

The Wielders - Prologue

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If energy cannot be destroyed, then neither can a man who puts all his energy into being powerful.

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It's said that parents often try too hard to push their children into achieving their own dreams. Despite not being a conventional parent at the time, I was no exception. Melis may have been half my age, but she showed twice the potential I did at her age. When I was her age (12), I was interviewed by five wield masters, each interview ending in polite rejection. With Melis it was different. As soon as the high council assigned me to her as her guardian, I was sure of her massive potential. It took the wield masters a little longer to realize it. But when they did, each begged her to join their respective dojos. One even went as far as promising me a bribe where I to persuade Melis to join his dojos, an offer I obviously rejected. The prospect of wielding was always a struggle for me. The masters made it seem as simple as learning how to ride a bicycle, but it wasn't. A true wielder has the ability to store kinetic energy in their own body, convert it into other forms of energy and then use it in battle. It's an action that requires one to fully master both his body and mind. After a year of wielding a child is given their battle gloves. The reason for this is that when a wielder wishes to attack, the kinetic energy stored is converted at both hands; the gloves protect their skin from being burnt. After months of failing to convert my kinetic energy into tiny sparks of electricity, I dropped out of wielding and studied agriculture. Unlike me, taking agriculture was an actual choice for Melis. She was able to create the sparks within two weeks. Her reason for taking agriculture was that she wanted to be a fish farmer, like me. I ridiculed the idea until the school promised me that she would be learning at an advanced level. Whereas I at her age learnt about the life cycles of fish, she learnt about the controlled and semi-controlled conditions of aquaculture. Despite having been a fish farmer for over five years, Melis knew far more about the technicalities of the trade than I did. And that particular day was an example of her intellectual prowess. We were in the process of adding lime to the ponds we had just created in the outer areas of the city. As was the tradition we added lime before adding the water. All I knew was that we did it so as to harden the water but Melis explained to me that it was because we needed to stabilize the Ph of the water i.e. makes it less acidic. I would have loved to know more but the sound of people in the inner city screaming interrupted. We could see people

running in different directions, but the screaming seemed like it was headed in our direction. A five-inch wall fence stood between the inner and the outer areas. He somersaulted over it with ease. When the living breathing epitome of sociopathic ambition finally came to a visible distance, he was as frightening as expected. The oily and cream-white scales on his skin gave him the appearance of a walking alligator. His eyes were pitch black, and his eyeballs seemed to be almost escaping their sockets. He wore plain blue cotton shirt and shorts, standard prison wear. His dark red leather cape hung off two metal pins on his upper chest. As the wind blew, the sides of his cape swayed with it. I imagined this was what prompted the nickname 'The Red Ghost.' After his capture, the Army made sure all his belongings were stored in a building far from his cell. Escaping our prison should have been difficult enough for him, meaning he probably risked recapture so that he could get his cape back. The path he was using to escape the city ran just beside our new ponds. I ordered Melis to run to the inner city and tell the guards from the royal region that the Red Ghost had defeated the guards from the prison region. She ran diagonally, avoiding his path whilst running towards the inner city. My second order was to the villain himself, I ordered him to stop and return to his cell. He kept running towards me until he was about five meters away from me. "So tell me, fish farmer," he said. His voice was hoarse but calm. "How is a pathetic mosquito such as you going to stop someone who just killed eight guards?" "I don't know but . . ." Before I could finish my sentence, he ran towards me with his hands mimicking the strike of a sword. A thin but fierce sonic wave carried me off of my feet and tossed me into a waterless pond. By the time I got back up, he was already back on the run. I could feel an aching in my rib cage as well as my jaw but I had to keep up with him. A wielder at his level would have easily outpaced me where he able to utilize his spark pace. Advanced wielders could transfer a portion of their kinetic energy to their leg muscles and use it for motion; this advanced acceleration is called 'Spark Pace.' The lacerations on his calves, however, helped me understand why he couldn't or rather why he wouldn't use his spark pace. I assumed his legs were deliberately abused as a way of reducing his odds of a successful escape. I on the other was unable to invoke my spark pace but only by virtue of simple mediocrity. I had already felt one of his powerful waves . . . and that was him in a rush. There was no way I was going to defeat him. My only option as far as I was concerned was to hunt him down and keep him busy by providing myself as a distractive punching bag. My tactic was either going to leave me with a broken neck or gargling on my own blood. I knew Melis wouldn't have enough time to save me. But if I did my job right, she would have enough time to save the city.