

ABC0011  
Age 10

## ARCANE INTELLECT

### *Introduction*

You're too young to understand what *it* was like. Too young to understand what war was like. What power *means*.

Even now, after a whole decade of study, I don't quite get it. I know, although not as well as I could, that the intellect is a form of power, and with great power comes great responsibility. The organisation called the Drainers lacks responsibility.

The intellect, as you probably won't know, is the realm of our magic, but we call it Intel. We, that is to say, the Intellect Knights, store Intel in either vodka, or intellimantic metals, which Intel Forgers make into armour, from rings to breastplates, and knives to greatswords. The Drainers steal Intel.

I am a rebel. My name is Excel and I was an Intellect Knight.

### *The story starts...*

Excel examined the tyre tracks with one practiced eye. The other eye, which was bionic, was staring unblinkingly up the path. The helmet slung casually by his side was slightly warmer than usual. His target was close.

After being the most wanted person in the empire for a year, Excel's appearance had not changed much. His red hair fell lazily around his pale face. The only sign of his exile were his battle scars, scattered up his arm. There was also a gold hilted-sword slung by his hip which was called *Gladius Ignis*, meaning *Fire Sword* in Latin. He prized this the most since it was the fire sword of the seven elementum swords, the seven most powerful intellamatic swords.

He looked up. The imperial scout tank he was tracking had passed about a half hour ago. If he hurried, he could steal it.

Excel put the helmet on and let the mask fold around his face as he crouched down like a cat ready to pounce, then pressed a button on his chest. Suddenly, the jetpack on his back roared into life. It launched him forwards and kept going until Excel saw the tank. Tapping the button again, he plummeted towards the tank. As he landed, he heard a rough voice saying "What was that?".

Excel wrenched the trapdoor to the cabin open. In the entrance stood a badly shaven man. "Hey" he said playfully. "How's it going?" He splayed his hand and a small sphere of fire flew at the man's face. Howling in pain, he stumbled out of a side door and rolled away. When Excel jumped in, the other man had already jumped out. *All the better*, he thought.

Using his jetpack again at the settlement, he flew to the top of an old warehouse, where he could hear voices.

“If we don’t hurry, that renegade will find us,” a male voice warned the others.

Excel stumbled, fell and hit the floor with a sickening *crack!* All the men in the room looked at him. Leaping to his feet, he added the odds up in his head. There were about Seven of them, including the leader. He was a fully trained Intellect Knight with the ability to shoot fireballs, but they would just drain his intel. No good. But there was no point in running away now. He would have to fight.

Excel lunged lunged at the nearest one, sword in hand. As he swung it, the sword burst into flames and connected with the man’s flesh. Spinning around, he launched another fireball at the toughest looking one. He didn’t bother looking to see if he was hit, since he could feel intel draining from his sword and gauntlet. but punched the ground with his fist. The warehouse shook as three streams of fire erupted from the floor, knocking the remaining fighters down.

All that remained was the leader. She was a woman of around thirty, and she had waist length black hair. She wore a plate of leather armour. Not to mention that she was holding the *Sword Glacies*, the ice Elementum Sword.

“Excellent job!” She told Excel politely. “I was quite impressed by your performance. You get a lot less credit than you deserve.”

“Well, that much is obvious,” Excel replied conversationally.

“I am so sorry I’m going to have to kill you,” She said, and she ran at him as miniature blizzards appeared around her sword.

Excel had been ready for this and made an expert parry as she stabbed. He came in for a counter-attack, slashing at her face but missing while she hit his leg with a perfectly aimed slash. Howling in pain, Excel decided to move into a more defensive strategy, and kept the sword close to his body. His leg had a thin layer of frost appearing on his leg.

Excel splayed his hand and she disappeared in a puff of smoke. One thing he knew: ice mages are weak to fire. As Excel looked around at the defeated Drainers, he muttered sourly, “And I thought it was a challenge!”

Excel went around the warehouse and found a fair amount of loot: a nice plume (that would be nice on his helmet), the *Aer Gladio*, the air Elementum sword, and a new gauntlet. Fitting the vanity items on, he walked out of the warehouse with a new spring in his step.

**THE END**