

### SCROLLS EPISODE THREE

Marty froze. Sitting before him was the man who had almost murdered him the night before. Sloan looked surprised to see Marty and the two stared at one another for several tense moments. Blake looked back and forth between them, confused.

“Do you two already know each other?”

Finally it was Sloan who broke the stare. He smiled and steepled his hands in front of him.

“It looks like you were holding out on me Marty,” Sloan said. “I thought for sure that if you knew any spells you would’ve used them against me at your apartment.”

Marty’s entire body was tensed, ready to leap into action. He stayed completely still but was aware of movement around him. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Crosby, the man who had hit him with the air spell in his apartment, slowly circling towards them.

“Is it true, Marty? Can you really cast four different spells?” Sloan asked.

Crosby was standing right behind him now. Marty swallowed hard, feeling like things were going to go bad very soon.

“Do you realize how special that is, Marty? To be able to cast like that?” Sloan asked.

Despite the smooth way in which he spoke all Marty heard was murder. Sloan hadn’t hesitated to try and kill him the night before and Marty was certain it was something the man wouldn’t give a second thought to trying again.

“It’s not too late for us to be friends. I could help you master your powers and in turn you could be a part of my plans. Soon I’m going to be one of the richest men in the world, working with me could be a very profitable situation for you,” Sloan said with a serpent’s smile.

After swallowing hard Marty spoke.

“I would never work with scum like you.”

The smile faded from Sloan’s face.

“You disappoint me Marty.”

The tension in the air intensified as Sloan stood up. Blake sensed this and stepped between the two of them.

“Listen, everyone just calm down. Clearly you two got off on the wrong foot but that doesn’t mean we can’t just talk about things.”

“I think we’re just about through talking,” Sloan said.

The older woman who had been casting the water spell had joined Sloan now. She was standing next to him while Tasha, his assistant was standing on his other side, holding a curved dagger. Beside her was the man in the wheelchair. Rain Man had circled around and was off to the side, along with the man who had been floating when they came in. Blake was panicking now, obviously wanting no part of the situation.

“Just hold on. Let me talk to him, I can get him to reconsider,” Blake pleaded with Sloan.

Blake was going to say more but stopped suddenly when he looked into Sloan’s eyes. His mind was set on murder and nothing anyone said was going to deny him. Blake stumbled back towards Marty.

“Cover your ears,” Marty said quietly.

After a second of confusion Blake realized what this meant and did as he was told. Marty covered his own ears as he called up the symbols and the word in his mind. He then took a deep breath and screamed.

“LEAVE ME ALONE!”

His magically amplified voice shook the building. Windows blew out and everyone in the room fell to their knees under the power of the sound. Even with his ears covered the noise had nearly been unbearable to Blake. Marty quickly dismissed the spell from his mind.

“Let’s go!” Marty yelled.

He reached out and grabbed Blake. They turned to run for the door but Crosby was there behind them, still on his feet. The muscled man backhanded Marty hard, sending him tumbling to the floor. Marty rolled, his face stinging where he had been hit. As he slid to a stop he called another spell into his mind and stretched out his hand.

“Thermos.”

A stream of fire shot out, catching Crosby in the leg. His pants leg ignited and he stumbled backwards in a panic. Marty stopped the spell and got back to his

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feet. He and Blake ran for the door but the rest of the room was recovering from the voice amplification spell now.

“Get them!” Sloan screamed out.

The large doorman was in front of them. He hadn't budged and almost seemed to be daring them to come any closer. Marty glanced over his shoulder towards Sloan just in time to see the older woman shaping a large ball of water in the air in front of her. She looked up and it shot towards Marty.

Blake saw it too and reached out his hand. A stream of ice fired out and hit the water. He kept it trained on the water as it hurdled through the air towards Marty's face, turning it into a flying boulder of ice. At the last second Marty ducked. The chunk of ice crashed into the head of the doorman and he collapsed to the ground.

Marty reached the door first and started undoing the locks as fast as he could. There were many of them, some more difficult than others and requiring more effort. Blake was concentrating hard and erected a wall of ice to protect them while Marty worked on the door.

“Hurry up!” Blake yelled.

Gun shots rang out and several bullets impacted Blake's ice barrier.

“Got it!” Marty yelled as he twisted open the last lock.

They ran out the door and slammed it behind them. Blake was bounding down the stairs but Marty stopped and turned around.

“What are you doing man? We have to keep moving!” Blake yelled.

Marty reached out his hand and fire shot out. He aimed it at the edge of the metal door, slowly going around the outside of it. Blake had come back up and watched as the door became welded shut. Once Marty had finished Blake followed it up with a blast of ice to cool the newly fused metal. They then turned and ran down the stairs.

The night air felt like freedom to Marty. He followed Blake as they ran down the sidewalk. They had just passed the door to the Double S bar when an ominous sound caused them to stop. Someone had stepped out of the Double S and cocked a shotgun.

“The boss says you boys got to die,” a man with a heavy southern drawl said.

Marty closed his eyes. A sharp crack and then a thud sounded out behind him. He slowly opened his eyes and turned around. The man with the shotgun was

down on the sidewalk, unconscious. Standing over him was Ken, brandishing his campus security flashlight he had just used to hit the man in the back of the head. Marty was about to say something when another man came rushing out of the bar with a gun. Ken had his back turned to the man and was completely vulnerable.

As the man raised his gun both Marty and Blake fired spells. A stream of fire shot past Ken on one side while a stream of ice shot past him on the other. Both caught the man with the gun in the chest, knocking him backwards. Ken stood completely still, a shocked look on his face.

“What. The. Hell?”

Marty wasn't sure how to answer but he was sure that this wasn't the time or place to try. He grabbed Ken and shook him.

“We need to get out of here,” Marty said.

Ken nodded and the three of them ran away as fast as they could.



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(REVELATION)

The three of them remained silent as they fled back to the campus. They were out of breath, Ken more than the others, by the time they reached one of the common areas on the edge of the campus. They all went inside the nearest building. It was filled with vending machines and tables and chairs. Ken collapsed into one of the chairs. After gasping for several moments he spoke.

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“You guys have super powers?!”

Marty ignored him. After taking a few more seconds to recover his breath he approached Blake.

“That’s how you try to help? By taking me to a murderer?” Marty asked angrily.

Blake swept his hair out of his face before responding.

“Look, I…”

“Save it,” Marty interrupted. “I don’t want anything to do with someone that would get involved with a guy like Sloan.”

“Who’s Sloan?” Ken asked.

Marty turned towards him.

“He’s the guy that blew up my apartment. He saw my web comic and thought I had some masterful knowledge of spells or a stash of scrolls. But you’d be better off asking Blake about Sloan, he’s the one that works with him.”

Blake stepped forward.

“I’m only doing that so I can get close enough to take him down.”

Marty laughed.

“Like I’m going to believe that.”

“I helped you escape didn’t I?” Blake asked.

He paused for a moment to let his question sink in.

“Sloan Scott is worse than you think. He’s planning something big, he’s going to kill a lot of people if we don’t do something to stop him,” Blake continued.

After sitting down beside Ken at the table Marty looked up and shook his head.

“No, there is no we.”

Blake approached the table.

“Think about it, Marty. He’s the one who trained me, he knows everything I can do with my spell. I’d never be able to touch him. But against you he’d have no idea what to expect!”

“You want something to drink?” Ken asked as he stood up.

Blake shot him a dirty look for interrupting.

“Marty?” Ken asked.

“Sure,” Marty answered.

They watched as Ken approached one of the vending machines. He stood before it, looking over the choices. He then reached into his pocket. A second later he reached into his other pocket. He frowned and then turned towards them.

“Does anybody have any change?”

Blake sighed.

“You know what, the adults are talking right now. Why don’t you go back to wherever you came from?” Blake asked.

Ken stared at him for a moment before returning to his seat beside Marty.

“As I was saying, together we could put a stop to him before he has a chance to hurt anyone else,” Blake said.

Marty was staring at the table. A wave of exhaustion had washed over him. Ken placed a hand on his shoulder.

“You alright Marty?”

The worst of it passed after a few moments and Marty nodded. He still felt weak but looked up and spoke.

“I don’t want anything to do with this. I don’t know you, I don’t trust you and I sure as hell don’t want anything more to do with Sloan Scott.”

Marty stood up and so did Ken. The two of them began walking towards the door.

“Sloan is going to kill people if we don’t do something,” Blake said.

“Then call the cops!” Marty yelled. “Just leave me out of it.”

They continued walking.

“What are the cops going to do against someone like him?” Blake called out.

As Marty and Ken went out the door Blake yelled again.

“I can’t do this without you Marty!”

It was well past midnight and the early morning air was cold. Marty was light headed and having trouble focusing as he and Ken walked towards the frat house. After a few silent moments Ken spoke.

“I’m sorry I followed you tonight.”

“Don’t be. I would be dead if you hadn’t.”

Ken looked back over his shoulder at the building they had just left.

“I just got a bad feeling when I saw you two leaving the party. The guy looked like trouble.”

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“Well you were right,” Marty said.

After a long pause Marty spoke again.

“Thanks for being there.”

Ken smiled.

“That’s what friends are for,” he said.

It had been a little over two years since Marty had any friends. He liked how it felt. They stayed silent for several minutes. The pounding music from the party was audible in the distance as they got closer to the frat. It was well past the time when parties were supposed to end but somehow parties at the Beta Theta Pi house never seemed to get shut down.

“So, you have superpowers?” Ken asked out of nowhere.

The question got Marty thinking about everything that had just happened. There was no denying the power of the spells. He recalled the way the brief conflict had gone, the way the spells had jumped into his mind with ease when he needed them. It seemed too crazy to be real but having just lived through it Marty knew that it was.

“Apparently,” Marty finally answered.

As they approached the frat house they both saw Keiko standing out front talking to another girl. She saw them and walked over. As she noticed the shape of Marty’s face where he had been hit and the general state the two of them were in she frowned.

“Don’t you ever stay in your own dorm room?” Ken asked.

Keiko shot him a dirty look and then turned her attention to Marty. She reached out and touched his face. He jerked away, the wound still tender. Keiko pulled her hand back. It was clear that she was upset.

“That’s the kind of stuff that happens when you hang around a loser like Kenshin,” she said.

Her words clearly stung Ken. He opened his mouth to reply but changed his mind. He walked past her and into the frat house. They watched him go and then Marty spoke.

“Your brother saved my life tonight.”

Keiko turned back towards him.

“What?”

“A man had a shotgun pointed right at me and was going to kill me and Ken saved me.”

He paused as she processed this.

“I know there are issues between you two but he’s not a bad person. He doesn’t deserve to be treated like that.”

Keiko thought for a moment. Before she could respond Marty held up his hand.

“It’s been a bad night,” Marty said.

He stepped around her and started to walk to the frat house. He paused and looked over his shoulder at her. They stared at one another for a long moment before he turned and continued inside to get some much needed rest.

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“Unacceptable!” Sloan roared.

Crews were working to repair the damage that had been done in the room while Sloan had his closest underlings gathered out of the way.

“I’m this close to moving forward with my plan! This is no time to have complications!”

Sloan ran his hand through his thinning hair.

“Someone tell me how an idiot boy who barely knows how to cast spells and a buffoon like Blake Moreno managed to escape us.”

He paused and slowly looked at everyone.

“Anyone? Does anyone have an answer that will lessen my desire to kill each and every one of you right where you stand?”

After a long moment of tense silence Sloan plopped down into a nearby chair. He rubbed his forehead. The sound of a new door being installed was grating on him. He sighed.

“We know the boy can cast three spells and cast them competently, correct?” Sloan asked.

Tasha stood up before responding.

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“Yes sir. We’re assuming that he used some sort of teleportation to escape your blast in his apartment. Tonight we saw him cast fire as well as vocal amplification.”

“What about Blake’s claims that Marty is capable of a fourth spell? Did anyone see him cast anything else?” Sloan asked.

Everyone shook their heads and Sloan again rubbed his forehead.

“Sir, from everything I learned when tracking him down for you through the comic this is just a regular kid. Maybe he’s nothing to worry about,” Tasha said.

Sloan motioned around at the damage done to the room.

“Nothing to worry about?” he asked. “Tasha, if you weren’t so beautiful I’d shoot you in the head.”

Sloan stood back up, his anger returning.

“No, this kid is too powerful to ignore,” he stated.

Tasha swallowed hard, afraid to continue to get involved in the conversation. After a moment she spoke.

“Should we try to get him to join us again?” she asked.

“No. If he were to realize his full potential he’d be too dangerous to control. Better to kill him now.”

After pacing for a moment Sloan turned and addressed them all.

“I’ve worked too long and too hard to let some brat spoil my plan. Find him and kill him. No excuses and no failure.”

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Marty slowly opened his eyes. He felt like he was coming out of hibernation. After speaking to Ken briefly about scrolls and the spells when they had returned from Sloan’s, he had fallen into a much needed rest.

“Oh good, you’re up,” Ken said.

Marty looked over and saw him sitting at the computer desk.

“What time is it?” Marty asked.

“9:15...”

“Oh that’s not too...”

“On Thursday,” Ken finished.

His words took a moment to sink in.

“I slept for a whole day?”

Ken tossed him a bottle of water.

“Yup.”

After taking a long drink from the water, Marty got out of the bed. His body was sore from sleeping for so long and he stood and stretched.

“I have something for you,” Ken said.

Marty continued stretching as he answered.

“Oh yeah?”

Ken turned around in the computer chair and held out a stack of papers.

“I printed up every spell you’ve ever used in your comic. I thought it would be cool for you to cast them all and we could figure out what they all do.”

The thought of it made Marty’s stomach hurt. He longed for the quiet life he had been leading just a few days before. He reluctantly took the papers from Ken and looked down at them.

“I don’t know if I really feel up to it right now,” Marty said.

“Oh come on, just a few?” Ken asked.

Marty sighed and began flipping through the papers. He came across one that he recognized. Aerios. It was the air spell that Crosby had used to tear up his apartment a few nights ago. He was about to start casting but paused.

“Everything okay?” Ken asked.

“It’s just something that Blake said the other night at the party. He seemed really confused when I said I could cast four spells.”

“Blake’s a jerk. He was probably just jealous.”

“It wasn’t just Blake. Sloan mentioned it too, talking about how special I was. I don’t think most people can cast more than three,” Marty said.

“Well you can already do four, so what’s it hurt to try another?”

Finding no flaw in Ken’s logic, Marty returned his attention to the paper. He concentrated on the two symbols, staring until they were burned into his memory. Finally he raised his hand and pointed it at Ken’s bed.

“Aerios.”

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A blast of air shot out. It hit Ken's mattress and flipped it up, exposing something beneath. Marty stopped the spell as Ken embarrassedly stepped in front of his bed.

"Those aren't anything of your concern," Ken said, his face reddening.

Marty stepped around him, expecting to see pornography. As he looked down he saw a collection of what appeared to be very girly comics. Titles like Lovely Complex, Fruits Basket and Chobits. Marty recalled seeing a teenage girl sitting in the aisle reading a similar comic the last time he had been at the bookstore.

After grabbing his mattress and placing it back on top of the comics Ken turned around, his cheeks still red.

"They have good storylines. Good character development," he said quickly.

Marty held up his hands.

"No judgments here," Marty said with the slightest of smiles on his face.

Ken pointed to the stack of papers in Marty's hand.

"Looks like four wasn't your limit. Want to try another?"

The stack of papers felt heavy in Marty's hand. He looked down at it and frowned.

"I just want to act normal for a little while. Why don't we go out and grab some breakfast?"

"Your treat?" Ken asked.

"I guess," Marty answered.

"Great!"

After getting dressed Marty and Ken went downstairs.

"Ugh," Ken groaned when he saw Keiko sitting in a chair in the entryway, reading a book.

As they came closer they also saw Blake.

"UGH!" Ken groaned, louder this time.

Blake had been waiting for them and approached as soon as they were down the stairs. Keiko remained in her chair but Marty noticed that she was watching them over the top of her book.

"What do you want Blake?" Marty asked.

"I want you to reconsider."

“Listen, you want to prove that you’re a big man by taking on Sloan, go ahead. But leave me out of it,” Marty said.

“Egoism is the very essence of a noble soul,” Blake shot back.

“Oh brother,” Ken said loudly.

“Bad things are going to happen if we don’t do something about him Marty. Can you live with that?” Blake asked, ignoring Ken’s comment.

Marty noticed that Keiko was still peering over the top of her book, paying close attention to what was being said. He absolutely didn’t want her to learn anything about what was going on.

“I appreciate your help getting out of there the other night but that’s as far as it goes between you and me,” Marty said, trying to speak quietly.

“But...”

Marty waved his hand, shushing Blake. He was staring at the front door of the frat. A tall blonde woman was walking in.

“What is she doing here?” Marty asked of no one in particular.

Keiko lowered the book and spoke.

“She was in town. She called me and asked if I knew where you were staying and I told her,” Keiko said.

“Ooh la la,” Ken whispered as the woman came through the door.

She was in her late twenties and had curly hair that fell beyond her shoulders. She had a trim body from a lifetime spent swimming. She had been a collegiate swimmer and had narrowly missed qualifying for the US Olympic swim team. She had a manila folder in her hand and a hard, angry look on her face.

Marty swallowed hard as she neared.

“Everyone, this is my big sister Tammy,” he announced.

She came towards him quickly.

“I can’t believe you’re...”

Marty’s words were cut off as Tammy slapped him as hard as she could across the face.

“You selfish bastard!” she cried.

She flung the folder onto the floor and Marty’s medical records came spilling out. Keiko was up and out of the chair in a flash. Everyone looked down at the

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pages upon pages of documents and brain scans except for Marty. He had seen enough of those to last him several lifetimes.

“It came back,” Tammy said, her voice cracking. “The cancer came back, didn’t it?”

A soundless cry escaped from Keiko. It sounded like someone had punched her in the stomach and she looked up at Marty as he rubbed his stinging cheek.

“How long?” Tammy asked. “How long did they give you until you die?”

END OF EPISODE 3

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