

Lichen never intended on studying magic. In fact, it had never truly crossed his mind to look into the subject due to how busy he could be with his work within the deep and dark parts of the forest, observing the effects of his potions, avoiding other Skireans at all costs, avoiding confrontation, that is until he stumbled across the mentor of Earth magic himself trying to cross the trail into the more mysterious parts of the forest in which he resided in. He seemed just as stunned as Birathan did, and he didn't know how to really speak. He couldn't, Lich was a mute. He gave the other CCCat an irritated look before making his way into the forest again. Not the friendly type it seems, thought Bira. Part of Lichen felt the need to observe who this other creature was, for he was a curious one. Lich was very much a creepy guy, large and bulky, but sly and fast in movement. He was also quite good at stalking, which he was currently doing as he watched this mentor create beautiful statues of stone and earth right at his feet. Lich cocked his head to one side. Now, he was truly curious to see what this was about... What was this guy doing out here and all alone? Bira looked up from his work to see the hermit CCCat coming out from the darkness of the treeline. "Hello again." Lich did not answer, but instead inspected the unusual statues that this CCCat had made. He poked them with a sooty clawed finger and the statue quite literally shattered into a pile of rubble. Lich jumped and backed away, but Bira, the one who had created it, only laughed at his skittishness. Lich looked up at him and bared his teeth, as if he were frustrated by the reaction. "Don't worry, it's just practice. Earth magic. Do you know it?" Lich stared at him with a blank expression. He didn't seem to understand immediately, but eventually he pointed to the other statue and created a few gestures which implied magic. Bira nodded slightly, "Would you like to learn how to cast magic from the earth?" The hermit CCCat seemed to ponder this. Would he even have the potential to cast such powerful magic? He seemed nervous about it, but nodded slightly anyway. Bira could sense his hesitation and clasped his shoulder, which had heavily caught him off guard. Bira could tell that he had been in isolation from the world surrounding him for quite some time, but no worries. The mentor guided him over to a small pile of stones. "The first thing to learn, and the most important, is to meditate. As with any magic... Have a seat my friend." Lich paused as he watched Bira sit down before joining him. Bira inhaled, exhaled, and with his palms facing upwards, the stones before them began to shake and gravitate from the ground. Lich seemed a little spooked by the magic, but settled down once he realized that there was no sense in being afraid. This was a teaching. Lichen tried to replicate the magic, but had only been able to shake the stones. However, Birathan saw the potential and smiled, "Good. What are things that bring you joy?" He asked Lich, who seemed to be a little lost on the question. Joy... Lich looked down and placed his hands on the grass just beneath them, his hands slowly moving along the blades. "Plants..?" He asked, and Lich nodded. "Think of those then, think of them growing all around you, creating a shield around you and protecting you from the outside." He instructed, scooting back to see what Lich could do. Lich began to think of giant ferns and Elderberries growing all around him, to give him a sense of comfort and wellness. He held his palms upwards like Bira had done, and soon enough, the comfort brought with it a sense of confidence for Lich. Soon enough, rocks began to float up slowly and around him, until they all fell onto the ground and startled Lich out of meditation. He looked over at Bira and smiled, the mentor gently clapped, "There ya go. It's all about relaxing first before casting it, if you can. For some magic, you would need more intense emotions, like with fire." Lich listened to what his new friend had to say on the subject and enjoyed learning something new. Another thing that he had been

completely unaware of the entire time he was meeting his new mentor, that he had actually interacted with someone else instead of running to hide. Which he would note later. Until then, he was busy learning more about his newfound abilities, Bira began to teach him about the various types of stones and rock that had potential just underneath his feet, about crystals and the way they can be manipulated. Lichen soaked it up like a sponge too, and he wanted to keep learning about it, but Bira needed to go. However, he did promise that he would certainly come back to offer assistance for further study. For the first time, Lich too found himself sad to see someone leave. He retreated back into the woods and home, which resided within a massive, hollowed out tree which he had fixed to be home. He knew its location by heart and simply couldn't miss it. The tree itself was covered in ivy and created an insulated inside. It was luxury for the hermit of a CCCat. While at the comfort of home, he still tried to use his new magic ability, picking up little stones here and there when he could find some. Sitting them on his little makeshift table, toying with them by way of magic. He found this to be amusing, but he simply wanted to learn more. He smiled and began to look forward to new opportunities for himself beyond the horizon. It didn't take him very long to fall asleep that night.