

# The Wielders - Chapter One: The Bruise

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Your greatest enemies are closer than you think.

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Melis did her best to hold back her tears as she ran. As much as she tried, she couldn't fight the image of Rahmi, lying on his back with a broken neck and choking on his own blood. She was caught between the guilt of abandoning him and the weight of the mission he had given her. She was running fast but in her opinion not fast enough. The guilt hovered over every inch of her skin like a heavy rash. She had just left the only person in the world she loved in a one on one battle with the most notorious murderer in their city. She came close to clearing her mind, but a little tear drop fell from her left eye to her nose and reminded her of why she was in pain. She shed tears of sorrow because she loved Rahmi and she shed tears in anger as she thought of how Rahmi was ashamed of his own life. He taught her everything she knew about bravery but called himself a coward. He taught her everything she knew about strength but called himself a weakling. He taught her everything she knew about making a difference, but he called himself irrelevant. What's wrong with him, why does he refuse to give credit to himself even when credit is due, why'd he need to act so brave, who was he trying to save, what sins was he trying to atone for? With every one of Rahmi's flaws she pondered upon, she felt an increase in her heart rate. She used what she remembered from her training from the wielder's academy to exploit it. By taking advantage of the number of pulses running through her body, she was able to send the joules to her knees and feet. Her pace tripled, but her strides remained constant. She had activated spark pace. In seconds she transcended into a mindless motion, almost floating through the road that split the forest. The tall trees on the sides of the dirt road flapped past her like tiny winds kissing her cheeks. She was finally allowed relief when she got off the dirt road and got onto the pavement leading to the royal barracks. When she got onto the pavement, she noticed that the spark pace left bruises on her feet, bruises even her closed sandals couldn't hide. It was a well know side effect of spark pace. The site at the barracks was even more ominous than she expected. Hopeless soldiers were laid across the walls of the hallway, each looking more depressed than the next. On the other hand, Melis found it strange that none of them were bleeding. If the Red Ghost's reputation truly preceded him, each of the soldiers would have either had a broken

neck or be gargling on their own blood. "Melis is that you?" It was Lord Baris; he stood tall and proud in a black robe made of black silk. A red sash ran horizontally across his torso, often grabbing attention due to its bright red colour. The attention, however, always went to the gold plated badge on his left breast area; a proud symbol that ensured all in his presence that he was a genuine army general. "Lord Baris, my guardian is in trouble. He went after Hager, and I don't think he'll manage to stop him." "Why would he do something so careless?" Lord Baris asked. "We need to get him out of there before he compromises our strategy." "What strategy?" "That's none of your concern little girl. Just sit your disrespectful little ass down and wait for me to get a team together." What team is he talking about? These guys don't look like they're preparing for battle. They look like they just lost one. Badly! Whilst Melis waited impatiently for the general; a slightly less proud figure rose from the shadows. Lord Adalet was a far more polite but far less influential general. Many people in Lord Baris's company felt as though they were coming up for air whenever Lord Adalet walked into the room. His cotton robe was a humble blue, and his smile was sympathetic. He approached Melis and knelt before her. "I'm so sorry to be the one to tell you this dear, but Rahmi has made a grave error. I'm sure you've noticed that our soldiers look tired, and there's a reason for that. We sent a large number of them to the far east of the island to set traps for the Red Ghost. For this to be achieved, they had to convert an unusual amount of stored heat energy into joules. To avoid Hager, they had to use forest dirt roads and spark pace. And now that you're Rahmi has acted so foolhardy, our traps are now pointless." "He didn't know about any of your traps, I swear," Melis whimpered. "I know dear, I'm sure he was just worried about how many innocent people would die if Hager managed to escape. But in life . . ." Before Lord Adalet could finish a seemingly upset Lord Baris aimed his index finger at Melis. He demanded that she show the soldiers where Rahmi was, a request Melis was delighted to oblige to. When Melis led the soldiers and the generals down the path Rahmi took, she found him in the exact state she expected. She found him on his knees, his face heavily bruised and trying to spit out whatever little blood he still had in his mouth. "He went that way!" Rahmi shouted, struggling to stand up. As soon as he did a soldier grabbed him by the neck and forced him back onto his knees. Rahmi looked up and finally noticed Melis was there with them. His eyes were wet with embarrassment. He couldn't stand her seeing him like that and so he looked the other almost immediately. Lord Baris walked up and stood in front of Rahmi. "Do you know what you've done, you little wanna-be?" he shouted. Rahmi was speechless. "You just spoiled a master plan to recapture Hager. My men are all tired from hours of running with spark pace. And you come here thinking a stupid fish farmer has what it takes to save the entire island." Melis stood and watched as two soldiers picked Rahmi up and began to carry him back to the inner city. She looked over at Lord Baris, he must've thought Melis wasn't looking. He attempted to give Lord Adalet a celebratory handshake but Lord Adalet stopped him and made him aware of Melis's fierce stare. The two army generals walked away and as they did Melis diverted her attentions to the soldiers' feet. Each of them wore open sandals yet not a single soldier has bruises on their feet. Melis stood frozen to the ground as she pondered. Aren't even the best wielders incapable of avoiding spark pace bruises. Don't spark pace bruises only leave the skin after twelve hours? Didn't Hager just escape about an hour ago?

Wasn't it the generals who said their soldiers looked defeated because they were runni . . . ?

Bastards!!!