

My Dreamscape

My ultimate fantasy in life would to someday day be an army ranger and go on dangerous, but thrilling, missions. So apparently one night my subconscious self must have fed this wish into my dream world. One night when I woke up in the middle of the night, in the blackness of my bedroom sweating and having chills, I seem to recall this mean-spirited loud voice.

“Group 4, you’re comin’ with me!!!” Marshal Green said. “Walker!!!! Wake up and get your head straight!!!

I’m Walker. I could feel his thick saliva that grazed my face with moist, smelly spittle every time Marshal Green talked. He was an angry and strict man, and if you stare at him long enough, which you can’t without getting thrown down and face planted into mud, he never blinks. Today, we were on our survival course, the most feared and most talked about course of all.

We went to a jet laboratory first. There are three places you visit during the survival course, all unknown places that vary every class. I looked at the lab and saw pure white everywhere. The walls were white as sheep’s wool that had been polished and cleaned three times. A professor magically appeared out of one of the rooms and kindly

said, "Hello." Marshal Green treated us like dirt, but to someone on the survival course that he met, he acted as if they were royalty.

Marshal Green stuck his hand out for a shake, but the professor acted as though Green had just murdered someone and was coming for him. "Don't touch me! I'm sterile!" the professor said backing away from us. "Right this way," and the professor led us to a big room that was titled "Poison and Much More."

The room was dimly lit, and it seemed as though the light flickered every minute for about 10 seconds. The professor gave us each an ax and with a dark, snake-like smile said, "Good luck."

Marshal Green had done every single course at least four times and every year he said, "Whatever happens, you cannot die. You'll come back no matter what in one piece." This certainly eases your fear of dying. I've heard that it's true. You'll never die or anything, but they hadn't said anything about you feeling pain if something DID manage to happen to you.

The lights dimmed even more, as if it wasn't already dark enough to see clearly, but for some reason, you could still see. Group 4 and I stood there motionless, too scared

to move, but not Green. He just patiently waited for whatever was coming to get here. Something suddenly dropped into the darkness. We all looked around and saw a whole bunch of the tables get pushed over and then propelled out toward us. Next, the figure slowly peered its head out and jumped toward me. I thrust out my ax and saw the figure cut in half, but it was still twitching! Alpha walked toward the figure cautiously and then viciously hacked at the two sides of the thing over and over again and then finally stopped after a couple minutes. The thing stopped twitching, and I looked at the carcass and saw that it was a reptilian-like thing that had four legs and no tail.

Alpha is the one who has been training for the longest out of all of us. He's 18 and the oldest, me the second oldest. I'm 17 and the rest are 14 to 16. You have to be at least 14 to go on the survival course but only ten to go on the rest of the courses. Green acted like nothing had happened and said, "Alright, let's go to our next stop."

We walked out of the lab, and then out into the city. The lights were brighter than I expected, almost blinding. We went into a gated building that had no roof. We opened the gate and went inside. We walked a short distance and came upon these giant stepping-stone lilli pads. "Now, each of you will jump on the lilli pads, if you start to lose your balance, lean back so the pad can be jettied forward and you can regain your balance. Walker!!! You're up first. Get on that lilli pad!" Green explained to us and shouted to me.

I took a big leap onto one of the pads, and in the air I saw some log-like figures in the water that had hungry eyes. Alligators. I landed and heard the splash of water. I saw the gators methodically swimming toward me, as if they were soldiers out on the battlefield, and I was the helpless enemy, unaware of the sudden attack about to be launched on me.

Before they got close enough to attack and bite me, I paddled furiously as if I was going to die, or maybe not die, depending on whether you believed what Green had said about not dying on the survival course. They kept pursuing, but somehow I suddenly found myself on this little island where the next part of the course would continue. I turned around and saw Elway make his way through the swamp on the pad. I saw him miraculously come onto the island next to me. I noticed I was standing on some kind of bamboo stick that was balanced on a large rock. Elway clumsily jumped on the other side of the stick, and suddenly rocket launched me into the air. Instantly, as much as I was shocked and frightened, I could tell I was about 15 to 20 feet in the air, in the kind of trajectory that a cannonball would travel, or an arc like some soldier would throw a grenade. As I whizzed through the air, I looked around observing the rest of my group staring amazingly at me. I looked back down and saw a quick flash of the cement ground and then.....THUD!!!

I woke up slowly, opening and closing my eyes, struggling to stay awake. I saw two trees full of stars towering over me, even though it was only one tree. I also saw two alligators come out of the water, even though there was only one. My eyes readjusted and I snapped out of my deliriousness for the moment. The alligator got closer each second and looked as if it were right on top of me before a large man with a chain wrapped the alligator's mouth and carried it off, using the chain he was holding. The man had a long, colorful alligator tattoo on his right arm. It then hit me that we were at some kind of alligator reserve. I slowly got back up and dusted myself off when I heard Green yell, "Come on guys, last part of the course." His words echoed in my ear.

I followed everyone else out and started feeling the aftershock of my fall. The adrenaline had faded away, and I had a blistering, throbbing headache. I heard a loud clash and thunder and felt the first drop of cool rain fall onto my head. My sight started to twirl. I saw the Group 4 slowly walk away, and I stayed where I was. Dizzily I struggled to walk, and I tripped and fell to the ground. I got up, only to fall down again. I fell to the side against a mail box and broke its hinges from the ground. Mail sputtered out and surrounded me in bright white letters that said, "Go home, Walker. You don't belong here!" I still hadn't regained my balance, and the world seemed to be spinning in all directions.

Nevertheless, suddenly my head cleared and somehow despite my dreams of daring adventure didn't seem so fanciful anymore. And, when I heard Green's pushy voice yelling "Come on, you grunts. Let's go down this swirling whirlpool and fight some fiery water dragons at the bottom of it that are defending our exit from the survival course," I must have woken up.

Even though I'm certain that it was just a bad dream and hated Marshal Green's attitude and treatment of us, I guess Marshal Green was right, I was still in one piece.