To anyone popping in at the last minute, Karthmin here: The last high-level edits have been made. Meaning that from here on out, we're scanning for typos, grammar and spelling errors, and practical fixes like that.

Any small additions, phrases, word changes you have ideas for are fine. Just no big-picture changes XD

SeekJustice: Well...I seem to be the first here.

Karthmin: *wakes up* Yeah, it appears so.

Kelly: So; dream sequence…
I have some epically weird dreams we could based this off of, if you want to hear some of them. My dreams tend to be especially vivid and usually coherent in story (even if, you know, they're wacky).
Also; I would LOVE to explore the concept of interconnected dreams.

PrincessFoo: I don't really like dreams in stories. ;P There is the "but it turns out it was all a dream" part, and also when I read them, I just want to get back to the action of being awake. There has to be a purpose of the dream.
Maybe, going off of the interconnected dream idea, MC is part of a worldwide organization that communicates through dreams, and they are discussing end-of-the-world stuff and things, but then you also have weird dream jelly chickens running through scenes and they have to face other stuff that comes up in dreams.

E. Grace: So, are you guys thinking we should go with a comedy, or something deep and meaningful—kinda like a vision? I don't know about you guys, but I kinda like the concept of having a dream within a dream, so it's almost so twisted you can't tell what's reality. I think that could be a fun story idea. What do y'all think?
Also, if anyone wants to share some of the dreams they've had, that could be fun! I know I've had some pretty deep and meaningful dreams myself... and yet they generally end up being super absurd at the same time. xD I actually just wrote a short story based on one...

Catwing: Well, our guild seems to like writing comedy (the last two stories though one of the prompts was comedy… *shrug*). I found a dream I had written up telling someone about my dream... I had figured out that when you can change your dreams that's lucid dreaming(in the intro thing…). So I'll just paste that here and if we want to use it we can. Maybe tweak it a bit.

"I found out a while ago that I can lucid dream. Which sometimes means I turn back time when something doesn't go quite right (once I hid under a table and changed which side the table hung so I wasn't spotted, then when the villain came around and was going to get my friend [who had turned into a cat, to hid with the imprisoned cats] Jumping out I grabbed a knife. I decided it was going to get too bloody so rewind. This time I grabbed a tennis racket. Which

wouldn't do much good, so rewind. Finally a frying pan which I used to whack him over the head. Then me and my friend [now human] jumped into a car that was attached to the wagon with the cats in crates. I had to stall the villain, while my friend started the car. Then we drove up the ramp pointed at the ceiling, then my brain skipped ahead to the news report. XP

"Last night someone drove a car out of a secret underground lair in [rich person's] lawn. The car was found in the front containing the missing cats and baby [the rich person's baby was missing. He was with the cats.]. The [villain] was discovered trying get the car back. No one knows who the rescuers were. But the [rich people] are indebted to them." -Reporter

And then me and my friend, who could turn into a cat, ate cookies while watching in the crowd as the police cuffed the villains and an investigator looked at the giant hole we had made. The rich parents crying and hugging their baby and cats. It was the best lucid dream I think I have ever had. And that's just the ending. ;D"

And that is part of one of my dreams. If you want me to I can tell the first part too. Just an idea tossing around here.

LadyFrosttongue: ooh, lucid dreaming sounds like fun. I like the dream idea a lot. I have no experience whatsoever in writing comedies, though. Not sure if I could help there.

I like to do crazy dream sequences. Things that would never happen. Like the dream I had last night about touring Prince's house…

I like your idea, Catwing!

Hope: What if the dream kinda interacted with the real world. Lucid dreaming, in a way with the person conscious. But however the dream ends up effects (or is it affects?) how events play out in the real world. Kind of like… it was Waking Beauty who could do that, I think. Or we could bring more than one person into the same dream, kinda like Inception, which is kinda lucid dreaming but on a whole new level. I also think comedy would be *coughs* fun. Though comedy that ends with a touch of sadness or seriousness is cool too because of the contrast.

MLBolanger: Keeping with both the lucid dream *and* the comedy - what if the dreamer changes something in their lucid dream not realizing the change affects something in the real world in a hilarious way? Say - they dream they are showering off poolside after a swim and decide they would rather be at a beach. Their significant other/sibling/parent is in the ACTUAL shower and the floor turns to sand....The water running in the bathroom next door might trigger the initial dream each morning and each day something strange happens to the person in the bathroom? Or another senario...maybe at an office with the coffee pot in the next room while the secretary falls asleep at her desk, suddenly a handsome/pretty barista replaces the coffee station. An old fashioned scribe replaces the noisy copier...and the list could go on. =)

PrincessFoo: Or someone in someone else's dream, while doing a bunch of the things that was can only happen in dreams, something like

"Don't you remember having a conversation about this earlier?" X said. "It was in a coffee shop, and we were sitting at a table and..." X continues to describe coffee shop.

The coffee shop slowly replaces the forested surroundings. MC found themselves sitting down, coffee cup in their hand.
“Remember?” X said.
“No.” MC said. “We never had a conversation in a coffee shop.”
Or
A headless chicken that could shoot fire out of it’s non-existent mouth! At least there was only one. No, no, don’t think about an army of chickens! They’ll show up—too late. Headless fire breathing chickens poured through the windows to join the fight. MC tightened his grip on his word. An army of chickens. Great.

Hope Ann: So… pulling together everything into a kinda outline for our story, then your guys can tweak it or assign someone to write it or something -- I’ve not done this before. :P So I’m not sure what you normally do. But here’s my proposed ‘outline’.

An apprentice is lucid dreaming in his mentor’s dream. It’s his final test he has to pass before he becomes a dreamtwister. And he has to do it in such a way that his mentor won’t wake up because it seems too realistic (he’s a dreamtwister too, of course)... so throwing in weird things. But he has to defeat his mentor’s subconscious, probably through three ‘trials’ such as getting out of a trap/cell; traveling through a forest or something; then getting some sort of trophy like a cup, which wakes him back up. He’s passed and the head of the division gives him some sort of medallion and then his mentor wakes up muttering about a strange dream and the apprentice just holds up the medallion or give some sort of comment about how it is strange indeed.

Alternatively, it could be an apprentice who isn’t ready and is trying it on his own, and his mentor stops him (after helping him and teaching him until the very end) with the comment of ‘even in my sleep I can still beat you’.

Karthmin: It seems that you’ve hit on the most coherent plot-line so far, Hope. I think we’ll go with it, and if you’re down to start writing it, go right ahead! We will all pitch in to help edit and make finishing touches. If it’s not too much of a rush job, it would be cool to have three days to work on finishing it up. If that’s not going to work, I understand. Two days will work as well. I’m going to ask Daeus what the solid deadline is. I heard 17th floating around, but I’m not 100% sure.

Sage: Yeah, that idea sounds pretty interesting! What if the apprentice didn’t *know* it was a test, or that he was even dreaming… He thinks it’s real for a time, but eventually figures out that it’s actually a dream, and is released from it... Which was the real test all along, set up by the mentor in order to prove his worthiness to become a dreamtwister. ???

Kelly: Oooh I like it.

Usually, we have a community document for brainstorming, then another community doc for writing the story (so whomever wants to or has time can write in the story.)

So, per Martin's suggestion I'm pasting the story below. And now we all work on it/correct it/tear it to pieces. XD The ending esp. It's not… bad? But I feel it could be better.

+++

Karth awoke inside a dream, strung ten feet in the air from a web of shredded rathroot. It smelled just like the hot brew that Naim concocted each morning. Karth tore off a long shred. Bitter, it was supposed to keep one alert.

This was in keeping with the First Rule he had made up during training: *Keep alert. Also, eat something if you can; because food, obviously.*

The official Step One of Dreambreaking: *figure out where you are*, wasn't too bad either. Just not the *first* thing one should do.

The most important rule was to keep track of time. Dreams were short things, considering how much was required of one. Karth checked the blinking numbers at his wrist and stuck the bit of rathroot in his mouth. He promptly spit it back out.

Shattered clouds above, what kind of monster dreamed of *sweet* rathroot? It was… like the sky turning red or the ground being made of a whale's tongue. *That* one had nearly made it to Least Favorite Experience out of the past three years of training. He still hated the smell of fish.

Karth peered down at the ground. Seemed stable enough from up here. Nice and earth-like, not made of feathers woven with chocolate or anything weird like that.

It looked almost like the forest behind his master's house, truth be told. Boring place to dream about. Karth grabbed the woven roots and hauled himself upright, stepping carefully so his foot wouldn't slip through the net. Such an everyday place, that bit of scarred earth and blackened trees and—

And close to the cottage where they both lived. Where Naim's subconscious was.

Trust a dreambreaking master to closely guard the entry point of his own dream.

Step Two: get out of wherever you are because the dreamer's subconscious is already searching.

“Can’t make things easy on a fella, can you?” Karth peered through the net toward the ground. It wasn’t far. Might break his ankles and get caught if he landed wrong. But then again, might not.

But… this was Naim’s dream. So there were probably hidden spikes down below to impale any leapers and send them back to the world of wakefulness. Much too risky.

Karth craned his neck to look up. Likely, the dreambreaking master would make everything needlessly complicated.

Somewhere below, leaves rustled. Karth grinned. The man’s subconscious was as poor at stealth as Naim himself. Too close for comfort, but clumsy in the woods.

Karth seized the rathroot, wiggled between the folds of the net drawn together at the top, and pulled himself hand over hand along the rope to the thick branch above.

“Almost makes this dreambreaking seem easy.” Karth muttered to himself. He reached the limb and dragged himself onto it, panting. How many times had Naim forced him to escape nets of all kinds for what he called ‘training?’ Maybe there had been a point to it more than keeping him out of the cabin for a few hours.

Step Three: lay low until the subconscious dreamer has determined all to be safe and then—

Karth sat up partway and stared at the tree.

It stared back at him. Eyes blinked from each leaf, watching. In the clearing below, boots crunched slowly.

Karth swallowed and lifted one hand to the leaves. “Hi?”

The limb beneath him twisted, the bark turning smooth and muscles rippling beneath it. A serpent’s head loomed from the shadows overhead.

Karth yelped. He grasped at the rathroot rope as he fell, but the confounded thing dissipated into shadows. The forest spun, rushing on all sides. The turf vanished and he tumbled through the space where the ground had been. Tree roots taunted him, dangling just out of reach as he fell past them, deeper into the earth that wasn’t really there.

He squeezed his eyes shut and seized the dream with his mind. Illusions, nothing more. That was the important thing to remember. He forced his thoughts backward, spreading the forest around him in his mind’s eye. And - now!

Karth’s eyes snapped open. The ground surged up and slammed into his back in the center of the clearing. He gagged, trying to draw in a breath.

Not fair. So many levels of not fair. He squeezed his eyes shut, trying to block out the buzzing in his ears. It all started with that snake in the tree. Naim knew he hated snakes. He *knew*.

Maybe that was the whole point of a test.

A shadow fell over Karth.

He blinked.

A tall figure stood over him. Broad, but bowing over a staff clutched with two gnarled hands. Sharp eyes peered from a scraggly-bearded face. A fat frog nestled in the man's hair, watching Karth.

Step Something-or-Another: at no point let your target's subconscious know you are in his dream. Also… *Twisting your target's dream is the surest way for the target to find you.*

Two rules muffed. So much for that.

Karth blinked. "Hi."

The greeting worked about as well as last time. The man—or old, weird, subconscious Naim—whoever he was, swung his staff.

"Hey!" Karth rolled beneath the blow and stumbled to his feet. "That's how you treat guests, is it? You were much nicer to all the other scouts you had over, you know. I could at least get the same treatment."

"You sure you want that?" It was Naim's voice, no doubt about it. But it came from the frog's mouth.

Karth blinked. "Did you just…"

The man croaked.

"Do you plan to keep your eyes inside your head or are you trying to let them fall out?" The frog asked.

Karth fled. Finally an action where his rules and the normal rules agreed. *Run and keep track of time.*

"I have raspberries I can throw at you if it makes you feel better!" The frog shouted after him. "Or no… wait. It was the dark-looking one that liked raspberries. How about cliffs? Would you like a cliff?

The forest crumpled at Karth's feet and the trees faded into dust. He teetered, barely catching his balance.

Naim's subconscious frog certainly knew how to keep things on the edge. The world spread out before Karth, great and bare like a bald head. Bits of rock skittered down the cliff face that dropped into clouds and shadow.

Knowing Naim, it probably ended in a nest of serpents. He turned around.

Naim smiled, hands clasped behind his back. Not a good sign. He didn't even look out of breath, but he was even closer than before.

"Well?" The frog didn't blink. It seemed to almost be waiting.

It was Naim's dream… which meant it was Naim's rules. That should help. Structure… There was always structure. Three parts to each training. Each legend. Each lecture.

Three parts to a dream. *Escape, journey, and resolution.*

He'd escaped. Which meant…

A rope coiled at Karth's feet. He eyed it as the frog man took a step closer. Ropes were quite useful for climbing down cliffs. It would be a long journey.

Naim wouldn't bother to stop him until he got to the prize at the end. But he'd have no end of fun tormenting him on the descent, and doing his best to hinder him until the dream ran out.

But who took a full journey when there were shortcuts?

He inclined his head to his master's subconscious. "Thanks for the cliffs. Good thing I don't mind heights."

He threw himself over the edge.

"Oh dear." The frog sighed. "No fun at all."

The voice faded as wind rushed in Karth's ears.

Best he figured, Naim would make the cliff as deep as possible to make it hard to climb down. So he had ten or fifteen seconds.

He hoped.

A dream always had tricks to it. But they only worked if one didn't die or get eaten alive in a pit of snakes.

Karth squeezed his eyes shut.

Don't think; just picture it. Turn the sky. Twist so he was walking, not falling. There were green hedges on all sides—he could see them in his mind's eye. Hedges, and the sky high above and a fountain in the middle with something glittering at the top.

He could almost hear snakes hissing. Maybe it was the wind.

Believe it. Act on it.

Karth twisted his body, then opened his eyes and took a step forward.

He stumbled from emptiness into the green circle surrounded by hedges. Karth almost laughed. It worked, imagine that.

He straightened and dusted himself off. Of course it had worked. He'd known it would.

Regardless, even death by snakes was preferable to actually climbing down the cliff with the frog man at his heels.

"You skipped the whole middle."

Karth spun and jumped back a step. Naim's subconscious was at his shoulder again. He popped one raspberry into his mouth and another into the frog's, then pulled a chisel from his pocket.

"You shouldn't skip the middle," the frog said. "That's where all the cool stuff happens."

"You mean pain." Karth retreated a step toward the fountain.

"Or typos." Naim lifted the chisel and grinned brightly. "Also arcs." The chisel transformed and suddenly he was holding a long, gold ruler. Except it was bent in a strange curve. "Positive or negative depending what side you're on." He held it out. "You've still got time left."

Karth shrugged. "Honestly, I'd rather not." He sprinted for the fountain.

"Wait!" The subconscious master sprang after him. "You can't just leave without an arc. You need at least one." He was holding three of them now, two with curves and one straight one. "Consider it a gift."

But Naim's gifts always came with a test. A test he'd fail.

"No thanks!" Karth sprang onto the ledge of the fountain. A silver spire glinted from the top. "I only need the point, thank you very much."

"You don't deserve it yet." The frog-man's gaze darkened. His fingers grew into talons. He was still at Karth's shoulder, scratching claws just a hands-breath away.

Karth seized the spire; the silver center of the dream.

The frog-man turned into a dragon.

The dragon roared, and the fountain crumbled. Water spilled around Karth's boots, except it was red now. Blood, not water. Just his luck. He would never get those stains out. The turf turned to ash, and flames surged from the hedge.

Karth staggered and fell flat on his backside.

The dragon-that-was-Naim's-subconscious-frog-man crushed the remains of the fountain with one great claw. If dragons could smirk, this one would hold the record for insufferable arrogance. But dragons were supposed to be above that sort of thing.

Supposed to.

The flames surged. Karth sucked in a parched breath. His throat shriveled in the heat as the dragon tilted its head back and spit flames into the air.

Show off.

Karth tried to grasp the dream. It slipped between his thoughts and the imagined smirk on the dragon's face turned into a definite sneer.

"Did you really think it was going to be that easy? That I'd just let you pass some test without a fight?"

The flames surged higher as the ground shifted. Cracks ran the length of the circle and a hollow thrum sounded from the depths beneath him. The dream twisted, listening to a stronger power than Karth's own. Flames curled overhead into a great dome, trapping him and the dragon inside. The stone beneath him trembled again, ready to shatter.

The dragon sprang forward, one scaly foot on either side of Karth. "Give me the point. Now. Perhaps we can finish this without driving you to madness."

The point. Right.

Karth tilted his head - a troublesome thing to do from the ground, and examined it. "I need this, I'm afraid."

The dragon snorted. "You're not leaving here alive with it."

That he believed.

Last Rule of Many: a dream is just a dream. Don't stay. Don't get trapped. Claim the point and use it.

Use it.

Not hide it, or steal it. Use it.

The dragon bent over him, smoking nostrils just inches away from his face. "I'm taking your hesitation as a no?"

The skin on his face blistered from the dragon's breath. There would be no more dreamtwisting. No twisting anything at this point. All he had to do was keep the spire as he left the dream.

Only one way for that. Karth sighed. He hated leaving dreams this way.

"Yeah." He lifted the point. "That's a no from me."

And stabbed it into his own chest.

Everyone always did say he had a way of getting to the heart of the matter.

The dragon roared, flames tearing over Karth's body as one massive claw raked across him to dislodge the point.

Too late. Smoke swept the beast away, and Karth relaxed his hold on the point. There was no pain, just a slow, crawling numbness. The flames bent closer, but they were cold now. Mist and shadows tangled.

He lifted his wrist with a grimace and checked the time.

Not bad.

The dream's ending spun faster, the flames fading into a haze of nothingness.

It wouldn't make the list of records, not with skipping the middle and being discovered by the frog-man in the first minute of the dream, but it was enough to pass the test.

He chuckled.

He'd never be able to look Naim in the eye again after seeing his subconscious. Wasn't sure if Naim would look him in the eye either. Then again, they'd not need to look at each other anymore.

Karth was a dreambreaker now.

Forcing a grin, he wrenched the point out of his chest and vanished.

Note from Hope: Two people have commented and I went through and corrected all the points they mentioned and resolved the comments.

Note from Karthmin: I went through and did some light editing. We have until midnight tonight (Sunday) to finish working on it, and I have to submit it sometime on Monday. I will copy the story as it is at midnight tonight, and paste it onto a different google doc that only I will be able to access. This way there's double assurance that we're playing by the rules. ;P

Just so you all know, we are by no means pressed for space in our wordcount for the story. I just checked. So if anyone has ideas for more expansive editing to make things clearer, then go for it. Don't worry that you're going to push us over the 2,500 limit.