

## Entry 1: Orientation



It's the first day of college, or should I say orientation week. Only the freshmen are currently here at the school. A portion of us was stuffed in the gym, waiting for someone to speak for what felt like the hundredth time. Waiting here was kind of nerve-racking, and I bet this was the feeling for most of the freshmen. I could feel the energy coming from everyone. Some were trying to show off, almost forcing themselves to look more powerful, and while others had a natural power that flowed smoothly, this difference could be felt immediately.

Right now, this was the time when everyone could size up each other and get an idea of where they stood against their peers. I hated it, but that was the nature of Powers. Powers is the term used for the people of the earth who have abilities. Abilities are forms of energy, that people can expel from their bodies in what are called energy blasts or whatever name the individual gives it. Other than energy blasts people's abilities also encompass and support various other skills. But for me, I am much different from them. Two adults then came into the gym and stopped in front of all the present freshmen on the bleachers. They both stopped on the school crest in the center of the gym floor, which was two W's intertwined together, while other professors made their way to the bleacher opposite of ours. One of the men on the gym floor came forward off the crest to address us.

"Good morning, freshmen, and welcome to Welwerth University. I am Allen Wood, headmaster of the school. On behalf of myself and all the professors, we are honored to have you here.

As you are aware, you were selected to attend this gathering because of your exceptional performance in your high school years, and we look forward to helping you develop your talent even further." He also stated that today the select few freshmen here were

invited to participate in a placement evaluation for the lead professors.

Our headmaster instructed us to perform to the best of our ability because the outcome of our performance today would help to determine if a student could skip the entry-level courses and start their college career in the intermediate-level classes when the semester begins. Mr. Wood also mentioned that this evaluation would not impact the sport evaluation that will happen later this week. As Headmaster Wood concluded, another gentleman stepped forward to introduce himself. His name was Mark Bagwell. As Mr. Bagwell cleared his throat, loud cheers came from the freshmen in the bleachers. He motioned his hands to quiet the crowd; as the sound dissipated, he spoke.

“As our headmaster said these exercises today have no connection with the athletic evaluation taking place later this week. Today is purely for academic purposes. There will be more information on the sports evacuation in the next day or two, like our headmaster has said, 'Fight to the best of your ability,'" he said as he turned to Mr. Wood and they both headed toward the other side of the room to the bleachers with the other professors.

Even through this evaluation was just for professors some athletic coaches were observing as well. This was because each sport has its characteristics that coaches look for in an individual and this was an opportunity to get a quick look at some of the freshman class for future recruiting purposes. For example, basketball is for people with excellent power control; they are very agile and good with hand-to-hand combat. While soccer is for people who mostly fight with their legs, they also have the potential to generate energy from their feet. Baseball is the opposite of soccer in which they primarily fight with their hands, and the strength that they can produce with their upper body is immense. Lacrosse focuses on precision shots with their power and a fighting style geared on breaking down the body and making an opponent fatigued. This is the same for field hockey. Swimming, on the other hand, is for fighters who are very fluid in their fighting and incredibly good movers in the water and air. Tennis is kind of the same with fluid movement being a key component, but also is a sport where many different playing styles and fighting styles

can be used, but it is hard to get on the team. This was due to tennis having the main lineup consisting of only a few players - much fewer than the other teams.

Sports teams in the schools and universities around the world have a hierarchy. Here at Welwerth, soccer is at the top of the food chain. But to get onto any sports teams is a big deal, hence why everyone was so excited to see Mr. Bagwell, the athletic director. The students who do not make it onto one of these teams are known as General Powers. This does not mean that they were not strong or skilled enough. It just means that they were not up to par with the coaches' standards. They did not perform well on the athletic evaluation, or a coach recruited well and only had one or two spots open, and other students won out.

Sports are still played regularly, but they have evolved and advanced along with the world. When people started using their powers during the games, the world decided to create new versions of sports - one where the sport is played without power, and one where it is played with power. This makes playing sports very interesting; there are basically two seasons of the same sport—one with no power and the other powered. So, a team or an individual can win a championship in the sport itself or the powered-enhanced sport.

Coaches can build their teams to either focus on playing the original sport or the power-enhanced version. The power-enhanced version of sports has gained more popularity over the years, so the world has gravitated more towards them, and more universities just focus on building the best team to play the power-enhanced version and don't really care about the unpowered sports season. There was another reason why the sport evaluations were so popular and performing well in them was the main goal for many. This was because the sports evaluation wasn't just an evaluation to get you on a team; it was also used to determine the elites of one's year. Getting on a sports team was one goal, but the other shining star was to become your year's elite. The latter half of the athletic evaluation became known by the student body as the elite tests, and that was what many in this room were striving to reach. Elites were like royalty at universities, categorized as the strongest of their particular

year. I was thrown out of my thoughts when Mr. Wood spoke again as he sat on the bleachers.

“Let us commence with placement tests. We will have four randomly selected students come down and fight against an opponent that is generated by the AITS—the artificial intelligent training simulator. These tests will be situational tests. Remember, fight to the best of your abilities.”

After Mr. Wood stopped talking, a clear energy dome began to cover the gym floor like an inflating balloon. The dome came from a shiny metal gateway that looked like a metal detector with a short hallway at the edge of the gym floor that led into the dome. I could feel many of the students raising their power levels in excitement and others becoming irregular due to them becoming nervous. Many random groups of four students entered the AITS and fought against different computer-generated opponents associated with a certain situation each group had to overcome. The professors would evaluate how well we handled ourselves in the fight and said situations. If the performance of the student was satisfactory, they would be allowed to enroll in the intermediate level classes, the prize of the day. Some did very well, and some did not.

Everyone took notice of Kyle. We all knew who he was, the number one soccer recruit for Welwerth University. But what everyone was so in awe about was the way he could produce energy from his feet. I only saw this technique done by one other person back in high school, but it was still pretty awesome to see. It showed how talented Kyle was and how much hard training he put into to get to this point. After Kyle’s group’s evaluation, four more names were then called to enter the AITS—three boys, including myself and one girl. As I headed to the entrance of the AITS, everyone’s eyes were on me as I made my way down the bleachers. The two other boys and I entered the AITS through the metal gateway while the girl who was called with us was already waiting. Over the loudspeaker, we were told by Mr. Wood to head to the center of the gym floor. I could feel everyone’s power fluctuate who entered the AITS, except for the girl who did not have any power coming off of her, and I wondered why. Glancing over at her, I noticed she was shaking, but we all kept walking to the center of the gym floor. As we all reached the center,

the AITS voice echoed through the dome, stating that this will be an exercise to test our situational strategy skills.

As soon as this was said, large power-imbued interlocking chains erupted around all four of us and bound us all to where we stood. The chains were heavily concentrated on our wrists, and the other students were struggling to get free. To my surprise, the chains started to retract, pulled us to the ground, and fixed us in a way where our hands were bound behind our backs.

The AITS then spoke again. "Scenario: restrained, captured by the enemy, in one-minute target, will be eliminated, objective protect, escape, and survive."

I smirked a little, and I thought about how fun this would be.

A giant of a man was generated in front of us. He looked like the Hulk on steroids. At first, his power level didn't seem to be that strong, but his power level began to rise and, before long, was at an incredible height, higher than any enemy previously generated. I glanced over at the professors, and they looked a little antsy. With his ice-blue eyes, he locked on to me and everyone else. The others around me started to struggle even more, and I could sense their fear. To my right, a student was struggling to get free but seemed calm. I took notice of him as we were walking to the AITS. He seemed strong, and maybe he could be of some help in this situation.

"Get ready," the mountain of a man said.

With one blue energy beam, he took out the guy on my far left. Thank goodness we were in a training simulator because that wave of energy-packed a crazy amount of power. When someone is in the AITS, and they get knocked out, they fade out of the simulator and return into the rehabilitation section right outside the simulator. It is a remarkable technology. He then turned his attention to me and stated he was going to take me out next. He extended his arms and started amassing energy in his hand. As soon as he fired his beam of energy, I squeezed my hands, and two transparent blue daggers appeared in both of my hands. The daggers look like the knives military personnel carry; I call them my essence weapons. This ability also allows me to produce a saber, but that's only when I get serious. I used them to cut through the power in the chains and break free. Moving as fast as I could to my right, I freed the guy who I took notice

of earlier as the beam of energy flew through the spot, I was held at just moments before.

"Thanks," he said with a breath of relief. "I didn't know how I was going to get out of those."

"Don't thank me yet; we still have to deal with him," I said as I readied myself. And so did the guy I just freed.

"My name's Corey, by the way," he said. "Nice to meet you. My name's Jet," I replied.

But in that moment of exchange, we let our guard down a little, and our opponent was on top of us in no time. He sent Corey flying into a huge boulder that the AITS created as part of the environment we were fighting in. He then turned his attention to me, and I braced myself for his attack, which hit me hard. As I was flying through the air, I felt him coming in for a follow-up attack, and without thinking, I whipped my body around and tried to land a kick, but he blocked it. I could see the flinch in his eyes from the impact. But just when I was about to attack once more, Corey came from above and landed a dropkick that sent him plummeting to the ground. His body made a crater the size of a semi-truck on the rocky terrain. As we descended to the ground, I glanced over at Corey taking note of how strong he was.

"Got him," Corey said with a smile.

"It's not over yet." My eyes were still on the crater. "See," I said to Corey.

"I don't understand; I put everything I had into that kick," Corey said.

He was right. That attack would have knocked almost anyone out, especially since it was a direct hit at close range. There was no time to think about it. He came at us again, this time, thrusting a punch at me. I dodged his attack before it could even reach me and ended up about five yards behind him. Corey moved as well, so he wouldn't be a part of his attack.

"Nice moves you have, kid," our opponent said as he flexed his muscles.

"Listen, you don't want to fight me," I said.

He ignored me and charged at me, throwing a punch. I blocked him, matching in strength and speed, and I managed to land a hit to

his face within this little tussle. He flew back and landed flat on his stomach. Everyone on the bleachers had their eyes locked on this battle. He came at me once again, this time firing two energy balls the size of small boulders at me. I dodged both, but that attack was a distraction. He appeared behind me in a flash. "Fast," I muttered. He kicked me with such force, it sent shockwaves through my body. And with another kick, he sent me flying.

Jumping out of the rubble that my body made from crashing into a rock, I rushed back. Throwing punches and kicks, I also used my daggers in an attempt to slash him any way I could. But he was dodging everything. I had to focus. This was not a high school-generated opponent; this was a college level, and they would be more difficult. Focusing, I caught on to his dodging pattern and landed a kick to his stomach that made his body fold like a closing book. As he was hunched over, I delivered a devastating punch to his face that made him stammer back a few feet. Payback, I thought.

He recovered so quickly, quicker than I thought, and he was in my face in a matter of seconds, ready to land another attack. But my instincts took over, and I yelled out, "Shieldous," and his attack was blocked in mid-thrust. Corey looked on with awe at what just happened.

"What is this trickery? How did you stop my attack?" the blue-eyed man asked with a disturbed look.

I sighed as I looked over, and I saw that everyone in the stands was watching in surprise—mouths open and eyes wide—and Mr. Wood was looking on with suspicion. No sense in hiding it now; it was time to show everyone what I can do. I moved behind the AITS-generated opponent so fast he had no time to react. He was still in his punching motion and landed blow after blow to his body. For the last attack, I stabbed him in the neck with one of my essence knives.

As he staggered back, he cried, "No blood?"

"Right, no blood. These daggers don't drain the body of blood but power from where the body was stabbed or cut," I said to him, watching him stagger.

I continued to explain to him that these knives don't fatally harm a living being. Where someone is cut or stabbed determines how much power will leave the body, and they also make the victim feel

intense pain from the wound. In his case of stabbing him in the neck, he was losing a lot of power right now and feeling incredible pain. Soon he would be too weak to even fight - let alone move.

“But what about the chains? How did you cut them with the knives?” asked the man with slurry speech.

“Did you forget the chains were surrounded by power? Since these knives can make things drain power, cutting through the power was easy, and after the power was gone, it was easy to get free just by pulling them apart after.” He fell to his knees. I gave a devilish smirk in his direction.

He looked at me with awe and fear and whispered, “You’re a monster.”

I couldn’t help but laugh a little. “Yeah, I get that a lot,” I said in a whisper back to him.

I walked back over to the place where we were held in the chains. When I got there, I released the chains that held the girl. There was fear written all over her face. As she got up crying, she ran toward the exit of the AITS, still shaking.

Mr. Bagwell turned to Mr. Wood and stated, “That was amazing, Allen. The AITS generated one of our best past students who has come out of Welwerth. No freshman has ever taken him down, let alone so quickly at that,” said Mr. Bagwell. “No, that was spectacular. He intrigues me. I have a few questions to ask him, especially about his abilities,” Mr. Wood responded.

It’s the last day of orientation, and tomorrow the rest of the student body comes to campus. I can’t lie; I’m kind of excited to see the upperclassmen and the kind of power they have. Also, this weekend is when the athletic evaluation happens. But we have one more information session to attend before that, according to our orientation itinerary. I received an email from Mr. Wood. He wanted to speak to me. This was probably about my placement test; he was probably just as suspicious as everyone else was after watching my fight. Walking the main path of the school’s campus and following the directions in the email, I finally made it to the building that housed Mr. Wood’s office. As I walked in, it was quiet. I stood in the entrance for a while, trying to figure out what to do next.

A desk person greeted me. "Are you here for Mr. Wood?" "Yes, I am," I said with a smile.

"He's been expecting you. Follow me."

I followed him up a massive flight of stairs, and he led me to a door. He knocked three times and then opened the door. Mr. Wood raised his head and greeted me.

"Ah, Jet, do sit down." Doing as he said, I shifted to get comfortable in one of the chairs that faced his desk.

"Do you know why I called you here today, Jet?" Mr. Wood asked.

"Is it about my fight yesterday?" As soon as I said that, a smile ran across his face.

"How did you know that it was the girl you had to save?"

I looked at him a little confused. "Wasn't it obvious? One, she had no power, and in the placement test, everyone who entered the AITS was to be a student, and if they were a student, they should have power. Second, our opponent knocked out the guy on the far left first, and next would have been the girl, but he went directly to me. He was trying to take out the people with abilities first—the ones who could potentially stop him. So, I took it as she was important, and the one we all needed to save. As the AITS said, she was the one who had to escape. And we would have lost if all the people with abilities were eliminated."

He looked at me, smiled, and laughed. "Excellent, Jet. I called you here to congratulate you. You got the highest marks from the professors on your placement test and can jump to the intermediate classes here at Welwerth."

"Thank you, sir," I said as he handed me the letter that congratulated me on my accomplishment. I got up from my chair as he sat in his and turned to leave his office.

"You know, it's been a hundred or so years since this place had one. This used to be an institution that catered to a wide range of the arts. They came to this school from all over the world to practice and hone their craft. But you know what I am speaking of, right, Jet?" Mr. Wood asked as he had his hands clenched in front of his face.

I was in shock. He figured it out way too fast, and I wondered how many others knew. I was trying to keep it hidden a little while longer.

“You’re not a Power at all, Jet, are you?” He walked around his desk and leaned his lower back on the front on his desk. “You’re a descendant of the ancients. You have their blood coursing through you. You’re a Magic, or would you prefer Caster, hmm, Jet?” Mr. Wood asked.

I replied with a nod. Caster was a nickname for Spell Casters while calling us a Magic was a not-so-well-used term. But what he said next even shocked me.

“I can’t wait to see what you can do; I have dreamed of witnessing the abilities of a Caster,” he said with a smile.

We talked more about Casters, and Mr. Wood admitted he dabbled in Caster history when he was a student. Time ticked away, and I had to leave in the middle of our conversation to make it to the last orientation week’s information session I had to attend. I left the office and jogged down the path.

The buildings of this campus were all different. Some were modern, but others looked very old in style, especially the library. It was originally the Welwerths' family home. The Welwerth family started this school, and when the school first started, it was to be a safe place for Casters to practice when the world frowned on magic and Casters.

After the eradication of Casters, the world chose to be very selective about the history being taught. But the knowledge that this one library holds rivals the top schools in the nation. At that moment, something drew me to the doors. But just before I grabbed the handle, I again remembered I had someplace to be and quickly hurried down the path.

Reaching the location of the information session that was already going on, I snuck to the back of the bleachers to listen. The main point of this session was to tell us that the upperclassmen were arriving soon. The other part of this meeting was to inform us that tomorrow would be the athletic evaluation, which later also turned into the elite tests. We were all informed we would receive an email with a time to report to the gym, and it was our choice if one wanted to come or not. We were dismissed, and we had the rest of the day to ourselves to get ready for tomorrow.

