

Chapter 1

“Who casted the first spell?”

Mr. Martin strode across the classroom in a bravado, hands folded across his chest, chin up in the air.

I had to hide a smirk behind my palm. Martin was the furthest thing away from the strict lecturer he was trying to cosplay. His thick rimmed spectacles and unimpressive physique cemented that fact.

“Can anyone enlighten me?” he boomed, his deep exaggerated voice resonating around the lecture hall.

One eager girl at the front raised her hand high.

“Rodrick Taylor!” she answered.

“Correct!” Our teacher returned to the front. “And when did he cast the spell?”

The same girl answered. “On the second of February, 2025.”

“Correct again.” Mr. Martin looked pleased with his prized pupil. While she beamed up at him, I turned to my sister.

“Nerd,” I muttered into her ear, which had Kayla almost spitting out her drink.

“Remember the name and especially the dates,” Mr Martin said, producing his wand with a snap of his fingers and then writing ‘2nd February 2025,’ on the whiteboard from a distance away.

“It’s an important detail for your exam,” he added. “Remember, this was over eight years ago. You might even remember the days before magic.” He chuckled. “The stone ages.”

He was right. Rodrick, or whatever his name was, stumbled upon a strange-looking wood while journeying on an insane solo trip deep in the Amazon. When he picked the stick, he said that he felt a charge flowing through him.

And when hot sparks flew out from the end of the stick, he assumed the shrooms were doing its thing.

It wasn't the drugs, or his imagination.

Scientists couldn't explain the phenomenon, especially when it was replicable.

On that day, magic was discovered.

Most people could only produce weak projectiles, but a few and a very special population had latent potential, able to shoot out bolts of energy deadlier than gunfire.

Of course, humans were humans. After the discovery of magic, all hell broke loose.

Wars. Poverty. Outbreaks.

It wasn't the zombie apocalypse, but I remembered it being a chaotic few years.

Things have stabilized a bit, but the news never stopped blabbering about the countless wars still raging around the globe.

I felt a jab to my shoulder. "Hey."

"What's up?" I yawned. Mr Martin was still ranting about exam tips in that hilarious, deep voice of his.

My sister sounded serious. "Do you think you will get drafted?"

"Yeap," I muttered. "I can't wait to pass the trials, join the military, and fight in a useless war with you by my side."

My sister ignored my sarcastic remark.

"What if you don't get drafted?" She insisted, her green eyes showing concern. "What if you fail the trials and we get separated?"

"I'll visit you often."

I meant it as a joke, but from her reaction, it didn't land well.

Kayla looked away. "Have you studied?"

"Of course I did."

"I really, *really* hope you pass."

"I will," I assured her. "You know magic potential is genetic based. I'll fly through the trials."

Kayla didn't seem too convinced. She looked back at me to shoot me a frown. "If it's genetic based, then why can't you produce bolts yet like Em or me?"

"Maybe it takes time to develop."

"The trials are in a week, Luke!"

She must have spoken too loud, because someone from the front shushed us, and now everybody was staring in our direction.

Mr. Martin glared at me. "What's going on up there?"

"I'm sorry, Sir." My sister gave him her brightest smile. "Please continue."

That seemed to do the trick. He nodded, then went back to babbling about whatever.

"I'll pass the trials," I whispered, leaning into my sister, inhaling her amazing scent. "Don't worry."

She didn't say anything. Just sank back into her chair, the worry in her face never fading.

I hated walking home.

Even though I portray this character who never gave a shit about anything and everything, the truth was I hated being alone.

Also, I have a particular dislike for sour fruits.

Fuck oranges.

So having Kayla by my side as we trudge towards the dorms lifted my mood considerably. It was a male-only dorm, but my pretty sister had a trick or two.

When security stopped us at the gate, she greeted the guy by name, gave him a flirty smile, and touched his arm.

We were through.

But as soon as we were out of sight, Kayla's face dropped and she let out a long sigh.

"Relax," I said. "There's no point in worrying. Trust me."

"The trials are in a week's time," Kayla reminded me. "Of course I have to worry!"

"Why don't we both flunk the trials?" I suggested, even though I had her response pretty much memorized at that point. "We don't get drafted. We can live a normal life."

Kayla shook her head. "I want to help, Luke. I believe this is my calling."

We were silent for a while until my sister spoke out again.

"How's the progress with your magic? Can you produce flares yet?"

Flares was the default offensive spell taught to us. They were high speed energy projectiles that acted like bullets, but more effective.

"Maybe." Taking her hand, I detoured us away, towards the practise range. "Let's find out."

Students crowded the range, all of them practicing for the trials. Flares blitz towards practice targets, and we even spotted a guy producing fully realized bolts. They shot out from his wand at intense speeds, vaporizing targets upon impact.

Damn.

But when we got a closer look at him, our mood soured. It was Arthur Reed. One of the top students in our campus, and also the biggest ass around.

Why was he even practicing? There was no point. Everybody knew he would be acing the trials.

"It's too crowded," I muttered, taking my sister's hand and leading us away. A few of the guys had their eyes already on us, particularly on Kayla. It wasn't often that an attractive girl visited.

"Are you sure this is safe?" Kayla asked as I led us into the forest.

"Yeah," I answered. "I know a spot."

We eventually made our way into a small clearing with a pile of boulders in the middle. While Kayla glanced around, I produced my wand with a snap of my fingers.

I exhaled, already feeling the charge of electricity flowing through me.

"Okay," I said. "Guns up. Let's practice."

"On what?"

"Just produce your damn wand."

Kayla gave me a glare before materializing hers with a snap, too.

"We have to be careful," my sister cautioned. "We might burn down the forest."

"Yeah, yeah." I waved her concern away before pointing to my chosen target. A lone pebble across from us. "Watch."

Magic was all in the mind. You think of something, and magic makes it into a reality.

I visualized intense bolts blitzing out from the other end of my stick. Bolts stronger than the ones I saw Arthur produce. Bolt that would no doubt dissolve the pebble into ashes.

The end of my wand started sparkling up. I felt it vibrating in my hands.

This was it. Not only would this be my first ever bolt, Kayla would be here as witness. I would make her proud.

Like our older sister, Kayla was gifted with immense potential, but it seemed like I was the odd one out, having nothing to show for myself. No arcane talent. No latent potential.

Until now.

Go.

SHOOT!

But reality crashed down on me when all I could produce were weak sparks that quickly fizzled into nothingness.

I didn't look at Kayla. I could already feel the disappointment from here.

"Well..." I walked up to the pebble and kicked it instead. "Maybe I can think of something before the trials."

When Kayla still didn't respond, I turned to her, my heart dropping when I saw the tears.

"Hey..." I started to say, but she turned away. "It's fine, Kayla. Really."

That set her off.

"It's not fine!" She whirled back around, and the tears started flooding down. "If you don't pass, then we will never see each other again!"

It was an exaggeration. I could pay her occasional visits, but we would definitely have long periods of being apart.

It would be a repeat of our older sister. Ever since she aced the trials and was drafted to the military, we never saw her again.

We received updates from time to time, but Emily was busy 'saving the world' or so everyone kept saying.

It didn't make sense why I was so... weak.

Emily held the highest record in the trials for our school, and Kayla was always at the top of our class.

So... why was I so pathetic? Nothing about it was making sense.

"Can you..." My sister sniffed and wiped away the tears rolling down her cheeks. "Can you at least make a simple shield?"

Magic was primarily separated into two realms. Attack and defense.

Attacks were self-explanatory. We treat our spells like bullets. Flares, pellets, bolts.

Defense was for survival and reflecting attacks.

Shields, hardening of the flesh, healing wounds, all sorts of useful stuff. But nobody was fond of this area of magic. Defense was seen as a last resort, and you wouldn't get applauded for being a medic.

"I will try," I exhaled, pointing my wand in front of me and trying to conjure a force field. There was a sparkle, and a few seconds later, a translucent oval shield appeared, hovering in the air.

A success, but it took a lot out of me. I felt the first bead of sweat dripping from my forehead.

"That's something," Kayla said, smiling at me through her tears. "Good job. How about healing?"

She pointed her wand over her arm, the end of her stick turned bright red.

"Hey!" I tried to say, but it was too late.

Kayla grit her teeth as she scorched her skin.

"Here." My sister raised her arm at me, nodding at her bright pink flesh. "Go ahead and heal me."

I didn't like the nausea or the butterflies in my stomach. The sensations were unfamiliar, and I had to take a few breaths to compose myself.

This was Kayla. If I fuck up, I might hurt her.

We had classes on healing, but I never really excelled in that area. In any area.

School only taught us how to hone our imagination, and you only could get as good as your potential allowed you to, so it was pointless asking my gifted sister for help.

I stared at her reddening flesh.

What if instead of curing her, I hurt her instead?

But one look at Kayla showed how determined she was. So I relented, sighing and pointing my wand at her arm.

Closing my eyes, I imagined her arm healed and prayed I wouldn't hurt her.

For a couple of seconds, I felt nothing. But then my wand started vibrating.

"Nice!"

I opened my eyes and saw the miracle I was performing. It wasn't anything special. Pretty much every student could heal minor burns.

But I couldn't feel more proud as I watched the redness in her skin disappear.

"See?" Kayla beamed at me. "You are good at this!"

I really doubt conjuring weak shields and healing minor burns could impress the inspectors. I returned her smile, but I didn't expect the hug she gave me.

Her tits pressed against my chest, and I had to stifle the urge to moan. I have seen her tits before, not fully, but glimpses of them. Fully formed teardrops that were almost impossible to look away from.

"No matter what happens..." Kayla whispered, and I looked at her, gazing into those gorgeous green eyes she inherited from Mom.

We were so close. If I leaned forward a little, we would be making out.

"Y-Yeah?" I said, my voice suddenly hoarse.

My sister went silent, just looking at me, our gaze locking, then holding.

Was it me or was there this... sexual tension between us?

It had to be just me because I had a thing for Kayla. Why wouldn't I? She was gorgeous. Everyone said she was gorgeous, and we spent all our free time together.

It was only natural to develop feelings for her, even if she was my blood.

"No matter what happens," Kayla repeated. "Know that I love you. Always."

She leaned in again, but it was another peck on the cheek, and I had to hide my disappointment by forcing a smile.

"I love you too," I told her, hugging her tight, relishing how her perfect body felt against mine.

She kept still, so I used the opportunity to feel her up, running my hand up and down her lean curves hidden behind her school uniform. She had to forgive me if I 'accidentally' touched her plump ass every once in a while.

Kayla didn't mind. After all, I was just her brother showing his love.

She didn't know better.

I used to have sick fantasies about her. Tie my sexy sister up while I fuck her. Have her on her knees while I shove my cock deep down her throat.

Fortunately, I managed to force these urges away. It took a while, but I did it.

But right then? With her perfect body pressed up against me?

It brought *that* side of me back.

Fortunately, before I could do anything stupid, Kayla peeled back and held my hand.

"I should go," Kayla said. "Before the guys back in the practice range report me to security."

“Stay,” I insisted. “They might not report you.”

Kayla had stayed in my room a few times before. Everyone was given a tiny single bed. Cuddling with Kayla on that cramped bed should have been uncomfortable, but during those nights, I have never slept better.

My sister bit down on her lower lip. It was one of her nervous ticks, but all that did for me was want to kiss her more.

“I...” She struggled with her answer. “I-I really shouldn’t, Luke. It’s so close to the trials and the last thing I want is to get us both in trouble.”

“Why do you want to pass the trials, anyway? Why don’t you just reject enlistment?”

“I can’t.” There it was again. That sexy lip bite. “You know why I want to do this.”

“Because you just want to help?” Leaving her, I found another pebble and kicked it hard. I saw Kayla flinched in the corner of my eye, but I pushed on. “Why can’t you just be normal and stop trying to help everyone around you?”

Kayla had this stupid obsession of helping as many people as she could. I didn’t know where she got the trait from, but she has been handing out free sweets and fending off her friend’s bullies since day one.

“I...” she sniffed, looking down at her feet. “I should go.”

Fuck.

I exhaled. “Sorry. I...”

It wasn’t me to just lose my cool like that.

“I’m sorry,” I told her.

“It’s fine.”

But it wasn’t fine. Kayla was doing everything she could to not look me in the eye.

“Text me later, okay?” I said. “As soon as you get back.”

“Okay.” She turned around and walked away, leaving me to mull alone with regret.

The trials were divided into three parts.

The first challenge was the written tests. We had to sit in one of the school halls and fill out answers to useless questions.

The history of magic, past wars, politics, etc.

Boring.

But Kayla kept pulling me into joining her study sessions, force feeding me hundreds of pages’ worth of knowledge.

It was an odd feeling being able to answer the vast majority of the questions. I even finished the test half an hour early.

Easy.

The second part of the trials was the practicals

We had to produce five miracles. It could be anything from producing bolts, summoning fire, freezing something, healing a wound.

Once that was completed, the final stages involved meeting a seer. Individuals gifted with the ability to sense a person’s latent potential.

They would provide you with a number between 1 and 100.

That was the part where no one could cheat. The number would ultimately decide your fate.

The passing mark to get drafted was 50. Anything below that and you had to live the rest of your life as a civilian.

That was the best fate. I had no idea why everybody was obsessed with getting drafted.

I guessed people sought recognition, and although singers and actors still held value, being a war hero would earn you prestige beyond imagination.

Anything above 70 meant that you had latent potential. Extremely rare. Every year, our nation would only produce half a dozen people that would score higher than that.

Several years ago, Emily was one of those people, and she still held the record for the highest score in our school.

80.

I walked out of the exam hall feeling conflicted. On one hand, I wanted to score as low as possible. I could live a life of peace that nobody seems to want.

On the other hand, Kayla was determined to make her mark on the world, and I wanted to be with her no matter what.

That meant I had to get a score above the passing grade. If I do, I would get drafted into military service and force into wars I didn't care about.

As I exited the exam hall, I had to weave through the crowd of bodies, trying to look for golden hair and green eyes.

We found each other a minute later, and Kayla greeted me with a comforting hug.

"How was it?" she asked me. "It was easy, right? Please tell me it was easy."

Before I could answer, someone came in between us, almost shoving me aside as he did so.

Arthur Fucking Reed.

"Hey!" The jerk smiled at my sister. "The test was a no-brainer, right?"

"Yeah..." Kayla tried to look past him, but he was blocking our view.

"So?" I didn't like the way Artur was looking at my sister. His eyes were obviously on her tits. "Are you ready for the practicals?"

"I want to talk to my brother."

“Fine.” He finally acknowledged my existence, turning to me and giving me a big slap on the back. “Hey, Luke. I assume you are acing the practicals too, right?”

I really didn’t want to deal with his sarcasm.

The crazy thing was that I was bigger than him. If magic never existed, I would man handle the fucking brat, but unfortunately, a real fight involved wands.

“Arthur.” Kayla’s frown was evident. “Could you give us some space? Please?”

“I’m just asking you about the test,” Arthur muttered. “That’s all. Honestly, what’s your problem with nice guys like me?”

I could tell my sister was resisting an eye roll. But she didn’t say a word. Instead, she took my hand in hers and led us both away.

“Sorry,” my sister said, as if it was her fault.

“It’s nothing,” I sighed. “And yeah, the written stuff was pretty simple, thanks to you.”

“Great.” Kayla squeezed my hand. “But here comes the difficult parts. I wish I could come with you.”

“I’ll be fine.” I looked around us, recognizing all the nervous faces. “I still don’t get why they put us through this crap. Why don’t we just meet the seers from the start? If the number determines our future and nothing else matters, then what’s the point of all this?”

“I know.” My sister nodded. “But it is what it is, and we just have to get through this.”

“I’ll pass,” I told her with confidence I didn’t feel. “I’ll be with you forever. Don’t worry.”

She bit down on her lip. “I hope so.”

“Luke Spade?” The instructor tapped his notebook.

“Yeah.” I nodded. “That’s me.”

“Alright, Luke.” He blew out the longest exhale I have heard in my life, seemingly not too happy with his job. “You have to cast five spells. Are you ready?”

What could I do but nod?

“First spell.” He pointed to the target, his voice almost a monotone. “Summon a flare. Hit the bullseye if you can.”

Fuck.

He cleared his throat as I stood there, staring at the target. “Produce your wand.”

“Oh...” I had completely forgotten. Clicking my fingers, my wand emerged out of thin air, landing on my open palm. I took a second to feel the smooth Arcanian wood, noticing as energy surged through me.

I aimed towards the target.

Last week, I’d embarrassingly produced sparks in front of my sister. This time, it would be different. This was where it all mattered, and I was going to do my best.

All of this just to be with Kayla.

The instructor tapped his feet. “You can start.”

“One second.” I narrowed my eyes on the bullseye and directed all my hate towards the red dot.

This is it.

Instead of bolts, I was realistic and envisioned flares shooting out of my wand.

Sparks were the weakest form of offensive spell casting. Flares were a level above that. And bolts were the cream of the crop.

I felt the familiar vibration of my wand. Sparks started emitting from the other end.

But it was just that. Weak, diluted sparks.

I looked at the instructor as my spell fizzled out into nothingness.

But he didn't react. Just noted down something on his notepad.

"Right..." He finally said, sighing again. "For your second spell..."

Nothing went right. Nothing.

The only task I could maybe pull out a pass was conjuring a shield. After he saw my pathetic excuse of a force field shimmering in the air, he just went back to his notes, and I just hoped for the best.

When I walked out of the examination room, Kayla was already waiting for me. We had entered at about the same time, but my sister seemed to have been there for a while.

When she saw me, her eyes lit up, and she hurried over.

"So?" There it was again. That sexy lip bite. "How was it?"

"Good," I said, not glancing away to make my lie more believable. "I think I impressed him."

Kayla gasped. "Really?"

"Yeah."

"Yay!" She wrapped herself around me, squeezing tight, and I just forced a smile, knowing it was all doomed. "I knew you could do it!"

What if we had to be separated? Getting drafted into the military was compulsory unless you could provide a valid reason for avoiding conscription.

Maybe Kayla could fake an injury so she could live the rest of her life in peace.

But it was a faraway dream. I knew my sister too well.

If there was a choice between picking me or helping the world, I might just have to say goodbye to the only person I ever cared for.

“You’re shaking,” my sister commented, stepping back to look at me clearly. “Are you okay?”

“I am.” I maintained my smile, although it was getting increasingly difficult. “Just tired from all the spell casting.”

“Well, we have a few hours of queuing before the evaluations.” Kayla nodded past me, towards the numerous halls filled with students, all sitting in rows, waiting for their turn. “I have our queue numbers.”

“Shall we go for a walk, then?”

“Sure.” She squeezed my hand. “I’d love that.”

I have never seen the campus this crowded.

Everywhere we went, people were there. So I took Kayla to the only place I knew nobody would be.

“We shouldn’t stay here long,” Kayla told me as we walked into the forest clearing. “If we missed our evaluation...”

“We won’t.”

For some reason, security was relaxed. They were playing poker, and we managed to sneak past them, probably because no one in their right minds would head back to the dorms while the trials were in progress.

“What do you want to do?” Kayla asked, climbing up a boulder and sitting down.

I sat down next to her, placing my palm over hers.

“Don’t know,” I said. “I just spend more time with you.”

Kayla forced a laugh. “Why are you talking so weirdly?”

I looked at my sister. At those green eyes, at her full lips, at her fair skin.

She blinked. "Luke?"

"Yeah?"

"Answer me."

If I gave any hint that I did terribly for the practicals, Kayla might lose it. And that couldn't happen.

"It's..." I cleared my throat while Kayla watched me intently. "I just want to say... I love you."

"That's it?" She chuckled. "Luke, you don't need to say that. I know you love me and I love you too."

Not like this. I see you more than just my little sister.

But I couldn't say those words. I knew Kayla didn't see me in the way I saw her.

But if this was one of the last times being together, I had to make a move.

So I did.

Kayla didn't have time to react as I took her chin and pressed my lips against hers, tasting heaven.

It was a simple peck on the lips. I wished I could have done more, but I peeled back before I could lose control, watching as Kayla blink up at me.

"Umm..." She kept blinking. "Umm..."

"Sorry," I said, looking ahead, towards the trees and rocks and everything else beside her.

Silence.

I could still taste her on my lips. The light, sweet taste of Kayla. It was my first kiss, and I was sure it was hers, too.

I was actually enjoying the silence, just holding my sister's hand when a beep disrupted the peace.

Kayla let go of me and fished out her phone from her uniform skirt.

"It's Madelyn," she informed me. "She saved seats for us."

"Mhm."

Her hand was back on mine. "We should go."

"You go. I'll stay for a bit."

She looked at me. "When will you leave?"

"I'll chill for a bit longer."

"I'll stay with you then," Kayla said, as if it wasn't even a decision. She leaned against me, head resting on my shoulder. "But promise we will leave in twenty minutes."

"Sure."

We stayed on for thirty more minutes, but it felt like hours to me. I savored every second, holding my sister, inhaling her scent, wishing I could kiss her again.

But as the time came, I hopped off the boulder, and then helped my sister down.

Kayla touched my chest. "Hey."

I raised a brow. "Yeah?"

"Just now... that was nice."

"Oh... yeah." I dug my hands into my pockets. "You know I love spending time with you."

"Not that." She got up on her tip-toes. "This."

Our lips met once more. But this time, Kayla was present with me.

Her mouth was carefree, her lips slanting around mine, her moans filling me up as I drew more sweetness out of my own sister.

“Kayla,” I moaned, tasting heaven once again.

I was about to have her laid flat on the rocks, legs spread apart, when Kayla suddenly broke the kiss.

Her lips trembled. “I love you.”

Then she walked off, leaving for doomsday.