

((Note: This section takes place towards the end of [chapter 11](#).)

It's ironic; first, the sudden dragon outbreak caused this city to turn into piles of rubble with its inhabitants running to whatever shelter they could find. Then the next day while people rebuilding the city, the very same beings that brought it down were actually helping them rebuild it. Humans called these many things: pity, mockery, and/or goodwill. Colin just finds this ironic and couldn't help but scoff at whoever belittles them. To him, it simply proves that these dragons are better than them. Colin was a 19-year old man with blue eyes, white skin, and brown hair. He wore a white shirt with a teal & black jacket, a black fingerless glove on his left hand, black pants, and teal & black shoes.

Colin settled in his new home on a chair. He hasn't closed the curtains yet, so he looks outside at the streetlights. When he saw them turn on earlier, thoughts began to fill his mind. Everything technology related he has seen that are working are mostly harmless. He knew better, though. If it works, it can be used as a weapon. He kept this thought to himself just to avoid another conflict. He closed the curtains and decides to call it a night.

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((Note: The following sections take during [chapter 12](#).)

It hasn't been eight hours, but Colin couldn't get any more sleep. He heard a loud noise followed by some frustrated yelling coming from downstairs. He could guess what this means, but he cares more about his sleep being interrupted. Sitting up, he looks at a paper bag on a table. He recalls someone needing that bag, but since the outbreak, he couldn't find any trace and thought this someone might be dead. Still, he didn't decide that's that, and from all the yelling, he needs an excuse to get out of the house anyway.

Packing his lance and a small survival gear with the bag in hand, Colin snuck out of the house and walked to the park, the only place where he expects to find the one that's missing. The trip has been uneventful and the man made it to the park. It's too early for anyone to be here, so there are very few people. This also means more room and less noise for him. He found a lone bench sitting by a street light and took it as a good spot to rest on. He sets the bag on the middle of the bench and sits down on the left side, thinking about what to do to pass the time.

Soon enough, he remembered what he read the other day that was about magic. He has an interest in wind magic mainly because he carries a heavy weapon and wants to move fast with it. He didn't bring the book with him, but he does remember what it said. To start, he has to concentrate on hearing the wind first. He started doing just that.

The wind felt calm and gave a gentle breeze, but Colin couldn't hear any of it. He read he was supposed

to hear it, but he wondered how that was supposed to work. His thought was cut short when some young blonde woman came over and asked, "Excuse me, do you mind if I sat next to you?"

'Yes.' Despite the thought to the question asked, the man moved the bag beside him to make room for the other person. It's a free park and this is a free bench, so his thought hardly matters anyway.

The woman took a seat next to the man and looked at the view in front of her for a bit. "So are you an early bird, too?" the woman asked. "I woke this morning, because I slept earlier yesterday. And usually, I go to bed at ten."

*'And here comes the talking,'* Colin thought. It seems as though he's not going to have the quiet, he's looking for to be able to concentrate. He went through some of his options, which are either respond to the next question, ignore it, or just walk away. There's no guarantee that any of the options will get him what he wants, so he figured he might as well compromise. "Some noise at the house woke me up. Had to go somewhere," he spoke.

"I see," said the woman. Then she asked, "Think it was some annoying neighbors?"

"...In the house," the man rephrased. "Old alchemist that owns a store in the market district." Colin lied back on the bench a bit with his arms crossed.

"Oh right," said the embarrassed woman. The lady seemed to have paused, trying to think of something to say, which meant there might be little reason for him to talk. But then he realized he just gave her something else to talk about. "So, I take it you must be his tenant? Or is it the other way around?" she asked.

Colin paused, thinking about why he's even talking in the first place. A certain voice told him to talk to people even though it's their fault he rather close them out most of the time in the first place. "Grandparent... Do you always make bad guesses to people you just meet?" he asked. Now it turns out that he has a hard time keeping his mouth closed, even though that's exactly what's on his mind.

"I-I'm sorry," said the ashamed woman. She turned her head away from his eyes and said, "I'm just trying to have a conversation, that's all."

*'Clearly, you're doing a great job at it,'* the man thought with sarcasm. *'And you decided to make a conversation with someone you never met before.'*

He waits until he heard the next question, "I'm not annoying you, am I?" the woman asked with a nervous look.

The man responded with a hand gesture where his index finger and thumb are almost touching each

other. "A bit, but you're still sitting here," he said with a neutral tone. At least her guess is right this time.

The woman got up from the bench and said, "Oh sorry... Okay then, I'll get going now."

Colin watched as the lady leave from the park, and then shrugged. "I didn't say you have to leave," he said. After his muttering, he went back to what he was doing. There's still a few more hours until the sun shines bright on the city and people come with their activities. He decided to pass the time practicing with the wind before he goes back to the house, where he still has things to move around. There's also the fact that the store needs to restock on things. The supplies could be ordered, but some of them might be too important to wait for. If it comes to that, it's the usual plan with him.

The practicing took an unexpected turn. It wasn't that Colin could hear the wind; he felt it shift a different angle. Throughout the few hours he accomplished something, but it wasn't what he was expecting. He decided to make note of this and figure it out later. At the moment, more people are coming and going, making it difficult to focus. It's time to head back to the house. He looked at the bag on the bench, putting some thoughts on what to do. He stood up and walked out of the park, leaving the bag alone.

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Word has been getting around, but it wasn't anything Colin would listen to, since he only cares about getting home to review. As he thought, the door's locked, meaning the grandparent probably left. He took the spare key out, unlocked the door, and entered. He found a note and a folded up newspaper on the table by the entrance hallway. The note came first, since it's their only way to communicate when the others are not around. Closing and locking the door, he took the note and read the contents.

The note said to read the newspaper as it has some shocking news about the dragons. Colin had a thought bothering him as he looked through the paper regarding dragons. He felt pity for the dragons for all the harshness they've been through. He was only one of many others, and since dragons are a touchy subject that has especially grown in the last few days, he never voiced his opinion. The news about the human refugee camps started some internal conflict in him. He felt the dragons deserved to be free, but this has also made them dangerous. The Aquarian dragons haven't given him any reason to doubt them though. He went back to the note to read what he expected to be brought up.

The supplies for alchemy are running low on certain items that are listed on the back of the note, so the man had to go to the forest outside of the city to get them. Normally, he could get them with no problem, but with the dragons about, he might not have that same chance. So, it was suggested he go to the library to know more about them. He already knew plenty, but it wouldn't hurt to go over the information one more time. Plus, he could figure out the sudden change he had when he was practicing magic. He packed up a couple more things to be prepared for any possible danger. He left the house with the door closed and locked, and headed to the library.

Colin made it to the library with little problems. He noticed dark clouds in the sky earlier signaling possible rain, but that's wasn't all there is to it. Something about it feels strange, but he wasn't sure what exactly. Whatever the case, he's inside, so he won't be getting wet. He picked some books from the shelves that relates to dragons and magic and used a lone table to review. He started with the dragon books first. He skimmed through most of the pages because he already knew plenty about them through these books. He looked for a few subjects in particular, such as their immune systems, defense, restorative capabilities among other things that could be helpful.

Colin learned enough of what's he's looking for in dragons. Their immune systems vary among types, and certain kinds have restorative abilities. As far as defense goes, he only needs to watch for soft spots which are usually the light-colored scales located on the underside. He kept these words in his mind for later times. He did not plan on fighting dragons, but rather planned to better defend himself against one should the need arise. Done with the books, he moved on to the topic on magic. He thought the best place to start would be adjusting to magic.

*'Concentration is the key to mastering. Yeah, skip that,'* the man thought, turning the page to the section that actually talks about what he's looking for. *'Neutral magic to adjust, times of practice, stronger when there's an abundance of...'* Colin's thought trailed off at the last word. "Huh..." Now that he thought about it, the sudden improvement happened today. Before that, practicing took longer and even so, the process was slow. Maybe he's over thinking it, but something along with every disabled harmful technology may have caused a reaction to the magical energy as well. Course, this is just a theory. An actual mage would have to confirm this. For now, he closed the book and returned it and the others to their rightful place. He hasn't eaten yet, so he decided to find a place that sells.

While on his way to get food supplies, Colin remembered where he's at and looks in a specific direction. The street at the market area has a bookstore where he found out had books about magic. His theory about magic came to his mind; and if it's true, then he should be able to learn something more advanced. Though in case the theory is wrong and it backfires on him, he decided he should start with intermediate spells. He can spare a couple more minutes looking before leaving. With that in mind, he decided to enter the store to find the book he's looking for.

The man looked through the store to find a book that teaches the next stages of magic. He looked through some of the pages and noticed that these spells were more complicated than the ones he had done so far. Despite this, he can still understand many of the words and given time and practice, he'll be able to learn many of what that book offered. He closed the book as he minded thought about food and theories. However, these thoughts were interrupted when some red-haired girl spoke eagerly, "Oh good! I am so totally going to kill those dragons with these spells!"

Colin felt a sudden irritation, not because the girl wanted to kill dragons, but because of magic being used as the weapon. He didn't want to hear this, but the lines looked it may take several minutes, and the irritation made it difficult to avoid responding to what the girl said, "That's not going to work."

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Colin didn't make any comments to what he heard from the girl. It wasn't a warning, rather an advice, to avoid doing something that would later on be regretted. Though how would someone like that get it through their heads? He finally purchased the book and was ready to leave until he saw the rain. He gave a dull look as he went through his pack to take out an umbrella while putting the book inside. As the man stepped outside, he opened the umbrella to have it cover him from the rain and walked to a cafe. Checking the price and offer, it seems like a good place, plus the wait time would give him an opportunity to learn some new spells. With those in mind, he placed an order, got a number, and picked a table where he can read his book to pass the time.

When his order arrived, Colin had just enough time to learn two spells: one for offensive and the other for mobility. He only needed to find the moment to practice, especially the mobility one. Until then, he took his time finishing his meal and then left the café. His next destination is the forest outside of the city. The rain seemed to have let up for now, so he didn't need to take out the umbrella again. The moment he stepped outside of the city; things suddenly started to change to him. Within the walls, he lived by its rules, and followed everything that made this city what it is. Out here though, those rules no longer apply and he can do whatever he sees fit. It's a strange thought, but the further he goes, the more accurate it seems.

As he neared the forest, he felt uncomfortable. The distance made it faint, but Colin could still pick up something dark and dangerous. He found out it was coming from a direction he wasn't taking. For now, things seem okay. But that could change and the energy could be at the area he's looking for later on. He decided to make this trip as quick and discreetly as possible and move in. The current plan is to find a stream; after that, he finds what's on the list and leaves before trouble arrives.

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Meanwhile, deep within the forest lies an uninterrupted area filled with plants of many sorts, surrounded by trees. One of the trees stand near the center, beside a hill completely covered by grass, and a stream of water connecting all the way from both and beyond the expanse area. Oddly enough, there were no signs of animal life despite the area being able to become a suitable environment for many. The location was not too far from the city, but it was still deep within the forest.

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Colin recognized the area he was at and took a left turn. Shortly afterwards, he found a stream of water and with it, a few herbs are listed in what he's looking for. He looked around, seeing no one in the area, and goes ahead to extract the herbs. It's a good start, but it's still not enough to head home yet. He went back into hiding in the trees, but stayed as close as possible to the stream as he kept walking deeper into the woods. Some time passed as he repeated the process, spot herbs, and look for anything

that might interfere. And if there aren't, then extract the herbs and move on. He decided to take a break and rest against a tree. On one of the tree branches, he spotted an apple hanging and thought about getting it down with one of the new spells he learned. Getting ready, he focused the energy on his left hand; he felt the magic building up. When it grew to the amount he's waiting for, he released it with a swing. A blade of wind came from the hand and swiftly made its way toward the apple. The apple landed on the ground and he lets out a breath of air in amazement. Picking up the apple, the man could tell that it was a clean cut, but only a third fell to the ground. He knew he can use this spell now; he only needs to work on the accuracy.

Feeling he took enough time, Colin moved on to the task at hand. Eventually the stream led to a clearing, but he stopped before he even got near the area. Just the sight alone was enough for him to back away in suspicion. *'I don't remember a clearing being here,'* he thought. Memory wasn't the only thing that made it suspicious. The energy itself seemed to be all over the place, particularly on the ground, almost as if all of them are connected. Fuming, he took out a pair of binoculars to look around the place from his position. The man found several identifiable plants and several herbs that put him on edge. They're most of what he's looking for and the amount made it so someone has enough to last a few weeks. For a herbalist, this would be an amazing place, but he knew this was too good to be true. Taking another look, he spotted something on top of the hill, the back of a familiar person with a flaming hand. *'What the... Isn't that the girl trying to pick a fight?'* Colin thought. He put the binoculars down at another sight; something was moving in the area. The grasses were forming behind the red-haired girl as silently as possible. Colin made out the shapes to be vines and completely hid himself from the tree. At least now he has an idea of what's going on. The plants do not like the fire the girl was giving out.

The four vines lunged toward the girl, aiming to restrain her while one would put a painfully tight grip on the arm that has the flaming hand until those fires are gone. The girl recoiled in surprise and screamed as she struggled to free herself. The fire spread from her hand to the rest of her arm and more flames appeared on her other limbs.

Colin made no attempt to even try helping the girl. She's the one who came to a suspicious place without thinking, so now she has to deal with what happens from that point. He felt the energy of the area starting to gather to the spot on the hill soon after he heard the yelling. A different type of energy caused that, making him guess what this mean. *'Nice going, lady, you just pissed them off.'* He goes through his pack, coming up with a plan in case he somehow gets involved in this. The distance and location he chose makes it highly unlikely to get noticed by both sides.

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As soon as the girl entered the water, a vine appeared from the ground soaked with water to try pulling her leg. However, it missed, leaving the other plants to try and force her away. The moment she ran away, the plants slowly retracted into the ground, seeming as though they never appeared at all, save for the burnt areas. After some time of peace, the plants on the hill started to move away toward the other part of the land, dispersing a camouflage. The being uncurls himself from his still state and looked

around the land, inspecting the damages done to this place. He growled in irritation and looked to where the girl ran off. "Defiler! Never come back again!" he roared with a matching tone. He pressed his left claw on the damaged ground, transferring life magic into it. When he removed the claw, the spot looked wondrous again. He continues to do the same for the other areas. As he does, he started to consider something he was told. Humans are using weapons and magic, and until something is done, it would be better if he goes somewhere far from their influence. *'Perhaps they're right, but these lands need healing. I cannot leave my work unfinished,'* the plant dragon thought. *'This area needs my magic. If I leave now, they will wither. I require time.'* The plant dragon was light green in color, his wings were tree branch-like with leafy membranes and leaves of various shapes at the tips, his eyes are white, and he is roughly 12 feet tall.

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Colin had a dagger in one hand and a vial in the other. He was ready to pour the vial on the dagger should he somehow get involved, but now it seems it's already over. After he put them away, he used his binoculars to see the plant-like dragon revealing to be the hill. It became clear. *'Yep,'* he thought before he covered his right ear when the dragon roared something about defiler. He only watched for a few minutes before deciding that the dragon is not going to leave the area long enough for him to gather those herbs. He went back to the direction where he came and took another path to find and gather herbs before heading back to Windfall. As time passed, he began to wonder about the dangerous energy he felt earlier. He didn't feel anything, so he guessed that it was probably gone or out of range. Either way, it didn't matter to him as long as he can continue what he's doing.