited into a hologram projecting his ocarina instrument. As her eyes widened with surprise Vana said, "I didn't know you played." Then looking towards the gap between them and the dam a look of confusion grew upon her face.

Without another word Arueshu cleared his throat, pressed the pipe of the ocarina to his lips, and began to play. The sweet sound of the melody echoed all around them instantly bouncing off the walls of the canyon below and returning to them with more force than before. Vana listened intently and realized she recognized the melody Arueshu was playing. Soft and yet with a hint of strength the music came from the Rayvers of the Takno clan. The people of the storm as they called them selves. As Arueshu continued playing the melody Vana found herself beginning to sing along almost without thinking.

Lightning in the stars,

A beautiful sight, a beautiful sight,

Rains come pouring down,

The rivers run high, the rivers run high,

Fill the trees, wet the breeze, make the living sing with joy,

Though too much of your touch, and the Earth could finish soon,

I want to go, I want to go,

yeah, yeah, yeah,

yeah, yeah , yeah,

Go with the storm, go with the storm

yeah, yeah, yeah

yeah, yeah, yeah

I cannot reach where I must go,

Lend me your aid oh mighty storm

Is it a yes or is it no?

Ahwoo!

Suddenly a loud grumbling noise filled the air and made Vana snap out of the trance the music had put her in. She looked around terrified expecting to see Meta Humans attacking them, and walked closer to Arueshu who did not even seem to have noticed the sound. Instead he only pointed with his eyes towards the waterfall and continued to play the melody. Beneath them the rushing waterfall had come to a complete standstill. Every drop of water stood as if frozen; floating in mid air. “Whats happening?” she asked astonished, but Arueshu simply continued to play his ocarina. The water behind the dam continued to rush forward towards the opening, but stopped the moment it was about to plunge down to the abyss below. As more and more water flowed forward more and more of it stopped in place. Quickly the level began to rise and rise until before long it was level to the mountain and the dam. Only then did Arueshu’s melody stop. Vana stood in shock looking at the water and not believing what she was seeing. Arueshu walked forward and placed his hand on her shoulder, “We must hurry,” he said leading her back to their vehicle.

“How did you...” she tried to ask. “Questions after,” Arueshu interrupted. He rushed her forward and they each climbed back inside the vehicle. “What are you doing?” Vana asked, still confused with what she was seeing. Arueshu ignored the question once again and started the engine. He moved them forward towards the enchanted water. “Arueshu!” Vana screamed knowing the vehicle would fall into the darkness below, but instead a sudden thud from the wheels caught her attention. Looking out the window she looked down and could not believe her eyes. Their vehicle was moving across the water as if it were on concrete.

Arueshu smiled seeing the reaction on Vana’s face at what was happening. She turned to face him with her jaw dropped, clutching her seat as if afraid they would still fall straight down into the water. “Trust me,” he said smugly, as his grin grew wider. After a few more seconds there was a another thud from the tires as they reached the dam itself. “Stop!” Vana shouted reaching for the door handle and almost leaping out. Arueshu stepped on the breaks immediately causing everything inside the vehicle to fly forward. Vana opened the door and ran back wanting to see how any of what just happened was possible. She stared at the water and reached down to touch it with her finger. “Stiff,” she said to herself. “Like rock.” She turned around and watched as Arueshu exited the vehicle with a smile on his face. “How is this possible” she nearly shouted, desperately wanting to know the truth. Arueshu walked forward towards the rear of their vehicle still smiling and looking at her as if she where a child. As he opened his mouth to answer his eyes looked behind her towards the edge of the mountain where they had just stood. His smile vanished in an instant and he reach down to his utility belt. “Vana,” he said reaching towards her with his left hand while pulling the

silver, footlong rod that was his weapon from his utility belt with his right. Immediately he said her name again, “Vana, get back in the vehicle now!”

From behind her a nightmarish roar erupted and filled the sky around them. A roar she remembered all too well. Vana rushed forward and took Arueshu’s hand. On the edge of the mountain four Meta Humans stood eyeing them with hate. Arueshu pulled her in closer to him and covered her mouth the moment he saw she was going to scream. All four monsters shot forwards towards them at inhuman speeds roaring with all their might. Vana tried to run away but Arueshu held her tightly in place, “Wait,” he said never taking his eyes off of the incoming monsters.

The four creatures ran across the water and were nearly half way to reaching the dam. Suddenly the one in the center of the group fell through the water and disappeared below. The other three continued forward as if they hadn't even noticed their companion had vanished. Seconds later a loud groan sounded beneath their feet, and Arueshu recognized the familiar sound that once more filled the air. Running water. With another loud groan the enchanted water collapsed and spilled down the side of the mountain all at once. The three Meta Humans sank into the waves and plummeted into the darkness. Vana cheered as she watched the creatures fade into the black and looked back to Arueshu with excitement and relief, but Arueshu was not smiling. He leaned against their vehicle panting as if exhausted.

“What is it?” Vana asked, rushing to help him. Panting, Arueshu raised his hand to signal that he was fine. “That wasn’t easy you know,” he stated putting the silver rod back into place on the side of his utility belt. “The water?” Vana asked, still confused by everything. Arueshu nodded and took deep breaths. “It takes its toll using those kind of

powers,” he said. “It was a lot of weight.” Vana looked at her companion with concern and then to the place where the water had been. Now just a hole on the side of the dam, and the water flowing like normal far below. It was as if it had never happened. “How?” she asked, looking back to Arueshu as he straightened himself up. Smiling he replied, “Secrets of the Jadai,” and walked back towards his door of the vehicle. Vana protested but Arueshu would not reveal anymore. “Come we’re almost there,” he said, and entered the vehicle once more.

Reluctantly Vana walked around to her door and entered the vehicle as well. “Before this is all over I’m going to know how you did that,” she stated. Arueshu laughed mockingly and stated, looking at her with challenging eyes, “A lot would happen before I shared those kinds of things with you.” He moved the vehicle forward and soon after they heard the thud of the wheels reaching the opposite mountain side.