



For the description of this activity, please look at page 12 of the *Gossamer* Learning Guide

Character Arc Descriptions:

The Woman

The Woman is seventy-plus years old and lives alone with her dog, Toby. She decides to take on a foster child and is discomfited to find out she is going to be receiving an eight year old boy with anger issues. When he arrives she discovers that he is suffering from bad dreams in which he relives the abuse he suffered at the hands of his father. She comforts him and tells him about her own past, including the death of her sweetheart and how she adopted Toby. She patiently fosters the young boy as he prepares to return to school and while his mother tries to pull her life together.

John

John is an eight year old boy whose father physically and emotionally abused him and his mother. He has been placed in foster care while his mother tries to pull her life together. He has severe anger issues, constantly threatening to hurt everyone around him unprovoked. It takes the patient care of his elderly foster mother and the unconditional love of her dog, Toby, to begin his healing process.

Littlest One

Littlest One is the newest dream-giver in "The Heap". She is full of curiosity and fun and can't be serious enough to please her first mentor, Fastidious. She drives Fastidious crazy until she is assigned a new mentor, Thin Elderly. From him she learns how to pull fragments of memory from objects and bestow dreams upon her human charges. She questions what exactly she is, comparing herself to all manner of creatures before figuring out she is something different. She is fighting to keep her human, John, free of the nightmares that plague him. Her skills grow and eventually she is bestowed with her own name.

Fastidious

Fastidious is a member of "The Heap", the dream-givers responsible for pulling fragments of memory from objects and bestowing them in the form of dreams to humans. She is prim and officious and has no patience for the curiosity and playfulness of Littlest One, the newest member of "The Heap". She gladly relinquishes her role as a mentor. Only late in the story does Fastidious admit to her own curiosity and vulnerability.

Thin Elderly

Thin Elderly is the dream-giver who offers to mentor Littlest One when Fastidious finds the task too difficult. He is a gentle mannered coach who teaches Littlest to pull fragments of memory from objects and bestow them on humans in the form of dreams. He also teaches Littlest what type of creatures they are and what they are capable of as they battle to protect their human charges from a nightmare horde of "Sinisteeds." The only time Thin Elderly shows a sign of weakness is when he betrays how fond he is of Littlest. Love is a dangerous emotion for dream-givers for it can lead to darker things.

Character Quotes:

Fastidious: (*to herself*) I'm too old for this. This is ridiculous. I am not going to spend one more minute discussing the rules. Not one more second/ we've wasted so much time, we're going to be late getting back ...

Fastidious: Difficult! That's putting it mildly! She's completely disorganized. She's disobedient. She's forgetful. She talks constantly. She ...

Fastidious: I, ah, have a question. Just a bit of information I wonder about...I'd prefer that you not mention to the others that I even expressed interest. It's just something I've always wondered about. What does, ah, fur feel like, exactly? Is it soft?

Fastidious: Once there is a lessening of standards, well-this is how it starts. The downhill slide. What can I say?

Thin Elderly: No. But I like a challenge. And I like her curiosity, her energy. I'm sure I can train her. I'll switch assignments with Fastidious.

Thin Elderly: here is what you must guard against. Delving means touching too deeply. Pressing your hand instead of using that light flickering touch you just showed me. It sometimes happens unintentionally, when dream-givers become too interested in what they're touching. When they start to like it too much.

Thin Elderly: Never linger. Never press. Everything has a dark underside.

Thin Elderly: You can't be a dream-giver when you become consumed by the darkness.

Thin Elderly: We are the dream-givers, Littlest. We are the only ones who bestow dreams. But a Sinisteed? It inflicts. ... Inflicts something called nightmares.

Woman: I wonder why they describe him as angry. What does an eight-year-old boy have to be angry about?

Woman: He's an angry little boy named John, Toby, and we must be patient with him. He'll be here Friday.

Woman: Dogs are good company. (She chuckles) So are you, comet o think of it. You're good company too.

Woman: He's worth a lot to me, John. He's my best friend. He's my family.

Littlest One: Yes. I collected fragments. I store them inside myself. I can feel them there, still. They make me feel good. There's a fragment of a party. The man in the uniform is there, laughing. There's a bit of dancing. And there's a – There's a kiss. Well, a fragment of a kiss.

Littlest One: I don't even know what that word means. Vunnerable? But it's the boy, isn't it? The new little boy in our house? I know it is. He cried last night, in his bed. Is that what it means, vunnerable? Crying at night? Being sad? Being scared?

Littlest One: And remember how light my touch is? Even when Fastidious was cross with me, she still said I had a wonderful light touch. You told me once my touch was gossamer...I am quite, quite certain I could touch the dog in a fragile and delicate way. In a gossamer way.

Littlest One: Oh, but I haven't! I'm not grown up at all! I still play and act foolish! Look!

Boy: It's John, stupid. And I want a Coke.

Boy: I'm only pretending to like you. When I have you really really believing it? That's when I'm going to break your arm.

Boy: I said SHUT UP! It hurt him. It really hurt him when his father rubbed his face in the floor. But he didn't cry. He never cried. Cry and you get hit.

Boy: Toby, you can't come. But I'll be back here after school. I'll give you a biscuit then.