

Dimension Master

#Chapter 21: Being Erased - Read Dimension Master Chapter 21: Being Erased

Chapter 21: 21: Being Erased

As the twin suns rose high in the sky, the smooth runed stones sank into the ground as if hiding from the approaching daylight. There was no trace of their existence once the sky lightened, bathing the dimension in daylight.

Drake opened his emerald eyes. The smell of seasoned meat and eggs floated around him, making his stomach growl in hunger. He frowned. He had eaten several sandwiches that night. He felt like he hadn't eaten for days.

Pulling himself up, he slipped on his boots and prepared himself for the day. As he washed up, then made his way down the stairs, he looked around him. There was a subtle pressure in the air. Frowning, he continued to the small table where his friends were.

Mayor Ivan, Mike, and Chad were sitting, devouring their breakfast as if they hadn't eaten in days. They didn't even look up to greet him. It was completely out of character for all of them.

Drake sat down, looking intently at the others. "Something's wrong. I can feel it." He stated, while quickly filling his own plate, and then he began to eat. It was much slower than the others. They didn't seem to have heard him. They were too busy eating their meal to notice.

After eating enough to satisfy his hunger, he stood up. "I'm going outside," he said calmly, looking at the others. They didn't even look up.

Thinking back to the last reward, he mentally spoke to his system.

"System, what is going on?"

{Not enough information provided}

Shaking his head, Drake left the inn. The sun was out, and the townsfolk were going about their business.

"System, scan the area."

{Not enough information provided}

Drake frowned. He wasn't sure how the information system worked. It was new and he hadn't used it yet.

"System, identify the pressure in the air."

There was a long pause before the soft voice floated through Drake's mind.

{Pressure identified.}

'Seriously? That's it?' He was expecting more information, like what the pressure was, where it was coming from, or why it was there. It gave him nothing.

"System, what is the cause of the identified pressure?" he asked, trying to word it so that the information system would be able to understand what exactly he wanted.

{Identified pressure is caused by a crystal grid surrounding the town. The pressure is the result of the power that the crystal grid is emitting.}

"Define the purpose of the crystal grid." He stated.

{The crystal grid's purpose is to trap or prevent entrance or exit}

"Who is the target of the crystal grid?"

{Target Unknown}

'Shit, I bet I'm the target.' He grumbled.

Drake walked through the town, surveying the behavior of those around him. They didn't seem to notice him either. It was as if he were a ghost walking through the streets. He knew he had to figure out what was going on and why. If the grid prevented its target from leaving or entering, why did he feel like no one could see him?

He needed to investigate.

Taking advantage of his current situation, Drake walked into the mayor's home and searched through his office. No one seemed to notice he had entered the large home. Once he found what he was looking for, he went from home to home, trying to determine if anyone had been taken.

What he had been after and was successful in finding was the list of all those who lived in the small town. There was even a section for visitors. His friends were on it, but his own name was faded out. It was as if it were disappearing out of existence.

To his surprise, he hadn't found a single villager missing. It appeared that the only one missing was him.

Drake walked to the barrier of the town and attempted to walk down the road toward the mountain.

He slammed against an invisible barrier. Since he had been slowly walking, he was not injured.

"System, if I find the power source, will I be able to destroy the trap?"

{Yes}

Drake sighed. He was expecting a little more than a one-word answer.

Drake thought about it for a moment.

"System, identify the location of the crystal grid's power source."

Drake waited, but nothing happened; he began wandering the town, thinking that perhaps it couldn't because he wasn't near it. As he approached the center of the town, a soft voice floated through his mind.

{Crystal grid's power source identified}

He knew that there would be no more information given.

"System, pinpoint the exact location of the crystal grid's power source."

A soft glow of green light left his chest. Then slowly made its way toward the center of the small town. Drake followed closely behind. He wasn't expecting his system to take him to it in that manner. He didn't even know that it could.

When he reached the glowing lights destination, the green light floated down through the dirt. Drake placed an 'x' on the spot. He watched as the green light exited, then floated back into his chest.

"System, what is the depth where the power source is located?"

{The power source is located three feet down}

'Shit!'

"System, is the crystal grid causing those around me not to notice me?"

{The effect is not created by the crystal grid}

{The effect is created by gargoyle sorcery}

Drake frowned. The system didn't say what created the crystal grid. "System, what created the crystal grid?"

{Dimensional runes were used in the creation of the crystal grid}

"System, what is the end outcome of the gargoyle sorcery?"

{The enchantment has been identified as an eraser. If the enchantment has not been countered, the target will be erased from existence.}

"System, how can the eraser enchantment be countered?"

Drake was beginning to panic. He was stuck in town, unable to leave. He was about to be erased from existence, and he didn't know what to do about either.

{Kill the enchanter or find the item that connects the enchanter to the target and destroy it}

"System, identify the item used in the eraser enchantment."

The system didn't respond, so Drake went back to the inn. He needed to find a way to get the attention of his friends.

As he entered the inn, no one seemed to notice him. Strained, he walked up the small stairs and looked for his friends in their rooms. When Drake found them, they were sitting on Chad's bed.

Drake walked into their room, slamming the door closed, hoping that the two boys would at least notice the door slamming.

Mike looked up as the loud bang sounded throughout the room, his eyes making contact with Drake's. "There you are!"

Chad looked between the door and Mike, frowning. "What are you talking about? Where is who?"

Drake frowned, not liking what he was hearing. He stepped close to Mike. "There is a gargoyle enchantment in place. I'm being erased," he said, pulling out the visitors page of the list of those in Draco Town; his name was still there, and it was still fading slowly.

Mike looked at the page, seeing the fading name of his friend. "What can we do to stop it?"

"Either kill the enchanter or destroy the link. I don't know who it is or what the link is. We are also stuck in the town; there is a magic crystal grid trapping us here." Drake grumbled.

Pulling some parchment from the desk in the corner, Mike wrote everything down. He included Drake's name. All the words remained; only Drake's name was already beginning to fade. He handed the parchment to Chad and told him to read it aloud.

Chad read the words on the parchment word for word, but stopped at Drake's name. Holding the parchment closer, he read the one fading name. "Drake?" Pausing for a moment, Chad's eyes widened. "That's what I've been forgetting? Drake, the Dimension Master's heir? How could I forget Drake! One of my best friends."

In Drake's room, back at home, the Dimension Master and his two companions stared at the screen in shock. They had heard every word that Chad had spoken.

The screen had been acting strangely. It had taken them on a strange walk through town. First to the border or town, before it seemed to stop abruptly. After that, the screen took them slowly to the middle of the small town.

After a while, the screen had stopped. A glowing green ball of energy had materialized and moved closer to the center of town. The screen followed the glowing energy ball. Once it reached the center, it headed for the ground in the exact center of town. It went into the ground, disappearing. The screen had kept on that spot for a while, until the glowing ball of energy floated back up, dematerializing.

The screen followed a trail to the inn. Entering the inn, it took the three watchers to the other two boys. They could not see Drake through the screen. Now they knew why.

Chapter 22: 22: Finding the Totem

"Drake?" Chad's eyes widened. "That's what I've been forgetting? Drake, the Dimension Master's heir? How could I forget Drake! One of my best friends!"

Mike nodded to his friend, his expression grim. "He's next to me by the door. There's an enchantment that is erasing him. We need to find the link and destroy it or kill the enchanter, and we need to do it now. We're running out of time. He's running out of time." The more he spoke, the more panic had made it into his tone.

Chad's face grew pale. "We need to go. We have to save him."

As if on cue, Drake opened the door to Chad's room and walked through. Mike silently followed him. Lines of worry covered his brow. If they didn't hurry, Drake would cease to exist.

Since Chad couldn't see Drake, he followed Mike. His head was bowed, fear pressing like a weight resting on his heart, making it difficult to breathe. He didn't want to forget

his friend again. He didn't want to lose him. He only had two friends, and they were in front of him. He couldn't see Drake, but it helped to know that his friend was still there.

Drake had an idea, but wasn't sure if it would work. He wanted to see if his system could help. As the three boys walked back to the dining room, Drake mentally spoke to his system.

"System, follow the link attached to me causing me to be erased."

Drake's eyes began to glow a bright green. As he looked around, he could see a thin glowing thread appear. The glowing green thread was stretched, leading away as it disappeared out the door of the inn.

"This way!" Drake hissed, following the thread.

As he followed the glowing thread through the small town, it weaved around as if it avoided touching anyone else. After several moments of following the glowing green thread, Drake realized that it was heading toward Nana's home. Drake's face paled, worried that the enchanter would use someone to get to him. He didn't want anyone to get hurt to save his own life. Especially someone he had grown attached to. As he followed the thread, he approached the door of the small home. The thread was going through its door as if the wooden door wasn't solid. It was like a ghost passing through solid walls.

Drake stopped in front of the door and turned to Mike. His voice cracked in anguish. Fear that Nelly was being used as the link. His thoughts were in a jumble, and fear radiated from his pores. "Knock on the door," he ordered his friend. His tone was subdued.

Mike knocked on Nana's door. It wasn't loud, but it was enough to alert those inside. They waited, not bothering to knock again. They could hear the footsteps of someone coming near.

After several moments, the door opened. Nana stepped out, looking between the two boys she could see. Her eyes passed through Drake as if he wasn't even there. To her, he wasn't.

Drake tried to talk. "Can we come in, please?" he asked. Nana didn't hear any of it. She waited patiently in the silence as if Drake had never spoken. Chad didn't hear it either.

Mike repeated Drake's words, worried that his friend would be gone soon. They needed to hurry. "Can we come in, please? It's really important. Something inside your home seems to have been planted during the battle with the monster. It might be dangerous."

Hearing Mike's words, Nana's face paled as she stepped aside, letting them inside her home. Drake entered first, following the glowing green thread. Mike followed him. Soon after, Chad followed Mike.

"What exactly are we looking for?" Chad asked Mike. His voice was calm, trying to hide the fear. He couldn't hear Drake either, so he had to rely on Mike. Chad repeated Drake's name in his head, not wanting to forget his friend. It was his mantra until they found a way to stop what was happening.

Mike shrugged as Nana closed the door and followed the only two boys that she could see. "I believe we'll know it when we see it. It's hard to say."

Drake started to sweat as he followed the thread. Apprehension vibrated through his being. His fear was growing. It was heading to a small room in the back of the home. "In there," Drake pointed. His hand was shaking.

Mike turned to Nana and pointed. "We need to go in there." He was pointing to the room at the very end.

Nana's face paled further as she nodded. It was the worst possible room to have something dangerous in.

Mike quickly opened the door. He stepped back, appearing to hesitate. Since no one else could see Drake, it was the only option.

Inside the small room was an oval rug. It was crocheted out of strips of pink rags. The bed had a quilt with pink, yellow, and lavender blocks in a cute pattern. Pastel bows were sewn in the corners of some of the blocks. It was a child's room. Specifically, a little girl's room.

Sitting on the bed was Tod, who was reading a story to his little cousin, Nelly. The glowing thread ended at the little girl.

Drake continued to follow the thread, walking up to the little girl. He needed to make sure that the link wasn't her. He prayed it wasn't. There was no way he could harm the little girl. He would rather disappear forever than hurt her.

Deciding to find another way if he could, he spoke to his system.

"System, follow the link between the caster and the identified link to me."

A second thread materialized. This one was red.

Drake turned to Mike. "Have the children stand apart, facing me over there?" he said, pointing to an empty area in the room.

Mike turned to Nana. "I need the kids to stand over there so we can have a look. Whatever it is, it's near the bed. Maybe even under the mattress."

Nana nodded. "Kids, she told them. Please go over there for a moment," she said, pointing to the empty area.

The children obediently got off the bed and stood near the wall in the empty area of the room. They looked at Chad and Mike with curiosity.

Drake sucked in a breath. The thread was still going to Nelly. He looked around the room. She was never without her doll. He didn't see it. He turned to Mike. "Ask Nelly where her doll is."

Mike first searched the bed and under the mattress for something that didn't exist. He knew he wasn't going to find anything. He just didn't want Nana to think they came to her home targeting Nelly. After his mock search, Mike bent down to Nelly's level. "Where's your dolly?" he asked gently.

Nelly pulled the doll from her apron pocket and handed it to Mike. Mike took it, pretending to look at it. Drake came closer. "It's not the doll. Ask her if she's wearing something under her dress. A necklace or something. It should be right here," he said, pointing to an area on her chest.

Mike handed the little girl back her doll. He spoke again; he was trying to be gentle. He knew that Drake was focusing on Nelly. He was worried that the little girl was the link, and he was trying to make sure. "Nelly, are you wearing a necklace or a piece of jewelry right here?" he asked, pointing in the exact spot that Drake was indicating.

Nelly pulled out a little leather bag. It was rich brown with runic designs covering it. The designs were several shades darker, as if they were burned into the leather. The sachet was held closed by a thin strip of the same rich brown leather. "I found it," She said happily.

Mike glanced at Drake. Drake looked relieved. The little leather bag must be the link.

"The bag is the link that the enchanter used. We need to get it out of here," Drake stated. "I can follow the link to the enchanter with it and kill him so he can't try something like that again."

Mike took the bag from the little girl and turned to Nana, holding up the bag. "This is it," he said calmly. "We need to get this thing out of here. It was planted by the monsters when they attacked. It's too dangerous to let her keep it."

Nana nodded, she was looking at the little bag in fear. "Yes, take it away."

Mike stood up and headed to the door. "Thank you, Nana. If she finds anything else, it's important that you bring it to me. We don't know what was planted in town. We don't know if there was more than one item, either. We only knew that there was one. Keep in mind that there might be more."

Nana nodded as the boys left her home. Mike followed Drake as he followed the red thread.

The red thread led them to the barrier. When they tried to pass through the barrier, it was like slamming into a solid wall.

"Shit!" Drake cursed. He wanted to get to the enchanter, but there was no way as long as the barrier was in place. "We have two choices. We can destroy the bag or destroy the barrier."

Chapter 23: 23: Breaking the Link

"Shit!" Drake cursed. He wanted to get to the enchanter, but there was no way as long as the barrier was in place. "We have two choices. We can destroy the bag or destroy the barrier."

"Try shooting the barrier with one of your skills," Mike offered. He doubted it would work, but they were running out of time before they even knew that there was an issue.

After Drake nodded, Mike set the small leather bag on the ground. Drake held his hand up, mixing his whirlwind and fireball. It seemed to be the most powerful so far. The fiery whirlwind shot lightspeed out of his palm, crashing into the small bag in the perfect center. The spell exploded, dust and rock flying everywhere.

As the dust settled, the little leather bag was revealed. It was as if the spell hadn't even touched it.

Drake held his hand out again, shooting a beam of glowing green energy. It shot like a laser, hitting the leather bag. It was a perfect shot. The beam subsided, and the bag was yet again untouched.

Chad was watching the bag, not saying anything. He could see that something was happening, but the powers used were unseen by him. "That thing looks like it has something in it. Maybe empty it and destroy the contents one by one?" he suggested. He wanted his friend back. He kept his mantra up, reminding himself to remember him.

Drake picked up the bag and attempted to open it. The bag held firm; he was unable to even open it. Something was keeping it closed magically.

"System, identify how the link can be destroyed."

Drake's green eyes began to glow as he looked at the bag. He felt like his system was inspecting the link for options.

After several moments, his eyes faded, and the soft voice floated through his mind.

{The target cannot destroy the link}

"Shit!" Drake spat out in frustration. He looked over at his friend, Mike. "I can't destroy it."

Mike relayed what Drake had said to Chad. Chad appeared to think for a moment before he said anything. "Maybe someone other than the target has to destroy it."

Drake set the little leather bag back on the packed dirt.

Chad took his bow off his back and pulled an arrow. Aiming at the bag, he shot. The arrow slammed into the bag, bursting into nothing. A cloud of dust formed from the impact. When the dust cleared, the bag was revealed; it was still unscathed.

Growling in frustration, Chad picked up the bag and tried to open it. It wouldn't open for him either.

Mike started to pace. "What are we missing?"

Panicked and frustrated, Drake slammed a fireball into the barrier that was trapping them inside the small town. The fireball burst, causing the barrier to vibrate; waves of energy rippled like water before fading again.

Mike, still pacing, was trying to figure out what they could be missing. After several minutes, he looked between his friends. "I have a theory." Looking at Drake, he explained. "You are the main character in the game, correct?"

Drake nodded.

Mike continued. "We are your cohort. You had to create our characters, which means we are a part of you in the game. If you are erased, we will be too as soon as you are gone."

Chad frowned. "What are you getting at?"

Turning to Chad, Mike glared. "You're not usually this dense," he said, shaking his head. "Anyway...What I'm saying is... is that we are linked. I think someone other than the three of us has to be the one to destroy it."

Drake nodded, in agreement. It was a sound theory. Ironclad even. "Let's test it out. We need to find Mayor Ivan. He's the only one who might listen and try to help."

Mike nodded, then explained the plan to Chad. "Mayor Ivan is either in the inn or the tavern."

Drake perked up. "In the tavern, that guy I made a deal with. Make him destroy it."

The boys rushed to the tavern to find Gavin. They knew they had to hurry. They were quickly running out of time.

When they reached the tavern, Mayor Ivan was at the long table, planning with some of the soldiers. They were discussing the monsters and the barrier.

Mike had been the first to enter, Drake and Chad behind him. When they entered, Drake separated from them after taking the little leather bag from Mike and headed to Gavin, who was in his normal spot at the counter.

Drake could tell right away that Gavin could see him. His eyes met Drake's as his face paled.

He weaved around the other patrons that couldn't see him, before stopping in front of the man.

"I came to collect my debt," he said quietly. "Don't talk. No one can see me at the moment, you don't want to look crazy, do you?"

Gavin shook his head slightly.

"The goal is to destroy a small leather sachet. It is filled with a spell created by one of the monsters. I can not destroy it, and neither can my cohort. The spell used prevents the targets from being able to destroy it. That's where you come in." Drake set the sachet in front of Gavin. "Once it's destroyed, our deal is done. First open the bag."

Gavin silently picked up the small bag. His eyes scanned the room. He was trying to see if anyone was watching. No one was paying attention. Most were focused on the Mayor, who was trying to find a solution to the barrier.

Pulling the opening apart as if it were a regular bag, he opened the bag.

Drake let the breath he was holding out. "Dump out the contents," he ordered quietly.

After dumping the contents of the small bag on the counter, Drake leaned over and inspected them. He could see that the line was still in place.

Several of the items were flammable. They were dried herbs and a tiny scroll made from skin.

"System, which item from the link needs to be destroyed to break the enchantment?"

After a moment of silence, the soft voice floated through his mind.

{The Scroll needs to be destroyed to break the enchantment}

Looking up at Gavin, he pointed to the tiny scroll. "That is what needs to be destroyed first." Drake added 'first' just in case there was more to it.

Gavin stood up, picked up the tiny scroll, and headed to the hearth. Bending down, he set the scroll on fire. Once it started to burn, he placed it on the ground where it could be observed. Drake watched the scroll burn, turning into ash.

The link was still active but much weaker.

Once the scroll was gone, he looked up at Drake, waiting for what to do next. "I think the bag itself needs to be destroyed also," Drake stated.

Gavin headed back to his seat, scooping up the contents of the sachet, and picked up the empty leather bag. Once he returned, he bent down and placed the bag in the flames. They watched it burn. Since it was made from leather, it took much longer.

As they waited, Gavin spoke quietly. "Is this what's happening outside? Is this why there is a barrier trapping us inside?"

His eyes still on the leather bag, Drake answered. "No, that's another issue altogether. I have already figured that one out. Not only does it keep us in, it also keeps the monsters out. I know how to take it down, but there may be a catch, just like that little bag."

As Drake watched the leather bag burn, Gavin tossed the rest of the contents from the bag into the fire that could burn. They caught the flames immediately, disintegrating into nothing. There was only one thing left. It was a small stone with a rune carved in it.

As soon as the bag turned to ash, the link was gone. "What do you want me to do with this? The stone can't be burned."

Drake studied it for a second.

"System, can this stone lead me to the enchanter?"

Drake's eyes began to glow a bright green. It lasted only seconds before the light faded. In that brief moment, Drake could see the red thread that linked the stone to the enchanter. He smiled widely. A soft voice floated through his head.

{The runestone can be used to track its creator}

{Quest 'Collect Debt from Gavin in a time of need' complete}

{You have received a skill}

{You have received 'cohort tracker'}

Drake smiled. "Thank you, Gavin, your debt is paid."

Gavin smiled. His demeanor changed completely from the previous days. "Are you going to help destroy the trap, or at least tell us how?"

Drake nodded. "We will discuss it. We may want to keep it up for a few more days to rest up and prepare for another attack. It seems to keep the monsters out as well. It will buy us time to figure out how to make this town safe. Either way, I'll let them know what to do to take it down. I'll let Mayor Ivan decide when he wants it down." Pulling out the page showing the visitors' list, he looked at where his name should be. His name was there, still faded, but easier to see. His name was reappearing. Drake smiled, "I guess I need to involve myself over there," he said, looking at the long table where they were discussing their multiple situations. "I'm not sure if they can see me yet, but I can at least try."

Chapter 24: 24: A Plan

Gavin had returned to the seat at the counter. He kept turning his head, watching the young heir.

Drake strolled up to the long table, not stopping until he was standing next to his two friends, who were focused on the conversation, and didn't notice that he had arrived by their side. Not that Chad would see him, but Mike could.

Mayor Ivan was standing over a map of the town. He had drawn a line around Draco town to show where the barrier was located. "We are trapped; we need to get rid of this thing."

"I can help you with that," Drake said calmly. He was hoping that they all could hear him.

Mike turned to Drake first. "Did it work?" he asked. "Was he able to destroy it?"

Drake smiled widely at his friend. "The link has been destroyed, and my name is reappearing on the town roster. I believe it worked, but the effects may take a bit longer to take effect." He then addressed the table where the mayor was talking to the group of men. "Can any of you see or hear me?"

To his disappointment, there was no answer, making Drake grumble to himself. He looked at Mike. "Tell them I know how to take down the barrier, and that I can tell them where the power source for it is located."

Just before Mike was about to say anything, Gavin came walking up to the long table. When he stopped, he first looked at Drake, then toward the men. "I think we should let the barrier stay up a little longer. The young master explained to me that it was not only to keep us in, but it also keeps the monsters out. I propose we leave it up long enough to come up with a plan to deal with the monster. The barrier can give us the time we need to do that in relative safety."

Mayor Ivan looked at Gavin, his irritation bubbling up. "We don't know if the barrier is dangerous!" he argued.

Drake spoke up, knowing that at least two of those present could hear him. "I don't believe it is. The runes used to create it are dimensional runes. According to my sources, it has no other purpose other than keeping us in and the monsters out."

All eyes turned to Drake, causing him to flinch slightly. He looked down at himself in relief the moment he realized everyone could see and hear him again.

Ivan took a deep breath before speaking. "Did you put it up?"

"No, Mayor Ivan. While I was dealing with another issue, I discovered the barrier and investigated it. I found what is powering it. The power source is located in the exact center of town and buried three feet into the dirt."

Mayor Ivan tugged his scruffy beard. "What other issue? Is it something we have to worry about?"

Drake shook his head. "Gavin here," he said, pointing to the man beside him, "Helped with dealing with that. One of the monsters planted a totem in town. Nelly found it. Once we tracked it down, my cohort and I tried to destroy it, but couldn't. It turned out that we were the targets. It was an attempt to erase us from the equation so we couldn't help you against the monsters. Knowing that the target of the spell couldn't destroy the totem, I went to Gavin for help. He kindly destroyed the totem, solving the problem. From what I can tell, the barrier does not seem to be related to the totem or the monsters at all."

Ivan stood up from his seat. "Show me where the power source is located."

After stepping out of the tavern, Drake led them to the center of town. Activating his system, he tracked the exact location of the power source. Those with him watched in disbelief as the glowing green orb exited his chest and floated to the center of town before entering the dirt. Before it reappeared. Drake bent down and drew another 'x' in the dirt. The one he had placed earlier had already been scratched out.

The glowing orb reemerged and entered Drake's chest, and the glow in his eyes faded. "It's three feet down in that spot," he said, pointing to where the little 'x' was drawn in

the dirt. "Destroying the power source is how to deactivate the barrier. I won't know how to destroy it until it is removed."

Mayor Ivan nodded, his eyes focused on the 'x' in the dirt.

Mike spoke up. "I think Gavin is right. We should construct a plan and prepare to deal with the monsters before we attempt to deactivate the barrier."

There was silence in the small group as Ivan thought. Drake stared at the 'x' he had drawn, then addressed the system. "System, list those who use dimensional runes."

After only a few seconds, the soft voice floated through Drake's mind.

{Dimensional Runes are used in Dimensional sorcery or by the Dimension Master}

'Shit!' Drake thought. 'I would have thought it was the dimension master that put the barrier up, but it used the word 'or' indicating he isn't the only one that can use it.' He looked up from his thoughts at the mayor. He was still thinking, trying to figure out what was the best thing to do for his town.

Just because the barrier kept the monsters out of Draco Town, it didn't mean that it was safe.

Drake lifted his head. He was worried about the wording of his system. "I think we should act fast. While we are digging up the power source, you plan with your men. By the time we get it out of the ground, you need to be ready."

"Something's changed," Mike observed aloud. "What happened?"

Scanning the group, Drake spoke. "If I said, Dimensional Runes are used in Dimensional sorcery OR by the dimension Master, what would you think?" Drake began. He then continued before anyone could respond. "At first glance, you would say that it was the Dimension Master that placed the barrier. However, the wording suggests that he isn't the only one who can use dimensional sorcery. My question now is, if the Dimension Master did not place the barrier, who could have?"

Chad frowned. "You don't think it was the dimension master who placed the barrier?"

Shrugging, Drake bit his lip before speaking. "I don't know, but I also don't know who else is capable. Some questions bother me. First, why would the Dimension Master trap us here if we," he said, pointing to himself, then his friends, are supposed to be on a quest. Second, why did it coincide with the totem we found?" Drake looked over at Mayor Ivan. "The totem was a small leather bag. A sachet. It was literally erasing me out of existence." Speaking to the entire group again, Drake continued. "I was able to

track the totem the same way I found the power source of the barrier. I was also able to track the enchanter to the totem. Whoever or whatever it is, is outside the barrier."

Chad lifted his head, looked excited. "Can you track the creator of the creator of the barrier like you did for that little leather bag?"

Drake became quiet. He spoke to his system.

"System, can you link the barrier to its creator?"

Seconds later, the soft voice floated through his mind.

{The barrier cannot be traced to its creator}

"System, what is preventing the link between the barrier and its creator?"

{The creator is not present in the current dimension}

Drake frowned. "Shit!" he said aloud, unaware that the others had been watching him. He looked around at the group, startled. "Sorry," he said, scratching his chin before answering his friend. "The creator of the barrier is not in this dimension, which is preventing any type of tracking."

Gavin sighed, "I'll get a shovel. Mayor Ivan, I suggest you go to the tavern and make plans with the men. This shouldn't take long."

As Drake watched Gavin and Mayor Ivan disappear, he thought about why the barrier's creator was not in the current dimension.

Three men sat in front of a computer monitor in a small room. It was Drake's room. One of them had the glowing green eyes of the Dimension Master.

Relief was on the men's faces. When Drake disappeared from the screen, it made them panic. They all knew if Drake vanished, the other two would soon follow.

All three men were dressed in armor, their weapons ready. They had to act fast. The Dimension Master had a plan, and the only way he could implement it was if the young trio was trapped in the town. They were already digging the power source out of the dirt. It was only a matter of time before the barrier was down.

It may not have been the Dimension Master who placed it, but it was going to help save the boy's lives.

Chapter 25: 25: One Problem Delt With

Gavin came toward him, a shovel clenched in his large hands. Mayor Ivan was somewhere, probably in the tavern, quickly planning, trying to get things prepared before the young heir destroyed the power source of the barrier. It was a race for time.

Drake watched as Gavin approached. His eyes occasionally moved to the red thread that led to the creator of the token, meant to erase him. Mike and Chad were at his side. The 'x' was still marked in its spot, but Drake didn't trust that it would stay there. Magic seemed like it had its own set of rules. It was a set of rules that he didn't know or understand.

Taking the shovel from Gavin, he began to dig in the hard, packed dirt. He had to go three feet down. The dirt was firm, making it hard to dig through.

Taking turns, the three boys continued to dig, unaware of what was taking place at the gargoyle's lair.

Gargoyle Lair

Three men stood looking at the treehouse village, their armor glistening in the sunlight. The man in the center wore dark green robes, his eyes glowing with a soft green glow.

The man in robes turned to one of his companions. "As you stated, this is our fight. The only way we can fight it is while the boys are trapped in Draco Town. Once the barrier is down, there is nothing we can do." He pointed his sword at the thread of red light. "That is our first target. We take out the shaman, then as many of the army as we can. If you see one of their leaders who leads their army, they are the priority. If you see the king, he is my responsibility."

"They are all in their underground lair. How will we get to them?" one of the men asked.

The one in robes turned to the man who spoke. "We walk through their front door."

The three men followed the red thread through the village. The robed man scanned the structures, his eyes glowing bright. He was using one of his skills, looking for life. There was none. This made the robed man smile. There were no captives.

Continuing to follow the thread it led them to the entrance of the underground lair. The steam from the heated chambers below puffed through the entrance. The Dimension Master turned his green eyes to his companions. "We have a priority: Shaman first, Leaders of the army second, King last. However, anything that comes your way, kill. We need to clear all the ones that are a threat if we can. If you see the human flesh eaters, they need to die as well."

His companions nodded solemnly. Not all the gargoyles ate human flesh. There was a group amongst them that was tied to the king who did.

The red thread led to a small chamber; the shaman, hunched in his cloak, was watching the link to his totem. In his mind, as long as it remained, his charm was active. A sinister smile was on his face. The Dimension Master held his hand out, shooting a sharp, glowing beam. It was bright green and razor sharp. It hit the shaman in the neck, severing his head. The head fell to the stone floor with a thud, the body soon after. Particles of light filled the chamber as the shaman disappeared. The red thread faded immediately. There was nothing for the runed stone to link with. Its enchanter was dead.

"One down," the archer of the group snickered.

The trio made their way through the chambers, avoiding most of the inhabitants. Their goal wasn't to wipe out the race, only the ones that were the biggest threat.

When they reached what would be considered the army's training ground, there was a wide stone table with all six of the leaders of the army.

The Dimension Master smiled, "How convenient. They're all in one location. Easy pickings."

His words echoed through the chamber, catching the attention of those in the room.

His swordsman companion smiled widely. "We can handle these guys; you find the king."

The man's green eyes flashed, a wide grin spreading on his handsome face before disappearing around a corner.

Several chambers down, in a large room. A cloaked gargoyle sat on his throne. Behind him was his group of flesh-eaters. Sensing someone had entered his throne room, the king turned his head, his eyes landing on the Dimension Master.

Seeing everyone present, his grin grew. "Convenient," he stated cheerfully. His glowing green eyes moved through the group, taking in all who were present.

The king stood from his throne; the flesh-eaters behind him moved to flank their king, ready to fight with him.

The Dimension Master clicked his tongue as his whip uncoiled from his wrist. The blades' sheath was already removed. A soft glow of energy filled his palm as the group of flesh-eaters moved past their king to fight.

The king stayed where he was, a malicious smile on his fanged mouth. He was confident that his flesh-eaters would make short work of the robed man in front of him.

With a swish of the Dimension Master's whip, the battle began.

Draco Town

Drake watched Mike dig up the last bit of packed dirt from the power source. He was momentarily distracted as the red thread flickered, then disappeared, vanishing without a trace. He frowned, eyes narrowing as he studied the spot where the thread once glowed. There was nothing there to see.

Chad, noticing Drake's troubled expression, looked in the direction his friend was looking. "What's wrong, Drake?" he asked. "What are you looking at?"

"It's gone, the red thread is gone," he stated evenly, not knowing why it would have vanished all of a sudden. "The stone out of the totem was linked to the enchanter. It just vanished. I don't know why."

Mike listened as he finished digging and began to pull the power source out of the deep hole. "It's out. I guess all we need now is to destroy it."

Drake turned his attention to his friend. He held out his hand. Mike placed the large stone in his friend's outstretched hand.

Taking it, Drake started walking toward the barrier. "I don't want to place it on the ground. It might sink back down."

They walked to the barrier. With one hand out, they attempted to touch it. Their hands pressing against an invisible force.

Drake turned to his friends. "Have your weapons ready. I'm going to set it down. If it starts to sink, act fast. If it looks like the powers from your weapons are making the power source stronger, don't use them."

Mike looked around them, finding a large rock. "There," he pointed. "Maybe you should set it on something more solid."

Just before Drake set the power source on the large rock, Mike picked up another rock, which was the size of a bowling ball. He held it in his hands, ready to try to smash the power source.

Gargoyle Lair

The Dimension Master stood in the center of the throne room, surrounded by bodies. Most had lost their head. The king stood on his dais, seething in anger as he stared down at him. The Dimension master snapped his whip, a wide grin on his face.

Movement came from behind him. Without turning, he spoke in an even tone. "Finished already."

The archer stepped forward with the swordsman close behind. "Easy work."

The robed man chuckled. His eyes began to glow brightly, and a soft green glow filled the room. "It appears I'm out of time." He stated, a sinister edge to his cheerful tone.

The glow brightened, then flashed with a blinding light. Once the light had disappeared, the Gargoyle king was standing alone on the dais. The Dimension Master and his two companions had vanished.

Draco Town

Mike smashed the stone down onto the power source as hard as he could. It shattered the power source with little to no resistance. The runes glowed for a split second before the stone burst into small shards and crystal dust.

The barrier flickered with a light glow as it disintegrated into nothing.

Drake held his hand out as he took a step forward out of the barrier. The barrier was no longer there.

"Let's go find the mayor and let him know it's down. We need to prepare for another attack." Drake stated, then started walking purposefully toward the tavern where he knew Mayor Ivan would be.

Unknown Location

Looking down at the glowing orb, a man in a black cloak, his hood hiding his features, frowned. "The barrier is down. How did the heir know how to take down the barrier? Why would he take it down? It was protecting the town!"

The man walked to his scrying mirror and looked at the still surface. It was a black bowl filled with enchanted water. Waving his hand lightly over the surface, he willed it to show him the gargoyles' lair. Before him, in the mirror, showed the gargoyle king surrounded by his dead flesh-eaters. Moving the view throughout the lair, in their training, all of their army leaders lay dead on stone, and most of the soldiers were among them.

The man smiled. "I guess it doesn't matter anymore," he laughed. The sound of his laughter echoed throughout the room. "It seems I need to speak with the gargoyle king."