

Second Jump

The girl and Earth

Will awoke with the sun bright like the day before. His headache was totally gone and he strongly didn't feel hungry. The sheer greenness of [Mist](#) was a very big change from the grayness of [Myrahh](#).

[Hiram September](#) was nowhere to be seen, but Will wasn't too concerned. So far this was the safest place he'd ever seen in his young life. The 'monsters' of the forested moon didn't display any kind of hostile tendencies.

In fact, they were more playful and curious than the day before. A few ventured close enough to get a very clear appraisal of Will.

Will found Hiram over the hill stretching out in an opening in the forest canopy. Hiram turned as Will crested the hilltop.

"Nothing like a good morning stretch in the sun! Just the best way to start the day," Hiram exclaimed with a huge smile on his bearded face.

Will stepped out into the sun's rays as well and took a long deep breath. His skin tingled from the clean fresh air and the perfect sunlight on his face. *"I wish my world could have felt like this."*

Suddenly a thought occurred to Will. 'If this moon was so full of magic, maybe his own powers were amplified as well.' Will called out a lightning spell and it created a strong glowing shine over his head.

"Whoa! Simmer down there, Will. Don't blind me!" Hiram said, a bit shocked.

"Hmm..." Hiram thought aloud, "you use incanted spells on your world?" Will thought that was common knowledge: that magi had to normally use incantations to use magics.

"Well, novices usually start off with incantations to teach themselves the ropes. Most skilled magi don't even bother with incantations unless it's a fairly complex spell." Hiram Said.

Will was taken aback for a moment. So, maybe the development of magic on other worlds was different, too. It seemed a great opportunity for Will to maybe learn something new. Soon a flurry of questions came to mind about different magical theories and how things were done on [Geb](#).

If surprised Will just how very different magic worked on Geb. There seemed to be, or at least from what Hiram could explain, a multitude of different types and variations of magics.

It was at that point Hiram was curious, "how much... or... what kind of magic do you really know?"

"All magic on Myra was done through incantations and I really only know about half a dozen different incantations by heart. There are huge libraries for the more senior students and the upper magi that contain all the known incantations and research centers where we invent new ones.

"Could you teach me something new?" Will asked, "Something that doesn't need an incantation?"

"Hmm..." Hiram took a moment to collect his thoughts. He could tell Will was a good kid, and had an unmatched, genuine curiosity, but Hiram was a little rusty after several years of inactivity.

"I guess the basics of chrono-magics would be something fresh for you," Hiram finally decided. It was a fairly complicated set of theories, calculations, and technique, but it would give his new friend a new point of reference to expand himself.

The entire morning was spent just getting Will prepared mentally. The whole concept of *time* as linear, but not constant was usually an insurmountable hurdle. Harder still was the fact that time, as he had perceived it, was not a set medium. All things were of such variable paces that one single unit was universally improbable.

Hiram finally simplified it down to a 'single heartbeat' as the set counter. "First, feel it one at a time. Count it. How does it change with each breath? Long... or short... You need to keep focused on that."

Will found it harder than he first expected. Holding his breath to sense a magical property was second nature, but Hiram said this was "just a starter technique."

In fact, Will started to notice that the harder he tried, the faster time seemed to pass. After awhile, Hiram decided to show Will a good example of how it should look. He took a deep, calm breath and breathed out at a slow, controlled pace. The second breath caught Will at undheares. Will tried to move, but his movements were sluggish. He felt like he was in water; his breath, heart, and mind slowed considerably.

Finally, Hiram released his grip and Will could move normally again.

"Sorry, Will. I just thought you should get a feel for the reversal effect. I put you at 1/2 speed."

"I could feel things around me, but when you slowed it down, it was like almost a dream state!" Will said, "That is one of it's more dangerous side effects. If you don't maintain some outside stimulus you go into a shutdown spiral and then self-stasis. From there, it's nearly impossible to break-out. It's a common and fairly lethal mistake. Forget to breathe and your heart stops, time slows to a barely noticeable pace, and then you're stuck there." Hiram explained with a rather serious look.

"Don't push yourself, Will. These skills take lots of work. Even on Geb there aren't many Chrono-magi. Even my teacher was a 1 in 100 individual. It's a rare talent." Hiram said as he relaxed on a large moss covered stone.

"So if slowing down is an option, what about speeding up?" Will asked, looking at the mossy stone. "Does time work both ways?"

"Of course it can speed things up. It's just not as useful as you think," he'd already guessed what was on Will's mind.

"You mean like this rock?" Hiram said standing up, "actually, It's easier to just blast it apart than age it to cracking point. Though if you pin-point it that isn't so tricky."

Hiram cupped both his hands around a portion of the rock and concentrated on accelerated time's pace. Will noticed that there were stray splinters and fissures growing around Hiram's hands.

Hiram took his hands away and pulled out a rock. It has been selectively aged and fractured in a shape

that only out-lined his hands. Will noticed that Hiram was also breathing harder.

"I guess it'd be useful if you were an artist or trying to do precision work. But otherwise it isn't reliable."

Will, however, was rather impressed. To crush walls was one thing, but the rock cut out was as if it had been nearly scooped out of the larger rock itself. It was delicate dark; something Will appreciated...

Several more days passed as Will and Hiram discussed all the different aspects of their worlds. Will could tell that Hiram wanted to go back to Ged at times. He missed his home. Mist, the living moon, was nice but Hiram clearly missed his family. There was a sorrow in his grey eyes, like a sad stone stuck forever on the side of a mountain; just out of reach from what it could see.

That night, a face appeared in his dreams. It was eerily familiar. It was a young woman's face, but she looked like someone he knew or someone he'd met; maybe a person he'd passed by randomly in his old life. But he couldn't recall anyone exactly like that on Myrah.

Yet it wasn't her looks... it was something in her eyes, her nose, her hair... no... it was something else he couldn't explain. Can feel *deja vu* looking at a total stranger? How does that work? Will was sure he'd never seen her before.

The stone was moving on its own in his pocket. It was a strange stone. He'd shown it to Hiram, but he couldn't sense anything unusual about it. How is it he jumped from Myrah to a distant moon, anyway?

The next day, Will decided he would try to make another jump. "Leaving so soon?" Hiram knew that Will was being drawn away, but he was still disappointed.

"Can I help at all?" Hiram asked.

"I don't really know how I did it the first time," Will closed his eyes, trying to step through the details of the first experience. Will held the stone in his right hand and his staff in the left. He walked through the lightning incantation, but the power did not flow. He felt nothing: no pull, no draw, none of that 'warm swimming'. The spell just blinked and faded like a snuffed candle.

"Is there any higher ground overlooking the forest? I was closer to the sky last time."

Hiram led Will for most of the day to a lonely, grassy hill much farther away than he'd expected. Dusk was coming as Will stood on the highest point of the hill and looked down.

It was hard to leave this all behind. While this was somewhat like a prison for Hiram, this was a paradise for Will. The past several days had been some of the best in his memory. The entire moon seemed to happy and it seemed to welcome Will with a curiosity to match his own. It was a wonderful change from the apathetic grey that physically and emotionally existed on his own world.

At the very least, he knew he wasn't going back to Myrrah. No, he didn't want to be anywhere near *that* place again.

"Do you think this is high enough, Will?" For being such a gentle rise, the hill felt more like a giant green mound. It overlooked the sea of trees and felt almost like a bold island of turf.

Still, it had a nice feel to it. The stone seemed to think so at least. It has started moving on its own again.

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