

Little Lost Cat

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Could even the most expert of dreamers save his beloved pet?

CHAPTER 1: Into the Dreamlands

I awoke from a dream of Shadow, my black tom cat. I had loved him about as much as I was capable of loving anything when I was a teenager.

He loved me much more. He followed me around like a dog and slept on my bed. He spent much of his days and nights near me.

I had carelessly enlisted in the Air Force with hardly a thought for Shadow. I expected to visit him while on leave and bring him back with me.

While I was gone, he searched my room frantically every chance he got. He even went through my dresser drawers as if he hoped to find me hiding.

He gave up, sickened, and died before my first leave. I never saw him again in the waking world.

The guilt has been with me for over 30 years.

Now for three straight nights I had dreamed of him trying to hide. Before I could make out what was after him, I awoke, sitting up straight in bed.

Someone or something was keeping me from Shadow.

I would not fail him again.

"Alternate Realities" have become a New Age icon. But in our dreams, we do catch glimpses of other realities. The most stable of these is the Dreamlands.

I'm not in the class of the fabled Randolph Carter. I've studied the works of Dr. Ann Faraday and Dr. Patricia Garfield. I even gleaned something from Carlos Castaneda. I've spent many years roaming the Dreamlands.

When I lay down after a large dinner, I was ready. I settled on the brass bed that has been in our family farm house for four generations. I remained focused until I dozed off.

I awoke on a black leather couch with a red horsehide spread over it. It had belonged to my grandfather when I was a small boy.

It has long since gone from the waking world.

Randolph Carter may have gone down 770 steps to the dreamlands. I dislike stairs.

I got up and stretched. I felt good. The pot belly, the twinges of arthritis, and the receding hairline were gone. I'm always about twenty years old in the Dreamlands.

When I get too old for the waking world, I will spend all my time in the Dreamlands.

All around me were bookcases filled with colorful paperbacks, books, and magazines. A massive table varnished in dark brown with golden flecks dominated the room. On it were two huge atlases lying open from my last visit.

At one end of the table was a copying machine. It was made of a dark finished wood like the table. I had no idea how to fill or service it. So far, it had never run out of paper or had any problems.

I leafed through one atlas. Ulthar was out as Shadow would not be in peril there. In my dream, he had dodged through a forest of crystalline pillars. Maybe they would know of them in the Archives of Zacatha.

I left the atlases as I'd found out long ago that they couldn't leave the building. I took my back pack from beneath the table. I got out a leather folder with the Miskatonic University insignia on it. I copied off over a dozen atlas pages and put them in the folder with several others. I added twenty or thirty sheets of blank paper.

I snapped the folder on my clipboard and put it in the back pack. From a foot locker under the table, I took out a basket-hilted sword as well as a hand axe and a Bowie knife and fastened their sheaths to my belt.

I'd learned to use a sword while younger and a lot more limber. I had been a Society for Creative Anachronism member as well as a member of the Tri-State College sabre fencing team, the best in the NAIA. I drilled until I could sword fight literally in my sleep.

I'd bought a really expensive blade about a year after I got my engineering degree. I used it until it became part of my dreams. Then I sold the one in the waking world to a collector for a slight profit. No point in being greedy. After all, I still had the blade where it counted.

From the shelves, I selected five paperbacks that never existed in the waking world.

I chose LINGO, JUDGE LAWLESS, THE COBRA, THE PLOT MASTER, and CRIME, INSURED, all by Walter Gibson with vivid covers by Rozen. A little light reading would make the way go easier. Besides I hate to wait without reading material.

I thought it appropriate to read of The Shadow while looking for my Shadow.

I hesitated, then added Doc Smith's 6 volume A HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION, also in paperback. I might be gone a while.

Just down the hall from my room was a narrow kitchen with an old fashioned ice box. I've always wondered who or what kept it supplied with ice and food. I'd never seen another living thing in the building.

I opened a cupboard and got out several chunks of foil-wrapped pemmican and trail packs of dehydrated soups. I filled my canteen at the sink.

I sat at the table and briefly admired Rozen's picture of my favorite crime fighter hanging from a gargoyle, then started reading LINGO. I ate some cold turkey and a dish of vanilla ice cream as I read.

I rinsed off the dishes and placed them in the sink, knowing that they would be clean and back in the cupboard when I returned. I replaced the book in my backpack, put on the backpack, and headed back down the hall.

Just the other side of my room was the living room. It was over three stories high with a domed ceiling. Books crowded a tall fireplace made of stones gathered from all fifty states and Canada.

Carved above the fireplace on a flat oval light green stone that felt like jade was the motto "Our life is no dream, but it should and perhaps will become one. ___George MacDonald."

I would see that Shadow's and my dream ended well.

I made my way between comfortable stuffed chairs to the elaborately carved front door.

Outside the front door, neatly cropped grass ended abruptly in a forest of massive oaks. I wondered idly if little white sheep came out and neatly cropped it when I wasn't there.

The Great Library almost filled the clearing. Despite being six stories high, the Victorian building looked squat.

I often wonder how many million books are in it. I keep meaning to check

out each room. But there always seem to be too many distractions in the rooms near mine.

And once I looked at the atlases, I had to explore the Dreamlands.

I rarely used the back door of the Great Library. I never knew where it would open to.

I once had once found myself in a swamp full of alligators after stepping through it incautiously. I never knew I could run atop water. I guess such things are a matter of motivation. Especially in the Dreamlands.

A trail from the back of the house led down to a dock on Library Bay. By the dock where I'd left her was Seafoam, my boat. The painted eye on the port side watched me as I approached.

Seafoam came up along the dock impatiently and unfurled her sail as I jumped in. We headed off with the wind behind us. Soon we were through the mists and fog that always seemed to surround Library Island.

A word from me and Seafoam changed her heading.

I opened my pack and took out LINGO. I leaned back against the mast and started to read. Soon we entered the main part of what was named Spiderweb Lake, though on the maps it looked more like a mis-shapen octopus with dozens of thick tentacles.

We crossed the lake and Seafoam headed up the Stillwater River. I could always depend on her to follow directions.

When the sky clouded over, I went into the cabin and uncovered a bioluminescent lamp. Windows ringed the cabin and beneath the windows were lockers containing a series of numbered cartons containing useful items, a trick I had learned from Doc Savage.

Eventually I covered the light, settled myself on an air mattress on the floor back of the pilot's chair, and slept. I dreamed of Shadow pacing in a gilded cage. His eyes met mine and I knew he was waiting for me.

But when I spoke to him, a figure that looked like a giant lobster standing on two legs blocked my view of Shadow. Its dull red shell had vivid symbols painted on and it wore a coppery head band.

Shadow hissed and spat at it. It gestured and Shadow flinched back. But only to the back of the cage.

I snarled and the thing looked at me.

"It iss oursss," the thing hissed like it was part snake. "Do not attempt to take it from usss. You will die on the way. SSStay there or elssse."

It gestured and the scene went dark. I dreamed no more that night.

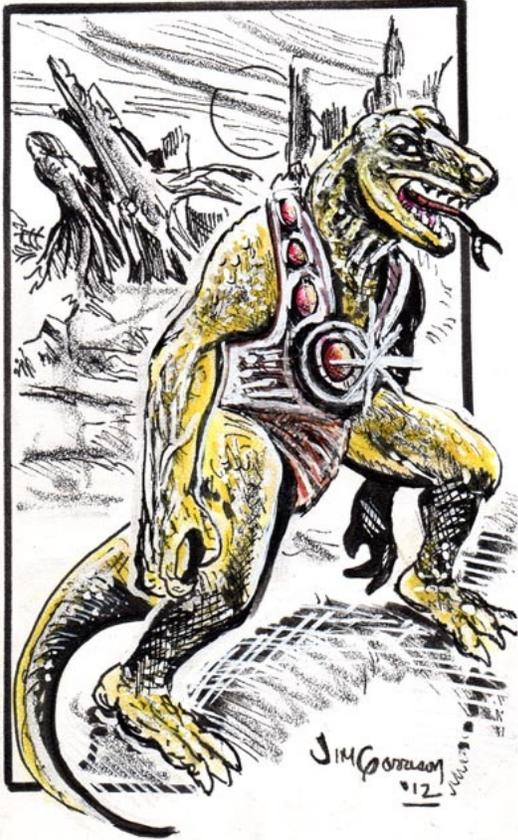


CHAPTER 2: Lizard Lore

Zacathia is a warm place. But so is Hell from most of what I've heard.

I left Seafoam beside a massive dock and trotted inland with my pack on my back. I was walking between two rocks when a huge yellow lizard came around one. He had really nasty looking fangs and claws. But he also walked upright and was wearing a harness that reminded me of the one John Carter wore on Barsoom.

As an expert dreamer, I recognized one of the Lizard People, a race of peaceful beings dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge.



I raised one hand in greeting. "I'm Will George, here to consult the Archives."

One taloned hand repeated my gesture. "I am Zinga, an apprentice Geographer Tech. I am here to aid you with the Archives."

So we strolled together up a road between two rocky hills with sparse grayish bushes. Soon we crested the hills and started down. Zinga felt no need for idle conversation. Nor did I.

As the land got lower, it became more inhabited. Bushes and plants with small lizards among them were succeeded by fruit trees shading fields of unfamiliar crops.

I stopped to gaze at what looked like an apple tree. A little lizard girl with a shy smile that barely showed her fangs presented us each with a shiny red apple. We thanked her and walked on munching. Mine was definitely a Cortland and a good one.

Soon we came in sight of a massive city of black stone. The Lizard People built large sturdy buildings that looked like they were meant to endure past the ending of Time.

The Archives were a great complex of buildings, perhaps the whole town. Zinga headed for one building near the edge of town and I went with him.

Though I had pictured vast hordes of books, this building had none. Its walls seemed to be made of a light gray stone. All around the room were pale blue screens, so close they almost touched each other. Below each was a sloping shelf, apparently of the same black stone as the town.

On the shelf was only a fist sized device with a cord or wire leading to the wall just below the screen. Zinga walked over to the nearest one and picked up the device.

He squeezed it and symbols filled the screen in front of him. His talons simultaneously worked several of the six keys on what must be an input device.

Soon the symbols were English words. I carefully described the forest of crystalline pillars where I had glimpsed Shadow. And the giant lobsterlike thing of my abortive dream.

Zinga squeezed and the screen became a window in which the crystalline pillars of my dream showed. Amid them walked beings that looked like giant red lobsters on legs.

"The Crystal Pillars of Cephas and the Krotands who live there," Zinga informed me.

I nodded. "Those are the pillars. I must go there."

"The Krotands do not welcome strangers," Zinga said flatly.

So I told him of Shadow and of my loss in the waking world, of how the Krotands were keeping my beloved cat from me.

Finally he showed me a map of the way there. Back down the Stillwater to Spider Lake, then southwest along the Redwater to the Badlands. Across the Badlands to the Land of the Giant Jackrabbits and across that to Cephas.

Zinga worked his hand control and a map of what looked like wax paper, but was strong as spider silk, came out of a slot below the screen.

I looked at it. Something seemed to be missing. Library Island was nowhere to be seen.

Zinga asked, "Is there some problem?"

"Library Island is missing." I took off my pack and extracted my map copies from my Miskatonic University folder. He gazed at Library Island, then at his screen.

He squeezed his hand control, then borrowed my map. He fed it into the slot. In a few seconds, it came back out.

A sort of low hum filled the room. There were two other lizards in the room, one helping a quite tall, extremely slender young woman who wore very little but a veil over her face and a G-string. Both lizards turned to look at me.

Three lizards came bustling through three different doorways and converged on me. Each looked at my map showing Library Island, then looked at me.

Soon the five of us were heading deep into the complex of buildings. We climbed stairs, then headed across an enclosed walkway with transparent sides.

A nice view up and down the street below, but not for those with a fear of heights. Fortunately, we were soon across.

We ended up in a large ornate office with the walls covered with various pictures. I recognized the towers of Kadath and the streets of Ulthar as well as several other Dreamland sites. Most were unfamiliar.

A lizard stood behind a sturdy sloping table in the center of the room. The Lizard People rarely sat, but balanced on their feet and tails.

She introduced herself as Senior Geographer Tech Zalamanthera. Another lizard hurried in with a chair and sat it down beside me, then left.

It was just as well I had a chair handy as I was quizzed about Library Island and the Great Library for over an hour.

When I left the city of the Lizard People, Zinga came with me. A

pack twice the size of my rode his shoulders and two staffs of twisted metal hung from his shoulder harnesses. He also had several throwing knives sheathed along his two chest harnesses.

The Lizard People value knowledge above all else. And the Great Library certainly had a lot of knowledge within its walls.

CHAPTER 3: The Badlands

There was very little good about the Badlands. Zinga had consulted his maps as we came up the Redwater. We left Seafoam at what Zinga considered the best place. I patted Seafoam and she rubbed against my hand.

I knew that she would wait for us.

Then Zinga and I headed up a narrow trail between two towering boulders. Very little grew near the river and nothing grew away from it.

We both carried extra food and several canteens of water.

Soon Zinga and I were within a maze of canyons. Twisted walls of rock stood on either side of us. It looked like some demon had tortured the very Earth herself. The wind howled like one of the damned amidst the barren rocks.

I doubted that many tourists came here.

Zinga consulted his maps at every turn. He had a pad with a hand control attached that stored literally thousands of maps along with other information.

We slowly made our way through the maze. I was edgy. The landscape and the noise was bad enough. But I was becoming sure that something was watching us. Something quite unfriendly.

I'd learned to trust my hunches. I nudged Zinga and drew my sword and

hand axe. Zinga nodded.

Just after we rounded the next turn, there was a shriek that certainly had nothing to do with the wind. A purple lizard half again as big as Zinga was charging like an express train.

It had lots of sharp black teeth and black talons.

Zinga threw four knives. All stuck in the monster. Didn't seem to slow him down.

Zinga whipped out both staffs and braced them against the ground. I dived to the side behind a small boulder.

The purple horror skidded to a stop. It towered over Zinga and began forcing his staffs back and up. It shrieked almost constantly. Must have had good lungs.

And been mostly deaf.

I slipped out behind it, my hand axe in both hands. I drove the axe with all my strength into one leg just above one heel, then the other.

The beast let out a shriek that made its previous efforts seem tame. Then it toppled over, both hamstrings cut.

Zinga sidestepped. He grasped one staff in both taloned hands. The staff rose over his head, then flashed down to bury itself in the purple skull.

I chopped at the brute's neck.

Lizards die hard. It took us several more blows before the monster was still.

Zinga looked at me. "It looks like you were expected to come this way. Those beasts do not frequent this part of the Dreamlands."

He retrieved, cleaned, and sheathed his knives. I cleaned my axe. He cleaned his staff and hung it from his harness. He picked up his second staff, but kept it in his hand.

I picked up my sword and held it in my right hand and my axe in my left.

We went on.

An hour before nightfall, we found a circle of rocks where the canyon we were following widened out. It was a good defensive position, so we decided to spend the night there.

Zinga had brought some wood, so he made a small fire. I heated up four packages of vegetable soup. It was getting chilly as the sun went down, and the soup warmed me.

Wrapped in a thermal blanket, I read until dark and almost finished LINGO.

Zinga took the first watch. My sleep was troubled by dark dreams. Finally the Krotand appeared before me. "Barnex wasss only the firsst. Your doom iss ssoon." Again he gestured and disappeared.

I was glad when Zinga woke me.

It was well after Zinga went to sleep, in the dark hour before dawn, when I sensed something and woke him.

We were surrounded. Things that looked more like brutes than men, but wearing the clothes of men slunk around our shelter. Knives reflected the light of the uncaring stars.

We were badly outnumbered.

Then there was a taunting laugh. Our enemies turned. A figure emerged from the darkness. His cape swirled around him. Eyes gleamed from under his hat brim. Twin automatics blasted away.

At each shot, one of our assailants fell.

The brutes charged him. He dived into the mob, automatics clubbing down our enemies. Knives rose and fell, but he was always in motion, always elsewhere.

Zinga and I ran to his aid, but it was over.

None of the force surrounding us had survived his onslaught. He raised one hand to me, then faded into the darkness. An echoing laugh and he was gone.

My eyes were wet.

"Who was that?" Zinga asked.

"A childhood friend." I replied.

The next morning, I finished reading LINGO at breakfast. As I went to put it in my pack, Zinga saw the man pictured on the cover and recognized our rescuer.

It was good to know that the greatest crime fighter of the thirties still survived and carried on his work in the Dreamlands.

I started CRIME, INSURED while Zinga took up LINGO.

CHAPTER 4: Land of the Giant Jack Rabbits

At first, all I saw of Apperson Leasing was a counter nearly head high with a wall just behind it. On the wall hung a toy horn that looked to be silver. At the far end of the counter were two lawn ornaments.

Then one moved. Two little gnomes in red hats walked along the counter toward us.

Many things in the Dreamlands reflect the waking world. Even our lawns.

Zinga raised one taloned hand in greeting. "We seek transportation through your land. We need to go to Cephas."

"They do not care for strangers in Cephas," the slightly taller gnome said.

"I am Will George, an expert dreamer. My fur brother, who was my closest friend, is being held prisoner by the Krotands. I must rescue him."

The gnomes turned toward each other and conversed almost silently. Then they turned toward us.

"You may take two of our steeds. But they cannot bear you beyond our borders."

"You have my thanks," I assured the little gnome.

He held out a tiny hand and I added two goldpieces to my thanks. Zinga calmly matched my offering.

"But I fear that the Krotands will act against you. Twice they sent killers against us in the Badlands."

"The Krotands never bother us," The gnome answered. "They know that we do not fear them. Even their Storm Priests leave us alone."

Though the gnome hadn't raised his voice, around the corner of the wall came two white-pelted Yetis. They towered over both Zinga and myself. Yet they neither looked at or spoke to either of us as though they feared us.

"They are quite shy," the gnome explained.

Each Yeti led a jack rabbit. But not the kind that gnomes ride. Each of these stood over 5 feet high at the shoulder. And each ear was nearly a yard long.

The Yetis quietly saddled each beast with a high backed saddle. I was impressed to see that Zinga's saddle had a large hole in the back for his bulky tail.

The Yetis then led the two rabbits to the end of the counter.

One gnome carefully explained to the two jack rabbits what was expected of them. The rabbits cocked their heads attentively and certainly appeared to be listening.

The little gnomes seemed to share a common language with the massive jack rabbits, though I couldn't make head or tail of it. In fact, I didn't think I heard most of it.

When the gnome finished, he stepped off the counter onto one rabbit's head. He walked between the ears, down the neck and climbed the saddle horn which I saw contained a gnome sized seat in the front.

The gnome was carrying the silvery horn. He carefully placed within a niche in the saddle horn.

"I shall go with you," he said. "The Krotands will not even notice you with one of us along."

One Yeti helped me up behind the gnome and the other helped Zinga mount. They showed us how to fasten our seat belts, then hurried out of sight. Very shy for such large creatures.

We rode off and entered what looked like a grove of giant ferns. When I looked at their roots, I saw a circular shallow orange dome at the base of each tall fern. Suddenly I realized that they were giant carrots.

We rode all day through the realm of the gnomes. Giant carrots blocked our view and an occasional giant tree towered up into the blue sky.

I read CRIME, INSURED.

Zinga, ever thirsty for knowledge, rode beside me, chatting with the gnome. They found a common interest in maps and chatted for hours.

Zinga's little data pad got a work-out as he called up many things from it and added many more.

As the sun was setting, we neared the border with Cephass. We stopped for the night near a giant apple tree. I could see from the large windfall apples on the ground that it would be quite unsafe to camp beneath such a tree.

The rabbits rolled out several apples to our camp. From the back of my seat, the gnome brought out a block and tackle.

Zinga and I took off the rabbit's saddles after the gnome told them to lie down. We then helped the rabbits pull up two carrots. I had to anchor the rope of the block and tackle to the base of the great apple tree.

Even with both rabbits on the other end of the rope, the carrots were hard to budge. Zinga gave them a hand, But I wasn't sure how much he could add to the strength of the two huge rabbits.

The rabbits kicked the dirt off the vast vegetables and towed them to camp.

As the rabbits munched away at their supper, Zinga and I shared our fare with the gnome. The three of us chatted about the giant plants. The gnomes helped broadcast and plant some of the apple and carrot seeds. The rest seeded themselves.

The gnome settled the two rabbits after supper and stretched a hammock between the saddle horn and the back of the saddle.

It was a quiet night and I caught up on my sleep. The gnome had assured us that the rabbits would sense any intruders. He seemed to be right.

CHAPTER 5: The Crystal Pillars of Cephas

The next morning, we saddled the rabbits for a quick getaway and waved goodbye to the gnome. The rabbits sat there barely twitching their ears. Most of the apples and carrots were there beside them waiting for their next meals.

Zinga and I headed down a slope into more conventional trees, mainly oak and maple with a few hickory. In the distance, I caught glimpses of the Inner Sea of Cephas.

We cautiously made our way through the forest for most of the morning.

Finally through the trees, I saw the crystal pillars of my dreams.

The Krotands apparently kept close to the water. So we were able to sneak up to the pillars without being sighted. We eased our way among them with even more caution.

The protection of the gnomes might not extend to us here.

Most of the pillars were covered with sharp long crystalline needles. We didn't dare edge between the close pillars in places. Several times we reached a dead end and had to retrace our steps.

Then I saw my beloved fur brother.

There on a golden dais was Shadow pacing like he was caged. The Krotands were bowing and worshipping him.

CHAPTER 6: The Gathering Storm

One of their Storm Priests in a tall head dress gestured. The sky over us darkened. A flash of lightning jumped from cloud to cloud. Shadow hissed.

Zinga stepped out and flipped a knife. The storm priest went over with a shrill shriek.

I charged the dais. And bounced back. I took out my axe and hammered at the crystalline shell that enclosed Shadow. He stepped back.

Krotands reached for me and Zinga's knives flew.

Then the crystal shattered and Shadow shot out.

He darted down a hall and Zinga and I ran after him. I called, but he kept ahead of us. The Krotands seemed to awake from the shocking theft of their feline god and came after us in a vast mob, getting in each other's way at first.

They hissed like a nest of vipers.

I ran and prayed that we wouldn't blunder into any dead ends.

But Shadow seemed to know each turn and we got outside without any trouble.

A horde of red lobsters on legs followed us. And we didn't seem to be gaining. Lightning flashed and struck ahead of us. But never too close.

The Storm Priests were being careful to miss Shadow.

The three of us ran on through the darkening woods. Thunder muttered and roared. I was tiring as we pounded up the slope and found our rabbits waiting.

I boosted Shadow up onto the saddle and joined him. Zinga and I fastened our seat belts as a tide of red figures crested the slope behind us.

The rabbits sat and watched. The gnome reached into the saddle beside him and drew out the small silver horn. He gestured with it and yelled at the oncoming scarlet horde. Lightning struck near us.

The gnome raised the horn to his lips and sounded it. A high pitched scream that hurt my ears sounded and kept sounding.

The Krotands came on.

It thundered continuously.

The Krotands came closer.

The thunder grew louder.

The horn continued screaming.

The thunder seemed right on top of us.

Then a wave of giant jack rabbits swept by on each side of us.

The Krotands tried to stop.

The results were very messy. When I was a child, I raised New Zealand White rabbits. One night a rat got in with them.

I found him the next morning stomped flat.

Crushed red shells mixed with blue blood lay up and down the slopes.

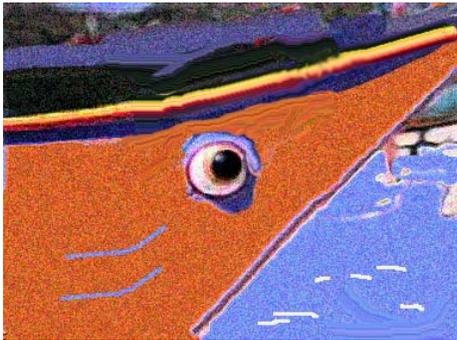
Finally the giant jack rabbits headed back up the slope. Their feet and legs were blue. The lightning had stopped and the sky cleared.

Zinga reached in his pack and replaced his throwing knives.

The gnome from his place in my saddlehorn led the now docile jack rabbit pack to a small lake. After all had drank the cool water and Zinga and I had refilled our canteens, the rabbits stepped into the water.

When they were clean, they went their separate ways.

The gnome had tended to the few that were wounded. Then we were on our way.



The gnome rode all way with us across even the badlands to the Seafoam. He looked at my boat, eager to be off, and bade us farewell.

We headed down the Redwater without incident. I rested and read with Shadow purring on my lap. I finished reading CRIME, INSURED as we started across Spiderweb Lake.

CHAPTER 7: A Stormy Sea

The sun slid behind a cloud and the day grew dark. Thunder growled in the distance.

Drawn up well in front of the mists that guarded Library Island were seven boat loads of scarlet Krotands. A Storm Priest stood in one bow.

He gestured and lightning crashed down near us.

Zinga's lips drew back in a snarl. He drew his knives as the boats closed on

us.

Shadow arched his back, bottlebrushed his fur, and hissed like steam escaping a boiler.

Seafoam gathered herself and was in rapid motion before I could say a word.

She darted from side to side. The boats of the Krotands could not match her. A couple even crashed together and the Krotands from them fell in the water.

I gather they didn't care for deep water from the way they thrashed. Then I saw two triangular fins cut the water.

A few spears were thrown, but Zinga and I had shields. And the spear throwers didn't want to risk hitting Shadow.

One who came too close was thrown into the water at a gesture of the Storm Priest.

Seafoam headed for the shallow water to the side of the lake. I held my breath. But Seafoam danced through the branches of a fallen tree. Except for one incautious crew, the other ships slowed down.

The wall of mist slowly advanced and Seafoam dived into it.

I could no longer see the boats following us. But I heard one hit a snag and the bottom tore out. Then another and another until all five boats left were holed.

I worried about Seafoam, but she seemed to know just where to go.

I could hear the Krotands thrashing in the water behind us. Then an ominous silence.

The mists cleared. Behind us were the remains of three of the boats, slowly sinking. Around them moved over a dozen triangular fins.

I turned to Zinga. "How did all the sharks all get here? I've never seen

the mists change position before, either."

" We are near what must be your personal Dreamland." Zinga gestured with both hands after putting away his knives. "It responded to your needs."

We headed into the mists that surround the Great Library.

The Seafoam guided us through the dying storm as a purring Shadow rested in my arms.



Zinga stayed with us at the Great Library. When none of his people came to visit us despite the map I gave them, I decided to take him back on the Seafoam, and bring them myself.

When I could tear Zinga away from the Great Library, that is. He loved it as much as I did.

Not far from my room was a room with four bookcase walls loaded with accounts of explorations of the Dreamlands. Zinga nearly lived there.

Evenings we'd spend in the living room, Zinga balancing on feet and tail by my favorite stuffed chair. He'd have a exploration book in his hands and a couple more at his side. I'd sit there with a novel. Shadow usually would be on my lap unless he had feline business elsewhere.

Three dishes with fresh food, milk, and water now have their place under the kitchen table. And the ornately carved front door now has an ornately carved cat door in it.

Sometimes I think the building is a living being. I wonder how it will get along with the Lizard People.

-END-