

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

Kai made her way through the back allies of Windfall, back to Undertaker's shop. She stepped inside, closing the door behind her. Undertaker was off at his desk, writing away at some papers. He was a long-haired grayette, pale-skinned man dressed in a black robe, top hat, black pants and black shoes. His hair bangs kept his eyes from being seen; but somehow, he could see anyway. His cauldron boiled silently, being the only noise aside from the quiet scribbling of words. Kai frowned briefly before flattening her expression again. "I got the repair spell down," she said, moving deeper into the store and over to his desk. Undertaker merely chuckled. "So when do I get to learn the next one?"

Undertaker glanced up, "You want to learn the final form technique?"

"I do."

A sly grin crawled across Undertaker's face. "A dangerous technique," he noted, going back to his scribbling.

"I don't care... I just..." she trailed off, leaning forward to look at what he was writing.

Undertaker whipped the papers away into a black leather bound book with skulls etched into it. "No, my dear, there's nothing about souls. Not for you." He closed the book.

Kai asked, "And why not? I already learned to collect passing souls. Teach me to recall ones that have passed on."

"Because that is forbidden to you humans. I told you to stop looking into that. I'll know if you stumble across anything. And if you try to use it... Well..." He stood up, quickly passing Kai in height. He said with an eerie smile, "I may end up owning you, too." Kai sneered, folding her arms across her chest and looking away. He chuckled, "Now did you want to learn that technique or not? As I recall, you said you had a genuine interest in necromancy. Unless you're lying to me. You have a growing obsession for souls." He chuckled again.

The girl corrected, "No!... I want to learn it." Kai knew full well that Undertaker knew she had other motives, just not the why. She would keep it that way. Though, he could probably find out, had he the motivation. Damn that man, Reaper, and his smugness. He seemed to know everything, or was really good at acting like it. The girl stood back from Undertaker. She asked, "So what does it take to do this final form? And what makes it so great?"

Undertaker chuckled, "Fair questions. But do you know what the weakness is for mages?"

"Mortality? Easily overcome by necromancers."

He explained, "A cute gesture, but no. A mage, necromancers included, tend to be more range-based. They rely on casting spells and familiars to protect themselves. Though if they are run down and forced to fight with their own body, most fail. That is what final form is for a necromancer. It means you won't have to rely on your puppets to save you in a dire moment." The man circled around behind Kai. "It's a morph ability and a dangerous one at that. While in it, you can siphon the life force of others around you; but at the same time, you constantly will lose life force to fuel it. You may consume souls from your collection to compensate, however. In this form, you'll find you have enhanced strength, both physically and in magic. A powerful technique, but depending on how strong you are in it...you may kill yourself using it because of its fuel source." He grinned at her, lacing his fingers together. "So saving it as a last resort in itself is a risk since by then you may have already expelled much energy in battle."

Kai snorted, waving him off with her hand. She pried, "Yes I get it. So explain it already."

"Very well, start with this." Undertaker pulled a dusty book off a high shelf and tossed it to her. Kai plopped down on a nearby chair and started reading while Undertaker finished up with the contents of his cauldron. Many lessons went like this, where she read to get the main points down while he criticized her practice of it. She finally finished and gave it a try. Concentrating magic on herself, a black smoke enveloped her. It snaked around her hands, tainting them to a pitch black color and sharpening her fingers to points. It stopped at her forearm, going still. She blinked for a second, wondering if anything had happened. She had not transformed into the full form. The girl looked down at her hands and yelled in alarm. Her mentor laughed, "Oh relax, it will fade."

Kai frowned and made a small huff. There was a long moment of silence before she felt something fluff on her back. Her eyes lit up in alarm once more and she stiffened. That did not feel right. Glancing over her shoulder, she saw she had sprouted a pair of black feathered wings. Again, she yelled out, "AM I TURNING INTO A CHICKEN!?"

The man grinned, "Certainly not. That would take a special kind of stupid to mess up that bad. You are merely experiencing a partial transformation. You seem to lack the power to do a full one. You'll just have to study."

Kai did a turn-about and yelled, "What the hell am I supposed to do with these? I didn't will them on!"

Undertaker sat at his desk again. "They'll disappear within a few hours on their own. It happens when you use magic, you're...incapable of controlling." He said with a grin still, "Now I believe you know what to practice, so go on. I'm sure you'll blend right in with the festival going on." Then he let out a cackling laugh.

The girl growled and stormed off. She re-entered the streets of Windfall, exiting the alley sporting black claw-like hands and large black-feathered wings. People whispered, stared, and moved away in alarm.

She yelled at the crowd, "WHAT!? WHAT ARE YOU ALL SO INTERESTED IN!?" The people looked away immediately in discomfort.

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

Kai wandered around the streets, stopping short to look at the festival. Maybe that would draw attention away from herself. She snorted and walked to the town square, entering the festival promptly. She felt a disinterest in stealing anything. Nothing worth stealing at a measly fair. She tried to get used to her new...temporary limbs, trying to fold her wings against herself. She groaned, "I don't know how you manage these." A few clicks came from her shadow in response. She looked around the crowd and saw an older boy with a staff and witch hat. Boy, that reminded her of Nick. Where had she seen his face? She looked to the side and saw a wanted poster with his face on it. That would be where? *'Oh yeah, the idiot from last night. Amateur thief,'* she smirked.

This young man started skipping before he did a little spin. Kai glanced away for a moment, only to notice that the boy was looking her way now. Apparently, she had stared a bit too long. Oddly, he came skipping right through the crowd to her. Well, perhaps it was not that odd, since he had blatantly broken into a shop for a sloppy robbery beforehand. So why should he not be bold today. 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. Kai kept herself from frowning as he drew closer and stared at her. "Hello!" he said cheerily to her.

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((Note: The following sections take place during [Chapter 21](#).)

Just after the festival paraded ended, Woltar flew into the town square, landing next to the fountain. He was too bulky to perch on it like his right-hand dragon, Crowe, who had announced to the crowd about upcoming meeting that was to take place now. Woltar had announced the news about the possibility of terrorists coming to disrupt the city's racial harmony. So, the Aquarians have gathered dragons of different elements to each the people the magic they need to defend themselves with. Albel stood with his arms folded across his chest as Woltar spoke. Rika and Fayt were nearby, pausing in their chatter to see what the booming dragon was saying. When he finished, the elder hybrid snorted and said in a snide tone, "Yeah, humans and dragons with angry tempers learning magic. This city is gonna burn from the inside out this time."

Fayt rubbed the back of his head and said hopefully, "I don't know...it could work. Even if for the sake of defending the city like he said. Swords and arrows only go so far for the humans against magic anyway."

Rika popped a small piece of carnival food in her mouth. She said, "Who cares? You guys never mingled with either race much anyway. What does it matter to you if we destroy ourselves? Besides, I wouldn't mind giving magic a try. Might help my hunting." She shrugged.

Fayt frowned, wanting to protest since he enjoyed the company of humans. He suggested, "Well there. Maybe you can make some dragon friends for once."

The woman glanced at the both of them, "Oh I already have some draconic friends." Albel seemed to be preoccupied, watching people pass by in the town square. Parties were not exactly his thing, unless they involved good food. Carnie food was only food to him by bare definition. Rika saw Woltar talking to a blonde-haired woman. The white-haired woman shuffled closer to the large dragon as he addressed a question about where to go for magic lessons. *'So they're open now?... Well then...'* she thought, looking at the city hall. "Oi," she turned, looking at the brothers. She asked, "I'm checking out that magic thing. You coming?"

Fayt raised an eyebrow, "Why would we?"

Rika rolled her eyes, "You still have magic elements, don't you? Maybe you can bother to learn something other than spewing it out your mouth." Then she walked towards the building.

The white hybrid stared thoughtfully for a moment before musing to his brother, "She has a point there. We could try it."

"Whatever," Albel grunted. The two followed after Rika, entering the city hall. There was a string of different dragon breeds, large dragons of each type representing their elements. They sat ways from each other. A few people had already wandered in, talking to different masters about their elements.

A fire pygmy fluttered down, "Welcome to the training center and city hall! Would you like to try your hand at magic?"

"Yes, yes," Rika ushered.

The pygmy asked, "Would you like help deciding an element or do you know what you want?" Fayt and Albel moved past, roaming to their respective elemental masters, fire and ice.

Rika paused, not sure now that she thought about it. She glared briefly at the ground, "And just how do you help?"

"Oh, right this way." He led her off to another room where a pink & purple dragoness sat. Her eyes were completely white and she held a glass ball in her paws. The pygmy said to her, "This one needs a little help."

The dragoness waved the woman closer and she grudgingly approached. The dragoness cooed, "Place your hand on my sphere, child." Rika cocked an eyebrow but did so, seeing the once clear ball fill with a smokey substance. "Ahh yes....yes...troubled past...but strong-willed. Try your luck with a light magic master." She grinned and waved the human out.

Rika exited the side room where a few others were waiting outside to get a suggestion. Looking around, Fayt and Albel had found their respective 'elements' and were demonstrating what they already knew. She fidgeted and looked around. There was a bright white & golden-feathered dragon that sat near a makeshift scribbled sign that read 'Light magic'. She stiffly moved over to the dragon and stared up at it. *'Had to be dragons, didn't it?'* she thought with a frown.

The dragon took notice to the new arrival, "Welcome," he greeted. "Are we coming to learn the basics, or do you already know some light magic?"

"Basics," she grunted.

The dragon looked at her thoughtfully, plainly seeing her dismay. "Light magic is about an honest mind set. Light is pure, light is insightful, and it is just." He flashed bits of light magic in his claws as he addressed the points. He looked over her shoulder, "Ah, an archer. That'll fit nicely into magic. But for now, let's try a simple exercise." He picked up a lantern and set it on the ground in front of her. It was completely enclosed, except for a single one inch hole from which light escaped. "Here, sit. Now with what I told you in mind, focus on the light. Try to imagine the particles that make it up, flowing separate from anything around it. Try to bend the light beam with your mind. Even if just a little." Rika sat down in front of the small beam of light and stared intently at it. She focused for a while before the light finally bent to one side. Her face lit up in astonishment. She had not actually expected to be able to do it. The distraction made the light flux back to its normal position. The dragon encouraged, "Very good, try it again. See if you can hold it." Rika focused again and the light bent. It wobbled but stayed in place. "See? All in the head. Magic has nothing to do about gender, species, or brute strength. It's all in your mind capacity. Light is made up of many colors. This white light here is what happens when all the colors merge and reflect off their surface together. See if you can separate the colors. Make a prism. A rainbow," he encouraged. The woman stared at the light beam and thought of the different colors of the rainbow. She imagined pulling them apart like a Twizzlers candy. The beam in front of her followed, spreading out into little chords. Her face lit up again, smiling at what she accomplished. "Great work! With this magic, you'll be able to manipulate the flow of light. You can even learn to create your own light to light your way. From here." He pointed to Rika's chest. "Your heart. Soul. Whatever you want to call it. It comes from inside. Magical potential is only as limited as your own mind." The woman nodded and looked over. Albel seemed to be learning more breath techniques. Maybe how to improve temperature. He did after all, only have red fire. Looking elsewhere, Fayt was with the ice magic master. He was learning to complexly control his ice. Even turning it to water form by the looks of it.

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When Tyler learned of Kai's ability to con people of both genders with her androgynous look, he made a playful challenge to her to see how much of a discount she can get from one of the vendors. She summoned a rosebud hatchling from her collection to take part in her plot. She handed her stuffed animal to the conjurer and picked up the hatchling, holding it to her chest. She wandered over to the stand and did a double take, stopping in. She smiled and looked at the assortments, musing, "Oh wow, these look great."

The girl at the stand laced her fingers together, "Thank you! We have all sorts to choose from, and the main store is right down the street there." She pointed to the business location.

"They look tasty. Where do you get them?"

The vendor smiled, "Oh I made them myself."

"That's amazing, I've never seen anything like these. How do you do it?"

The girl flushed and explained, "Oh I molded them in pans and with my hands. I do the little details with small tools."

"Sounds like some hard work. You got some serious talent here. And a good amount of creativity. Look at all the shapes and colors," Kai said partially to the candy hatchling. The rosebud swiped her paw at a large wrapped dragon gummy on a stick. "You like that one?" the necromancer asked with a giggle.

The store owner chirped, "Oh, would the little guy like one?"

"Well let's see..." Kai rummaged in her pocket, pulling out a handful of copper pieces, enough for one. She laughed, "It seems I'm running low; fairs tend to soak up all my money." She paused briefly before saying innocently, "Wouldn't really be fair to my little one back there to only get something for one." She motioned back to Tyler.

"Ohhh," the lady squealed, "It's alright, I'll give you two for the price of one."

"Really?"

"Sure, you got such cuties and the fair is supposed to be fun."

Kai gave her the copper and took the candy, smiling, "Why thank you."

"Come visit the main store some time," the lady waved at her as the necromancer retreated.

Kai moved back to Tyler and handed him off the large wrapped dragon gummy on a stick. She smirked, "There, little rat."

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A while later, Rika was silently playing with a beam of light. She had learned to fluently bend it around and split it into strands. She moved it about the floor, enjoying herself more than she had in a long time. The dragon spoke up again, "Looks like you got the hand of it, but how about creating your own bit of light?" He instructed, "Focus on a place; manifest your magic into a small spit of light. Think brightness." The girl did so and after a minute, a small speck of light appeared. It looked like a firefly, floating. Focusing harder, it started to spin and bulge into a baseball-sized light. She motioned back with her hands and it floated back into her palms, hovering there.

Fayt sat in front of his newly acquired skill of doing complex tricks with his ice. Specifically, the ice sculpture he had made with his breath. "Very nice," the instructor nodded. "You may want to learn that over better before you get into temperature control. I believe you could learn to melt your ice into water breath as well. It would certainly help with fires."

The white hybrid nodded at this and stood up, "Thank you, I'll take my leave now." He stood and walked over to his brother. Albel was attempting to learn an advanced technique from an Aquarian, but was not succeeding at the fire-eating technique. It looked like he kept choking on the flames as he tried to 'eat' them. Fayt smiled at Albel's attempts at the high-leveled technique. "Maybe a break is in order," he suggested, tapping lightly on his brother's shoulder.

The black hybrid grunted and straightened up. "I don't need a break. I need practice." He turned and walked off. Fayt smiled apologetically at the fire master and followed Albel as he walked towards Rika.

She was sitting on the ground, trying to maintain a ball of light she had created. She glanced up at the two hybrids and lost control of the light. It imploded with a quiet pop. Sighing, she stood up, dusting off her hands. She murmured, "Well that's enough for me today." Rika beckoned Albel & Fayt and headed towards the door. They walked out, breezing past the festival. She had seen enough of these in her lifetime and considered them a waste of time. Or at least a money sink. Everything inside was low quality and cost a small fortune. Not that was one to complain about money issues, but it was the principal. The hybrids did not have money anyway, so they followed without much care. Fayt was not particularly enthralled by it and Albel was far from the festive-type. Rika stopped and turned, saying flatly, "I'm going home for lunch and practice." She left the two hybrids outside the festival.

"Wanna go out and practice, too?" Fayt asked his brother. Albel grunted and moved forward, walking out of town and to the edge of the woods. He did not have much to practice on with no pre-made fire, so he decided to work on his temperature. He moved over to a boulder and started to breath fire on it. Fayt looked down at the ground. "Well let's see then..." He held his hands out in front of him and curled

his fingers as he started to breath his ice breath. The ice flakes took shape, forming slowly into a snowman.

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((Note: This section takes place during [Chapter 22](#)..))

Zaros moved slowly through the heavy crowds of Windfall, looking around curiously as he walked. He was a man in the height of 6'2" and has extremely long white hair with a bluish tint. His eyes were turquoise and his robes were light purple & white with his shoulders being bare. The rims on the shoulder end of the sleeves were heavily covered in white feathers. On his arm was a silver "Hollow" crest, showing a dragon encircling an orb of water. It represents an ancient group of water mages. This was his first view of the city since it had its major change. That being the Aquarians overhauling the place. People seemed happy enough around this strange festival going on and yet, there was a pending sense of disdain around the city. An awkward tension between humans and dragons as they are suddenly forced to live together. His face was slack, almost in a frown and his eyes slitted. He thought, *'Such a wasted effort. After that spell went off, they clearly don't want to be together. The wounds are too fresh for them to force dragons and humans together.'*

Akira ran up, slowing at the last second to trail behind Zaros. The 17-year-old boy asked, "I thought you hated the whole dragon-hugger thing? Why are we here?" He shoved his hands into his pockets. His hair was black and his eyes being blue. He wore a white shirt underneath a black jacket with each sleeve having a white line running down. His pants were also black.

Zaros slowed to a stop in front of the town square fountain. He looked up at it thoughtfully, looking over its details as he explained, "I don't hate it. I think it's dysfunctional. I wanted to see the changes here myself. This place is a ticking time bomb from the looks of it. The Aquarians have to keep constant watch with guards to keep standard peace. History has shown however that there has to be a pecking order. Someone needs to be on top in order for things to truly remain in order. And that's what I'm going for."

The man shifted his gaze from the statue down to eye level when he heard someone close by address who could only be him, "And what do we have here? A mage of the Hollow Bay?"

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((Note: The following sections take place during [Chapter 23](#)..))

After Zaros and Akira left, Akuma's eyes darted around at a sudden commotion, settling on a human girl being berated by a guard. Boy, did that guard look pissed; he looked like he was going to smash the poor girl into the ground any moment. He said with a smirk, "Heh, she's probably pissing herself." He enjoyed



seeing a human on the receiving end for once. Nick moved over to intervene with the situation. Akuma frowned and trailed behind, standing a few feet behind Nick as he piped up to get the girl's attention.

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Zaros stopped outside of the city hall doors. He stared up at them in silent contemplation. So this city had been entirely rebuilt by the Aquarians. *'Impressive...to rebuild such a vast city so quickly... A valuable skill,'* he thought, staring at the architecture. He continued inside and let his eyes wander. He looked over the various masters of the elements finishing up with people. *'Teaching humans magic to protect themselves... A risky play.'* He stood still in silence.

Akira suddenly came running through the door, gasping for breath. He huffed, "Would you stop doing that!? How am I supposed to do my job if I don't even know where my client is?"

Zaros looked ahead, asserting, "If I need your services, you won't have to worry about such things. Make no mistake of that." He glanced over his shoulder. "This effort to make humans strong and capable with magic could easily backfire with the right nudge. Many humans still aren't happy with the revolt. They want to use the magic powers to kill dragons. How small-minded." He walked forward, keeping his voice low so as to not draw attention. Akira trailed behind. "Dragons are a valuable part of this world. And yet, they are powerful and equally sentient. It's basic instinct to want to make a pecking order in civilization. Even the animals understand it is necessary to have a properly functioning society. In the end, one must reside over the other in superiority, then."

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After that encounter with the necromancer in black, the girl who called herself a trainer left. Akuma huffed, looking off somewhere else. "Good riddance," he mumbled as Sparks disappeared.

Nick smiled as he turned to Akuma. "Well, look at that, I was able to help someone without being punched in the face!" he said smirking at Akuma as he ruffled the hybrid boy's hair. Akuma smirked at the notion. The Veristan had not even seen the punch coming that time.

The same necromancer stopped in his tracks and said to Nick in a cold tongue, "Better watch your mouth around me, mage, or I'll use your skull as a cup. I will very much kill you without any help from a minion and watch as you suffer from poison. Unlike your friend necromancer, I personally hunt my prices, but for right now I have my own mission I need to do. And I would kill you even in front of a hellfire dragon, but if not for the fact I already had a fight today. My sword would have been run through you right at those words." Then he walked away from them.

Akuma bared his teeth at him, spouting in anger, "Hah, the other necromancer would MAKE time." It was true enough, Kai seemed to go out of her way to mess with people even with her mysterious schedule. He could even smell her nearby; it seemed everyone was at the festival today. The hybrid

snapped his head to the mage like a child who wanted to 'tell on someone' to an adult.

The necromancer yelled back, "You're not even worth my time, hybrid. So do everyone a favor and get lost." Then he got further into the distance.

Nick said to the hybrid, "I'm sorry, did you hear something? I could have sworn I heard the voice of the wanna-be-necromancer. Again." Kai weaved through the festival crowd of Windfall. People were probably eating something cheery like this up after the tragedy only days ago. She headed towards the town exit, glancing at the crazed bar and winking at Nick as she passed by. The mage nodded his head in greeting as he moved on. Nick stuck his hands into his pockets as he questioned, "Anyways, disregarding that random incident, what do you want to do now? We've already eaten, seen the performers and you don't want to go on any rides, can you think of anything more to do?" He looked up at the sky and yawned.

"You promised marshmallows," the hybrid piped up finally. Truth be told, it was late afternoon, but Akuma was not feeling it yet.

The mage grinned. Teleporting off before zipping back in a moment, he tossed a bag labeled 'Mallows' at the hybrid. He questioned, "Here you are, true to my word. Maybe tonight I'll get some more and we can make s'mores. Have you ever had s'mores before?"

Akuma opened the bag and reached a clawed hand inside, bringing out a marshmallow and packing it into his mouth. His fangs worked awkwardly around it, but he seemed to enjoy it none-the-less. He swallowed after a moment, looking up at Nick. "S'mores?..." he asked. The boy shook his head. What was a s'more? More human food? If it was like marshmallows, he'd give it a go. He reached into the bag for another marshmallow.

Nick cocked an eyebrow, asking, "You've never had s'mores before? This is a crime against nature, we must go now!"

Akuma started blankly at the mage for a moment. "Crime against...nature?..." he murmured curiously. He thought if existence as a hybrid was a crime against nature. Was not knowing what a s'more was worse? Perhaps it was a human joke. After a moment's thought, he decided this was more likely with Nick. Akuma yelped as Nick grabbed the him by the wrist, dragging him off back towards the house. The mage certainly did seem excited about these s'mores. '*Whatever then...*' he thought, letting himself be dragged away. What could it hurt?

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((**Note:** This section takes place during [Chapter 24](#).)

Once out by the gates, Kai looked around. The street was empty over here, a perfect place to do some work. Sifting through her collection, she pulled up a guardian dragon. She said with a smirk, "Let's have a look, shall we?" The undead dragon stared blankly at her. Kai circled the dragon once and nodded, muttering, "A little rough, but it does take a lot to take you guys down." She set to work on mending the old, torn flesh.