

A STUDY IN HAPHAZARD MAGIC

1.06 | THE FIRST TEST

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FADE IN:

EXT. ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH/BELL TOWER - NIGHT

EVIE stands in the top of the old church's bell tower. Rain pours down across the city.

She leans over the small half wall that fences the platform of the bell tower to look down at the road.

TALL SORCERER (O.S.)
Ah, good, you're here already.

Evie turns quickly, startled. She gets a glimpse TALL SORCERER before he sends out a blast of red energy that smashes into her chest.

Evie's lower back slams into the top of the half wall, she overbalances --

and falls.

For a moment Evie is in free fall-- only to suddenly jerk to a stop, swinging high above the ground.

She looks up.

A large, grey, clawed hand is wrapped tightly around her forearm. Her gaze drifts further, along a grey muscled arm to a monstrous face with glowing eyes and a fang filled snout.

A GARGOYLE come alive.

EXT. SUNSET APARTMENTS/ROOFTOP - NIGHT

MS. BELLADONNA shoos LINK further away from the door then stands protectively in front of him.

LINK
No, you can't --

Ms. Belladonna turns her head enough to give Link a wink.

MS. BELLADONNA
I think you'll find that I can.

The PLAIN SORCERER bursts through the door onto the roof. He takes a second to take stock of his surroundings and grins when he sees Ms. Belladonna and Link behind her.

His grin slowly turns to a look of worry with what happens next.

The air around Ms. Belladonna ripples with magic and the facade of the old woman disappears. Revealed in her place is a DRAGON, dark purple scales shimmering in the rain and lights of the city.

Her mouth doesn't move when she speaks next, magic carries her words telepathically.

MS. BELLADONNA (CONT'D)
(telepathically)
Now this seems like a much fairer
fight.

The Plain Sorcerer takes a step back.

So does Link.

LINK
Whoa.

Ms. Belladonna turns her head slightly to eye Link.

MS. BELLADONNA
(telepathically)
Will you be alright, dear?

LINK
You're not going to eat me, right?

Ms. Belladonna HUFFS, amused. A small lick of flame escapes her mouth.

MS. BELLADONNA
(telepathically)
My sister was the man-eater.

Ms. Belladonna turns to the Plain Sorcerer and ROARS into his face, exposing a mouth of razor sharp teeth and a purple forked tongue.

The Plain Sorcerer doesn't step back this time, he holds his ground in the face of the beast before him.

The Plain Sorcerer holds a hand out in front of him. At first nothing seems to happen -- and then water droplets become visible in the air, coming together into half a dozen balls of water.

The water suddenly freezes, elongating into sharp spikes. With a wave of his hand the Plain Sorcerer sends the spikes flying towards Ms. Belladonna.

A burst of FLAME from the dragon is enough to melt most of them but she raises a wing to block the few that make it through. They all bounce off tough scales and she starts her approach.

Ms. Belladonna slinks along the ground like a cat, jaws SNAPPING as she backs the Plain Sorcerer up.

MS. BELLADONNA (CONT'D)
(telepathically)
Stay behind me link.

EXT. BEARPORT RESERVE - NIGHT

The SORCERESS sitting on Asher's car sends a wicked grin his way.

ASHER stands awkwardly before her, looking half ready to run, half ready to fight.

SORCERESS
Come on honey, first hit is free.

She spreads her arms out wide, stares Asher down.

SORCERESS (CONT'D)
Unless you're too scared to attack a woman. Trust me honey, whatever you can throw at me I can take.

ASHER
Stop that.

SORCERESS
Stop what?

ASHER
Stop calling me 'honey'.

SORCERESS
Hit a nerve did I?

She slides off the hood of the car and stands with her hands on her hips.

SORCERESS (CONT'D)
Make me, honey.

Asher grits his teeth and sends a burst of green magic at the Sorceress but she easily deflects it.

SORCERESS (CONT'D)
Oh, green, very interesting. Still,
that was child's play at best.

Asher sends a contained ball of magic at her this time. It CRACKLES and BURSTS upon impact with her shield.

SORCERESS (CONT'D)
Is this all you've been taught? And
here we were worried that Miles had
actually found some sorcerers who were
talented.

ASHER
Shut up!

He moves to strike with another magical attack but the Sorceress beats him to it.

She slams her hands onto the ground, a momentary ripple of magic before the ground beneath Asher ERUPTS upwards, sending him flying backwards into a tree trunk.

Asher groans, winded. He tries to stand but falls back against the tree after barely making it off the ground.

The Sorceress makes her way towards him. An unnatural wind kicks up in the small clearing. It throws up leaves and dirt into Asher's face but the Sorceress is unaffected as the wind swirls around her.

SORCERESS
Such a pity.

She raises her arm but before she can command her magic a large branch falls from the canopy above and STRIKES her outstretched arm.

The Sorceress shouts in pain, pulling her arm back in close to her body. The wind buffeting the clearing dies down some.

SORCERESS (CONT'D)
What the hell?

There is a noise in the trees. A SKITTERING and RUSTLING not

caused by the wind. Then a sound Asher recognises --
LAUGHTER.

Asher takes initiative with the Sorceress' distraction and sends a green blast of magic at her legs. She deflects it, barely, stumbling backwards.

SORCERESS (CONT'D)

Nice try baby sorcerer, but it's going
to take a little more than that to --

One the faeries suddenly drops from the the trees above and latches onto her hair. A second faerie aims for her face but she dodges it and rips the first faerie from her hair, tossing it aside.

The wind picks up to be it's strongest. A third faerie tries to make it to the Sorceress but it's slight form is tossed away by the gusts.

Asher starts when he notices movement on the ground next to him. Dozens of small faeries are avoiding the wind by crawling along the ground.

The Sorceress grits her teeth, backing up a step.

Asher finally staggers to his feet, watching as the fairies continue to push the Sorceress back.

ELHARR (O.S.)

You are not welcome here.

Asher and the Sorceress turn to find ELHARR standing at the mouth of the path.

SORCERESS

Call your damn faeries off!

She aims a kick at one on the fairies that has gotten close. Asher is quick to bring up a magic shield, protecting the faerie from the full force of the kick.

ELHARR

No.

The Sorceress continues backing up, towards a motorcycle that went unnoticed until now.

SORCERESS

(angry)

Fine.

She points at Asher.

SORCERESS (CONT'D)

You got lucky this time.

She flings her hands out and the wind RUSHES forwards. A number of the faeries on the ground are thrown back and Asher raises his arms to shield his face.

The motorcycle engine REVVS loudly. Asher looks up just in time to see the woman peel off down the road and into the night.

As silence descends once more the faeries begin to chatter amongst themselves. The sound swells until Elharr speaks loudly, his voice the cracking of tree limbs and the whispering of wind.

It was some kind of instruction as the faeries all disappear back into the trees leaving only Elharr and Asher facing each other.

ELHARR

Consider your debt repaid.

Elahrr turns and leaves. Asher slumps back against the nearby tree.

ASHER

What the heck...

INT. NOTABLE NOVELS - NIGHT

MILES sits at the counter. In front of him are a number of open books, all of them look old. Miles himself is typing away at a laptop, brow furrowed as he scans what's on the screen.

A phone RINGS. Miles makes a noise of distaste but fishes his phone out of his pocket. His eyes are still on the laptop as he answers the call.

MILES

(into phone)

Asher. I thought my directions were more than detailed enough.

INT. ASHER'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELLING

Asher drives down a dark road, rain still PELTING the windshield. His phone sits in the cupholder, speaker on.

ASHER

(annoyed)

The instructions weren't the problem.
Your little test was.

INTERCUT with Notable Novels.

MILES

What do you mean my test? Dropping off
plants is hardly a taxing task.

ASHER

I'm not talking about the faeries, I'm
talking about that crazy woman you
sent.

Miles stills. Asher finally has his full attention.

MILES

What woman?

ASHER

What woman? The one who showed up and
tried to kill me!

MILES

(urgent)

What did she look like?

ASHER

You know what she looks like.

(beat; unsure)

Don't you?

MILES

Asher, I didn't send anyone else. Only
you.

Asher is less angry now and more worried.

ASHER

Miles, who was she? Because she wasn't
pulling punches. If it wasn't for the
faeries --

MILES

We can talk about that later.
(hastily gathering his things)
Right now I need you to get in contact
with Lincoln. I doubt you were the
only one to meet someone unexpected
tonight.

ASHER

What about Evie?

MILES

I'll find Evelyn. You focus on Link.

Asher is entering the city proper now, the continuous rain
has kept most people indoors but there is still a number of
cars about.

ASHER

Okay I'll try --

There is a loud monotonous BEEPING from the phone. Miles has
hung up.

ASHER (CONT'D)

Damn it, Miles!

He hits the steering wheel, frustrated but understanding.

ASHER (CONT'D)

Phone, call 'Link'.

PHONE

(robotic)

Dialling 'Link'.

EXT. SUNSET APARTMENTS ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Link stares with wide eyes at a scene off screen. He is
startled out of his surprise by the RINGING of his phone. He
pulls it from his pocket, taps the screen, and holds it to
his ear on autopilot.

LINK

(into phone)

Hey.

INTERCUT with Asher's Car.

ASHER

Are you okay? What's happening?

LINK

Whoa, calm down. Are you okay?

ASHER

I got attacked by some crazy woman so
I'm still processing on that front.

LINK

What? Me too!

ASHER

You were attacked by a crazy woman?

LINK

Well, not exactly. There was this
creepy guy but it's being handled.

Panning around Link slowly reveals Ms. Belladonna has the Plain Sorcerer pinned under one of her feet. She SNARLS inches from his face, mouth glowing with barely contained flame.

ASHER

You handled it?

LINK

Not quite. I had a bit of help.

(beat)

I had a lot of help.

ASHER

Cool, you can explain it all to me
when I pick you up. Just don't die in
the time it takes me to drive through
the CBD.

LINK

You got it.

Link hangs up the phone.

MS. BELLADONNA

(telepathically)

If you have a spare hand, Link, I
could use your assistance.

LINK

Of course.

EXT. ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH - BELL TOWER - NIGHT

Evie stares up at the Gargoyle that holds her tightly, her eyes wide.

EVIE

Ohmygod.

The Gargoyle speaks then, voice rough and gravely.

GARGOYLE

No, but this is certainly the place to look for him.

Evie barks a quick laugh, more shock than anything.

GARGOYLE (CONT'D)

Here, let's get you back up.

The Gargoyle reaches out his other hand and Evie quickly grabs it.

He pulls her back into the bell tower, Evie assisting with her feet against the outside wall.

EVIE

(breathing hard from the adrenaline)

Thank you.

GARGOYLE

You're more than welcome.

EVIE

Where did uh... oh.

The Tall Sorcerer who attacked Evie has been dragged onto the roof of the church. He is pinned in place by three other large gargoyles, each of them HISSING and SNARLING.

GARGOYLE

Only fools come to our domain and try to cause trouble.

EVIE

I can see that.

GARGOYLE

I assume you weren't here to cause trouble.

EVIE

No! I was here to...

Evie pats down her body, searching.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Uh, I was here to...

She glances around at the ground, and spots what she was looking for -- the bag. She swoops down to pick it up.

EVIE (CONT'D)

That! I mean, this. I was here to deliver some rocks.

(beat)

This delivery makes a lot more sense in retrospect.

She holds out the bag and the Gargoyle collects it carefully from her hands.

VALERIUS (GARGOYLE)

Thank you, you've done us a great service. You may call me Valerius.

Valerius holds out his hand. Evie accepts the handshake.

EVIE

Evelyn- Evie, to most. And to be honest, I think you were the one who did me a service. If you weren't here I'm not sure what...

(beat; a shaky breath)

...what I would have done. So thank you for helping me out.

MILES (O.S.)

Evelyn!

Evelyn and Valerius peer over the edge of the bell tower railing. Standing on the sidewalk, hands in the pockets of his trench coat, peering up from under the brim of his hat and getting rained on, is Miles.

EVIE

Ah, I'm being called by my- well, I don't know. Weird man in a trench coat I guess.

VALERIUS

May I escort you down? I wouldn't mind
(MORE)

VALERIUS (CONT'D)
having a word with Mr. Kurr.

EVIE
By all means.

Valerius surprises Evie by slipping an arm around her waist and pulling her close. He steps up onto the bell tower rail and then off it -- turning to plant his feet against the wall and grabbing the railing with his free hand.

He begins to descend, climbing carefully and doing his best not to jostle Evie.

EVIE (CONT'D)
O-oh, okay...

VALERIUS
(grinning)
My apologies, we rarely use the
interior.

When they near the bottom of the church Valerius carefully lowers Evie to the ground and makes sure she has her footing before he lets go and drops to the ground himself.

Miles approaches the pair, his posture casual but his face betraying more complex emotions.

MILES
(nodding at Valerius)
Valerius.

VALERIUS
Miles Kurr.

MILES
Evelyn, you're okay?

EVIE
Yeah, some test though. Who was that
guy?

MILES
It wasn't a test. I didn't expect
anything like this to happen. You got
lucky that you were all with people
who could protect you when you were
attacked.

EVIE
Wait, hold up, Asher and Link were
attacked too?

Miles holds up his hand in a placating gesture.

MILES
They're fine, they're fine.

He glances up at a car coming down the road towards them.

MILES (CONT'D)
In fact, this is probably them now.

The car pulls up at the side of the road. The window rolls
down and Link leans out.

LINK
Everything okay? We're not needed to
fight off any crazy magic users?

MILES
Everything is under control...
(looks toward Valerius)
I assume?

Valerius nods his assent.

MILES (CONT'D)
Good. Evie, go join Asher and Link in
the car. I'll meet you back at the
store.

Asher leans across Link to speak out the car window.

ASHER
Miles don't you want a lift? It's
still raining.

MILES
I have some things to follow up with
Valerius. Go, get out of the weather,
warm up. I won't be long.

Miles places a hand on Evie's back and gently pushes her
towards the car. She glances back at him, uncertain. Asher
and Link also watch attentively from the car.

EVIE
If you say so.

Link rolls the window up and jumps out of the car, pulling his seat forward to allow Evie to clamber into the backseat.

Miles steps closer to Valerius and begins speaking in a hushed voice as Link gets back in to the passenger seat.

INT. ASHER'S CAR - NIGHT

Link SLAMS the door shut. The three young sorcerers sit in silence for a moment, rain PATTERNING against the car.

LINK
We should probably get going.

ASHER
(quietly)
Yeah.

Nobody moves.

ASHER (CONT'D)
(louder)
Yeah, you're right. Seatbelts on please.

Mechanically Link and Evie buckle themselves in and Asher pulls away from the curb.

INT. NOTABLE NOVELS - NIGHT

In the front corner of Notable Novels sit two armchairs. Link occupies one, Evie the other, while Asher sits on the armrest of Evie's chair.

The trio still look somewhat ragged with damp hair, but they have all changed into dry clothes.

ASHER
So... gargoyles, huh?

EVIE
Mmm. Crazy, isn't it?

ASHER
I met fairies.

LINK
I met an old woman who was actually a dragon.

EVIE

That's cool.

(beat)

Shame we all could have been seriously hurt tonight, kind of takes the shine off it.

Link and Asher hum their agreement and then the trio lapse into silence.

The silence is broken by the UNLOCKING of the heavy front door. Miles steps in, head down and shuts the door behind him.

Another beat of silence.

MILES

I need to apologise for what happened tonight.

LINK

It wasn't your --

MILES

(firmly)

Yes, it was. Not entirely, but in a way, and it's not fair for me to brush it off like nothing.

The trio are surprised. This is a Miles they haven't witnessed before.

MILES (CONT'D)

So this is me, apologising. If I had thought things through I might have realised sooner something like this could happen. But I didn't and it did.

Miles finally looks up at the three, taking off his hat as he does.

MILES (CONT'D)

I need to make a visit to The Guild. Sooner, rather than later. I would like you three to come with me.

Asher, Evie, and Link exchange glances.

ASHER

(unsure)

I'd have to check my schedule...

EVIE

Me too.

LINK

Same.

MILES

That's fine, I don't need to sort it out immediately. In fact, it's probably best that you all head home, get some rest. I'll send you a message tomorrow.

Miles turns and opens the door, holding it in a clear invitation for them to leave.

ASHER

(to Link and Evie)

Come on, I'll give you both a lift.

Still hesitant and unsure, the trio file out the door and mumble their goodbyes to Miles as they leave. He closes the door behind them firmly and flips the lock.

Miles stands for a moment, shoulders hunched and hand white-knuckled on brim of his hat.

After a long moment he gathers himself and turns, striding towards the front counter. He drops his hat on the counter and pulls his phone from his pocket, hits a few buttons then holds it to his ear.

MILES

(into phone)

It's Miles. Put me through.

(beat)

They'll speak to me whether they like it or not. Put me through.

He leans on the counter, the fingers of his left hand drum an impatient beat while he waits. And waits. Then --

MILES (CONT'D)

(into phone)

We need to talk.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE