

((Note: The following sections take place during [chapter 14](#).)

A few minutes later, the tree house came into view and Chi flew up onto the landing. She opened the door and they went inside where she set the now dead fish on the counter. The dragoness explained, "I'd given up on it. Figured it was just a part of me now." The idea of making herself more or less whole again was exciting. She looked up to see Chi holding a pair of fish. "But let's eat first." The hybrid started scaling the fish. She washed pair after putting it in a pan along with minced garlic, salt, pepper, and butter. Katherine was busy exploring every inch of the room she and Chi were in. Her nose found its way into corners and cupboards. While her tail swished with barely contained excitement. Despite her enjoyment at exploring the girl's treehouse, the smell of cooking fish started to make Kat think more about her empty stomach.

When the fish were done, Chi scooped them onto plates, dribbling a bit of lemon juice over both. She took the two plates to the little table and set them down. "Here we go. Can you manage on tables?" she asked. Chi, even with a draconic body, still mostly resembled humans. She wasn't familiar with the toils of being four-legged.

Katherine padded back to the table and said, "Chairs and tables I can manage, forks and knives on the other hand..." She gazed down at her feet for a moment. "I'm still pretty elegant though. So I won't make a mess or anything," she explained and used her head to push a chair into place before gingerly climbing up onto it and twisted round carefully so as not to knock the table by accident.

Chi sat down at the table with the dragoness. "Well alright then, just wanted to make sure," she said, picking up a fork and knife. "Ah no worries, I love cooking," she assured, taking a cut of the fish and eating it.

"It smells great, Chi. Thanks for the meal," Katherine stated happily, waiting for the hybrid to sit down as well.

Chi swallowed the bit and looked at the magi again. Katherine had her snout in the food, but surprisingly enough wasn't making a pig of herself. Instead, she had maintained an air of dignity while she ate. She looked up from her plate, licking her lips as Chi spoke with a grin, "Humans are curious. They may have a lot of nasty points but... they're really good at making stuff. With food, too. Like cooking meat and seasoning it like this. It's wonderful. I learned cooking from humans."

The dragoness gazed down at her half-eaten fish and asked, "I suppose...but what if the humans decide they want things to go back to the way things were before?" She stated ponderously, "We took away a lot of their power, but it's not like they can't just make something new." Then, as if it was an afterthought, she realized how heavy she was making the atmosphere. She added quickly, "Err...but with the new guards at the city I guess we don't have to worry."

The hybrid emptied her plate, staring down at it as if in thought. "True enough, they could do something. But... that kind of thought only brews the hate, wouldn't you say? If everyone keeps taking counter measures to prevent an attack that hasn't even been thought up, people will always despise and distrust each other. Living together in peace starts with trust if anything. Not that everyone always agrees, but that's why the Aquarians are watching as a sort of neutral faction I suppose. The police," she laughed. Chi took her plate to the sink and set it down.

"I suppose you have a point, guess I'm just afraid," Katherine said before finishing her fish.

Chi shrugged and said, "It's always natural to be afraid in these kinds of situations. And I dare not say everything will go perfectly fine. But what matters is if the majority puts an effort in. On either side, there will always be bad eggs."

"I suppose you're right," Katherine said thoughtfully. Then she took the plate in her mouth and hopped off the chair to bring it over to the sink. She placed the plate on the counter for Chi. The magi stated ponderously, "Thanks again, Chi. I suppose I should be on my way. I've already delayed this trip longer than I intended." Then she added cheerfully, "I'll be sure to come right back if I find anyone so you can meet my family."

The hybrid grinned, "Alright, I wish you luck. Come back and visit sometime."

"Thanks, Chi. I'll see you around," Katherine said cheerfully and with that, turned to face the door. She thought about battling with it, but instead let Chi get it for her and glided down from the entrance to the soft grassy ground. The dragoness turned back to give one final wave before marching south.

Kat had barely made any progress when a message rang through in her mind, *'Hello? Can anyone tell me the best place for a plant dragon to go to? I thought about going south to Solomos, but I heard they're full of trees in the northwest region.'*

18-year-old Tyler's steps were each accompanied by the chink of his lantern's chain as it swung to-and-fro on his staff. He was a silver-haired guy with red eyes and pale skin and wore a wizard's outfit consisting of a black wizard hat with a brown belt around it, black cape that was red on the inside, brown long-sleeved tunic, black pants and black shoes. The night was starting to set in and in the dark his lantern cast an eerie glow. In his hand, he twiddled a pair of stones while strutting about in the night. Today he had a bit of arson in mind. He had heard about the fire earlier and found it inspiring. But which place to burn? There were so many options. Tyler continued his little strut down the darkening street stopping occasionally to prospect a building. The young man was now staring into a jewelry store. Sure, the place wouldn't burn as easily as the woodworkers' place down the road, but he could actually get something of value out of this little escapade, too. To top it all, he could hear the sounds of crowds elsewhere in the city and just a moment ago, a golden dragon looking like it was flying for its life had

soared overhead. With everyone so thoroughly distracted, Tyler figured he could get this done without a hitch...hell, maybe even set the place next door on fire too before anyone notices. That is, assuming the two idiots, a man and a dragon, at the fountain just a little way down the street would leave. He had been here ten minutes and they hadn't moved an inch. Were they meeting someone? Or perhaps they had both been stood up and were too thick to figure it out. Either way it was an inconvenience to Tyler and it was getting on his nerves. As another minute ticked by, he decided he would have to take the risk. He took a moment to peer into the window and see what caught his eyes. Set on some lovely gold bangles, a pair of mother-of-pearl earrings and a very attractive gold necklace, the boy began testing the weight of the stones he had been twiddling a moment ago and discarded the lighter of the two.

Tyler backed up a bit from the store window, took one glance in the fountain's direction and with a practiced motion hurled the stone at the window. The stone punched a small hole through the glass sending huge cracks through the entire pane before landing somewhere in the darkness of the store. The boy wasted no time in charging forward and smashing through the weakened glass himself. The alarm was already sounding. Tyler made a beeline for the bangles, smashed the glass with his staff and scooped out the bangles. Turning on his heel, he waved his staff and a flame appeared. It grew in size and became vaguely lion shaped. "Burn everything down," he instructed. The burning apparition set about launching itself against the walls and displays, while Tyler made for the gold necklace.

The mage had hooked the gold necklace with his staff when a worried voice echoed through the burning building, "Is anyone stuck in there?"

This caused Tyler to spin around his staff at the ready and the necklace still dangling from it. *'Damn that was fast,'* he thought to himself.

But instead of threatening with arrest the Aquarian guard told him, "Hey! Stop! Don't you know the buildings on fire!? You're going to suffocate in there!"

"You don't say?" the mage replied as though they were talking about the morning news. He wasn't sure the dragon was putting two and two together, but the longer he didn't get it, the better. "Thanks for the concern I appreciate it. Here-" Tyler flicked his staff and sent the necklace through the air to the dragon, who caught the flung jewelry on his snout horn. He turned and vaulted one of the few surviving displays before making a beeline for the back door. The blazing apparition on the other hand launched itself at the dragon's mostly isolated face, aiming to latch onto the Aquarian's snout.

The Aquarian didn't look phased as teeth clanked against his armor. He pulled out of the store, prying the apparition off, which dissipated into a ball of smoke. Tyler was still inside the building as the dragon circled round it and bellowed, "Halt! You're under arrest!"

'Ten points for cluing in,' the mage thought sarcastically to himself as he slipped the gold bangles onto his staff arm for safekeeping. The smoke was starting to get too thick for Tyler in the building. *'Options...options...Ah!'* He gave his staff another trio of waves. The first caused a small boy-like

stone figure to rise from the ground. The second created a staff identical to his own and the third summoned a current of lightning that resembled an elk. Panting from the lack of oxygen and the extreme effort of three conjuration spells at once, Tyler set his staff down and quickly planted his hat and jacket on the stone figure. "Keep...your...head down...and run...as fast as...you can." The mage gulped and sat down. "The jacket and hat should have enough of my scent on them. I wear 'em all the time. And you make sure to distract that dragon." Fake Tyler and the elk both nodded and before leaving, the fake plucked the candle from Tyler's lantern and placed it in his own. It opened the door and ran away as the Aquarian looked up at it and stared for a moment, sniffing at it. The elk shot out of the room straight at the dragon, aiming to take it by surprise while fake Tyler booked it down the back alley. He batted it to the side with his wing, charging for what smelt like the boy. Tyler listened to the very brief scuffle outside as the decoy tried to make a break for it. Hearing the sound of flapping wings, Tyler decided to peer out of the door. The back alley was empty and the fire was dying down. Now it was his chance. With his staff in hand, the mage skulked into the alleyway and away from the store.

((**Note:** The following sections take place during [chapter 16](#). Also, this section is not canon to the RP.))

Jason had escorted Kathia back yesterday before returning to the inn to get some sleep. He rose as the daylight shined through the window. It would be another relatively uneventful day he figured. For now, he just needed to get better with the bow and sword. Especially if his foes were to be dragons. Last night's murder was all but forgotten; it tickled that back of his mind a bit, but he ignored the thought. He had more important issues to deal with than some murderer who was probably too cowardly to face off against someone who could defend themselves properly. Jason got out of bed and did some stretching exercises to start the day. He had to be in top form if he was going to show off his bowmanship to Kathia today.

((**Note:** The rest of the story is canon to the RP.))

The sound of voices stirred Tyler awake. Last night had been both late and eventful. Yawning and stretching, the boy finally decided to get up before someone found him. He was currently tucked away behind a large pile of boxes in a warehouse. He would have preferred an abandoned warehouse, but with the city so newly rebuilt there weren't any. Tyler conjured up a new jacket and hat and put them on before creeping out a back door as workers began to bustle about.

Katherine was slow to rise as the plant dragon shook her awake. She had been curled up in the same

clearing the dragon had been resting in through the night. Katherine inched her eyes open to look up at the plant dragon, who said, "Good morning."

She let out a large yawn before getting to her feet and stretching. "Morning, sir," came the reflexive daytime greeting. The magi paused in her stretching as she caught herself. She stated quietly to herself, "Right, guess I don't have to say that anymore."

The plant asked, "Did you sleep well?"

Katherine gave herself a quick once over to see if new scales had rotted during the night and as usual there had been a new batch that needed to be preened. "Give me a sec to catch some breakfast. Then I'm going to clean up in the river before we get going if you don't mind. I won't be long," she said to him, walking off to the river still quite clearly groggy from the few hours of sleep they had.

The plant followed her there and asked, "Is that supposed to happen to your scales?"

The dragoness answered, "My scales rot away all the time. They aren't really supposed to, but I have what the humans called a mutation that causes them to do that. Being bred in captivity certainly didn't help either; I can't even fly for very long because of that." The last bit came out in a frustrated growl.

The plant asked, "You were in that city. Was there anyone who could tend to it?" As if he had another thought, he asked, "May I see your wings to see how they are?"

Katherine felt a little shy about the request. She really wasn't fond of displaying her issue to others. She explained, "Alright you can look at one. But I've already been shown to healers. Not even the white dragons could permanently fix it." They stopped and she extended one wing for him to examine. "Honestly its mostly that I just need practice....and perhaps a little strength training." Barring a few rotting scales on the surface, there was very little wrong with her wings. The wing membrane beneath the scales was untouched by the rot.

He looked towards her back as he said, "Yes, since I suggested that you practice. But since I know about this, I need to see if it has also affected flight." The point where Katherine's wing was attached to her body was the right size, but it was also here that the number of rotted scales was significantly greater than most other spots over the magi.

Kat waited a moment for him to finish with his inspection. She asked, "Soo...are they sky-worthy?"

At this point, the plant was done with his examination and he told her, "A lot of scales are rotting on the back where the wings are attached, probably the most out of the rest. That could have an effect on your flight."

The dragoness took a backward glance at them when he mentioned the higher density of rotted

scales. "Oh, that's normal. Since joint scales are softer, they tend to rot faster. Some preening will get rid of them and make space for new ones to grow in. If that's your only concern than I guess I just need practice and perhaps some work on my stamina?" she said with a hopeful smile. She didn't like feeling weak and helpless.

The plant responded, "Do what you think is best. The road to Solomos is long."

The magi suggested, "Well I could try some strength training when we set our next camp."

"Alright," he said before they resumed going down to the river.

Once at the river, Katherine sat down and raised a paw. Beneath the water's surface was a rather bountiful selection. "So, did you come up with a name last night?" She called back to the dragon, but keeping her focus on the river.

"I had a few in mind," he said as he recalled what he got. "Verdant, Stride, Zest..."

"Verdant has a nice ring to it," Katherine said absentmindedly before thrusting her paw into the water. With a rough almost scooping motion, she launched a fish out of the river and onto the land. Her tail pinned the still wriggling prey to the ground as soon as it hit grass.

The plant said, "I thought about things that relate to greenery and giving life. Those names are what I came up with."

"It's good that you came up with some ideas for a name. Sticking with traits that define you was certainly a good bet. And it paid off, too."

"It hardly feels that way," he said in response as if he felt that there was something missing.

Katherine considered his response in silence for a moment before chiming in again. "That's only because no one has used your name yet. I'm sure you'll start feeling better about a name once we start using it. But...if you're still uncertain, I can just keep calling you Green until you settle down on one."

The plant replied, "No. I kept thinking about it. Repeated it to myself sometimes. The words themselves mean life and greenery; but to me, it's just empty names." He took a few seconds to say this next, "A name you came up for yourself, not a gift given by someone who cares."

Katherine thought about his words for a moment. They were surprisingly deep. She mused out loud, "So in other words, a name from someone like a parent, really close relative...or a friend?" That would mean he would be without a name he liked for a good long while. At least until he found someone that would be of significant importance. Unless she counted as a friend...then again, they just met. They barely knew each other.

"Right and you know my story," the plant replied. "I rather be nameless than make up one for myself, but I still need one. So, I'm fine with you calling me 'Green'."

"Green it is until we get you a proper name," she concluded before returning her attention to the thus far-ignored fish. She slapped another fish out of the water and pinned it with her tail as well. Then the dragoness said, "Oh, I forgot to ask how many fish you wanted."

"Herbivore. I already ate," he told her.

Seeing as Green didn't need any, she tossed the first fish back into the river and ate the second. Once finished, Katherine licked her chops, stood and stretched. "I guess we better get going. I really held us up this morning," she said, looking at the sun in the sky. The magi turned to face the river, their first challenge although...they could probably just glide over it. "I'll go first," she said, feeling empowered after their little chat. Kat backed up and took a running start at the river. She jumped at its ledge and flared her wings out, giving them a few good flaps and then gliding to the other side. Her landing was rough and she almost overbalanced. "Your turn!" she called back to Green.

The plant dragon started taking flight by unfolding and flapping his wings, raising his forelegs up first and then his hind legs. Getting up to right height, he made his way to the other side and landed on hind legs first, then his forelegs. Folding his wings, he looks at Katherine and says, "After you."

The magi felt a twinge of jealousy seeing Green's superior flight technique. "Thanks," she said simply as she took the lead as indicated by Green. "We've got a lot of time today, so let's try and cover a lot of distance today," Katherine proclaimed, psyching herself up for what she was sure would be a rather long and boring trek.

((**Note:** This section takes place during [chapter 19](#).)

Stretched, fed, dressed, and raring to go, Jason left the inn ignoring a journalist still snooping around for a scoop on the murder last night. He had his quiver and bow with him along with some makeshift targets. He had told Kathia to meet him at the same back lot they had gone too the first time they met. Jason arrived to see the girl already there waiting for him with her head buried into her spell book. "So ready to blow my mind?" he said to Kathia as he walked up to her and set down his quiver of arrows and bow.

((**Note:** This section takes place during [chapter 20](#).)

Tyler wandered the streets of Windfall sporting his brand new golden bangles on his legs. The staff lamp in his hand was extinguished since it was daytime out. Humming happily to himself as he sauntered on, Tyler paused at the sight of a wanted poster. On it was the face of a dashing young boy sporting a very stylish hat. He tore the poster off the wall and stuffed it into his jacket before continuing on down the road. As the boy meandered through town, he heard sounds in the distance and stopped at an intersection. It sounded like a carnival farther down the road to his right. Tyler stopped and took some time to think. *'Hmmm....should I go? On one hand I love carnivals. On the other, the police are still looking for me and will most certainly be stationed there.... bah, a good chase'll be fun,'* he thought with a satisfied and somewhat sadistic smile. Tyler started down the road towards the carnival sounds. *'I'll have to be careful getting in. Front gate won't exactly be an option.'* The carnival loomed just ahead of him. He had taken a road that leads to the fence rather than one of the main gates. Tyler peaked around the corner of the street carefully, making sure there were no patrols nearby. Once satisfied, the conjurer slunk across to the fence and clenching his staff in his teeth climbed up the fence. Halfway up it wavered under his weight but remained standing. Tyler climbed the rest of the way and hopped down on the other side. Now it was time to enjoy the festivities. Tyler stood absolutely still for a moment holding his staff over his hand. With a small wave of the wooden staff, money started to pile up in his hand. It was all human currency, but it was worth a shot. He wasn't sure if people were using a new currency. Satisfied that he had enough money to enjoy the carnival, Tyler stuffed the money in his pocket and made out for the attractions. He was meandering around the carnival with a pocket full of money and not sure what it was he wanted to spend that money on. There was cotton candy, corndogs, and various other carnivalish things. He spotted a fortune teller's tent and huffed. Sure divination wasn't exactly impossible, but most people claiming to see into the unknown were frauds. So Tyler doubted the 'seer' in that tent was any different. He continued to peruse the place looking for the thing to start with.

Tyler had started skipping, having recalled a tune he was quite fond of. He did a little spin and noticed someone watching him...well actually a few people were looking in his direction at this point, but most just spared him a passing glance before looking away quickly as though afraid they might catch whatever it was he had if they stared too long. But, this blonde lady in punk clothes was actually watching him; watching and smirking. She had that kind of dominant smirk, like she was looking at an inferior and he couldn't help but be drawn over to her. So over he went hopping to the tune replaying in his head. Each step punctuated by a rattle from the lantern's chain or a jingle from the anklets on his feet. The lantern itself had swung dangerously close to some people's heads and there were grumbles of frustration, though Tyler seemed quite pleased to be a hazard rather than sorry. "Hello!" he said cheerily to the girl as he approached. Tyler noticed the black feathery wings on her back and thought it kind of strange. After all people didn't normally have wings. "Those are cool. How'd you get 'em?" he asked, tossing all manner of tact to the wind.

The young woman paused, glancing over her shoulder and said with a fake smile, "Oh... these are just from a spell. They'll go away soon." Then she asked him, "Shouldn't you be with your parents or something?"

Tyler had ignored her question about his parents completely. Not because of anything terrible; it was just irrelevant in his mind. Both were capable casters and both had been proud when he left home to carve his own path as a conjurer the year before. Granted neither of them knew of his criminal behavior, and he didn't know if they had survived the night of the Spell. The boy said as he babbled, "Magic? Transformation magic I bet. Always wondered if that kind of stuff hurts. I bet it does, growing and losing limbs like that. It must be very painful." He walked around her to examine the wings.

The girl cocked an eyebrow at him as her hands slipped into her pockets idly. "No, it doesn't really hurt. They're not real anyway. It's just temporary magical limbs. Anyone knows light magic can nullify dark magic. So my wings... would...." she trailed off, her face slacking.

The explanation of the effects of light magic on dark magic was currently boring him. He was beginning to wonder at what point she would reveal the lecture's relevance to her wings. "And it's just temporary, too. Well if it hurts, seems like it would be a waste. Imagine running out of time mid-air," Tyler said, still babbling away like it was nobodies' business. The girl raised her hands and the ground bubbled a black cloud and gooey substance. A form rose from her collection and took form and color. It was a light dragon. Moving over, she touched it briefly. Her black wings melted away and her black claws turned into normal human hands. Tyler had never been a keen detector of magic so it was something of a revelation when Kai melted her wings away with light magic. "Darkness-based. Very cool," he said partway between impressed by her wings and amused by how she got rid of them. His attention shifted to the light dragon. At first, he was pleased to see a fellow conjurer, but one good look at the light dragon told him that the magic she used while similar was different from his. There was no life and no will in the dragon she had summoned.

Once satisfied, she melted the dragon back into her collection. The girl cleared her throat and explained, "Ahem, yes well, light dragons have light magic pumping through them. They cut through any dark magic they touch." But her words about the dragon had simply gone in one ear and out the other as Tyler pondered other studies of magic he had been taught about.

The boy stopped in front of her again, having gone full circle. Holding out his free hand, he said, "It's nice to meet another spell caster. Name's Tyler Garth."

Her hands went back into her pockets as her eyes narrowed hesitantly. Her shadow moved, taking a opaque form and shaking Tyler's hand briefly before going back to normal under her feet. "I'm Kai," she said simply.

'More shadow magic. She likes to flaunt,' he thought to himself, grasping the shadow in return and giving a shake before it retreated back into her shadow. The girl looked at him with mild interest. "The necromancer," Tyler added under his breath just loud enough for Kai to hear as she introduced herself. She smirked slightly in response. "It's nice to meat you Kai," he said to her just as cheerily as he had when he first introduced himself to her.

The necromancer said, "Why yes, I am a necromancer and quite proud of it. I've gotten myself quite the collection." She paused for a bit before she joked, "And you must be a conjurer from what half the city saw last night." She half-chided, "Not a very stealthy thief, are you?"

"Half? Well, I guess hoping the whole city would know is asking a bit much of one little fire. I didn't really do it for the bangles, although that certainly was a nice bonus," the conjurer said, giving the bangles a little shake that made them jingle. He had revealed that stealth hadn't exactly been on last night's itinerary since Tyler loved making a scene of his activities. Kai cocked an eyebrow at his response to being seen. "I don't care for stealth. Now evasion of capture and still causing lots of public trouble. Now that's worthwhile," he stated, seemingly very pleased with himself. The girl's breath hitched and she averted her eyes, scratching her cheek idly. Tyler asked, "So do you kill your collectables yourself or do you just rob graves?"

Kai started, "Well... I..."

"You seem like the grave-robbing type to me."

"Do I?..." she responded. She reached out and patted him on the head as she said, "I suppose if I see something I like... I collect it. And what about you? Where does your wealth lay if you do not even steal for gold?"

Tyler chuckled a little and caught on to her insinuation as he replied, "Be it living or dead, eh?" The girl kept her simple smile as he adjusted his hat back to the way it was after she finished patting his head. "Me? Heh, we conjurers can just conjure what we need," he said and made a motion as if about to flick a coin. There was a ringing sound after his thumb snapped out and glint of copper landed in his hand. The boy opened his hand to reveal two small copper coins. "So really everything else is just appearances and entertainment," he said, letting one drop to the floor and pinching the other between his thumb and finger. Tyler raised his arm at a somewhat awkward angled with his elbow jutting out. There was the sound of snapping fingers and a dull wuzz before someone farther away cried out in pain. People turned to see a man clutching the back of his head screaming for the culprit to come forth. Tyler was looking smug, but kept quiet for a moment to enjoy his show before. He asked Kai casually, "Probably shouldn't linger. Wanna enjoy the fair with me?"

She asked quietly, "Heh, rotten little thing, aren't ya?" She beckoned him along as they moved through the fair.

"Whatever do you mean, Kai?" Tyler said sarcastically to the necromancer's comment. The conjurer feigned innocence as security rushed by to find out what had happened back where the man was yelling. Kai snorted at the feigned innocence of his question. Her hands found their way to her pockets as she looked around.