To Dream a Dream

by Alixtii

Summary

The dreams haven't stopped for Alice Liddell, but she has learned to control them.

When Alice was seven years old, she fell down a rabbit hole. When she was seven and a half, she traveled through a looking glass. When she was eight, she--well, suffice it to say that Alice Pleasance Liddell is no stranger to the strangest of dreams.

This one, dreamt on the night of her seventeenth birthday, almost a decade exactly since that very first trip down the rabbit hole, being very much a case in point, as she and her companion run from the horde of werewolves that dog at her toes.

*It's just a dream,* she reminds herself, *just like all the others,* but she knows that is only a half-truth. It may be a dream, but that doesn't stop it from having a perverse reality all of its own, just like the others had all had. After all, she had never truly satisfactorily figured out whether that one dream had been hers or the Red King's. She no longer thinks it truly matters.

In her studies of dreams--she's read everything she could get her hands on on the subject once she realized the episodes weren't going to stop, utilizing all of her family's connections at Oxford to the greatest extent she could--she came across a quote from a Chinese philosopher which seemed to capture the paradox of dreaming in a way all the half-baked scientific theories of Freud or Jung never could. "Am I a man who dreamt he was a butterfly," the sage had asked, "or a butterfly who dreams he is a man?"
Alice, who has had quite interesting conversations with butterflies, knows quite well the answer to that question could easily go either way. There is nothing intrinsically more real about this topsy-turvy world than there is about Britain and Oxford and her waking life; realms in which she is a Queen no less real than the one in which she is a schoolgirl.

In this world, however, she does have certain advantages.

"In here," she says, as she pulls her companion into a crag in the wall. She visualizes a wall between the two of them and the werewolves, wills the dreamscape to confirm to her command. *You are nothing but a pack of cards*, she thinks to herself.

The wall forms, and the angry howls of wolves now separated from their prey fill the air.

The little girl looks at Alice with awe. "Are you a witch?" she asks.

"Even better," Alice tells the girl, a smile on her face. "I'm a dreamer--and so are you." *And so*, she thinks glumly, *is whoever sent those werewolves against us*. She wonders if it is one of the other dreamers whom she has already encountered, or some totally unknown quantity. She'll find out the answer soon enough, she is sure.

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