

SUPREME MAGUS

Chapter 9 Understanding Spirit Magic

At that time, Elina and Raaz (father) were coming back to the house. Upon hearing Lith's desperate cries, they ran back to check on him.

When they found Orpal on the ground, puking, they understood what had happened. They already had suspicions, since whenever Orpal fed Lith, he was always hungrier than usual.

But now they had proof. Inside the pool of vomit, the undigested creamy soup was as clear as the day.

Raaz became red with anger. "You little...!" But had to stop, his other children had returned as well. "I am very *disappointed* in you, Orpal." Said Elina, seeing that her hubby was too angry to speak.

"From now on, Elina will be the one feeding Lith. You can take all her shifts in the stable, since I don't think that even you could eat hay."

"But mom..." Orpal said trying to defend himself. He hated cows and their smell.

"No buts, young man!" Raaz yelled. "And that is not punishment enough! Elina, feel free to prepare one more bowl for Lith, and take the food from Orpal's share! He must learn that bad actions have consequences!"

They were speaking too fast for Lith, and there were too many unknown words. But Orpal had just turned pale, so it had to be good news.

Orpal started crying and apologizing, but Lith made sure to cry louder, so Raaz and Elina both ignored his pleas and sent him to take care of the animals.

After being fed with a generous serving of soup and milk, Lith could finally focus on what had happened. After days of trial and error experiments, he had grasped the basics of his newfound ability and gained a much deeper understanding of magic.

Lith had discovered that when he casted an elemental spell, it actually consisted in a three-step process. First, he would emit the mana, then he had

to mix it with the world energy that he was trying to manipulate. The last step was the hardest one, controlling the spell and its effects.

Spirit magic skipped the second step, it used only his own power, without borrowing elemental energy. That made it more difficult than any magic he had practiced so far and more mana consuming.

It also required much more focus compared to normal magic. Pure mana had no physical form, so he could not rely on his eyes for manipulating its effects.

All depended on his willpower and imagination. The clearer was the mental image of the action he wanted the mana to make, the better the result.

The range was also very limited, barely reaching a meter (3,28 feet) radius.

Despite all its strict limitations, Lith started to practice anything but spirit magic. The ultimate discovery about it, was that every improvement he did in spirit magic was also passed on all other kinds of magic.

He didn't need to switch practicing between them anymore, and so he progressed in leaps and bounds compared to before.

From time to time, he would use a random elemental magic to check on his progress, reaching a new understanding of the profoundness of that element.

The progress Lith made allowed him to also improve his breathing techniques.

Through Accumulation, he could now not only perceive how his mana core changed in size with practice, but also have a rough understanding of the amount of mana contained in his body.

Using Accumulation he would feed the world energy to his mana core, allowing it to expand from the size of a pinhead to that of a glass marble.

Once the mana core grew to marble size, further progress could only be made when the physical body forcefully compressed the mana core back to pinhead.

Lith had no idea how the phenomenon worked, and had found no way around it. Mana core and body development had to go hand in hand, there was no shortcut.

Bottlenecks happened when Lith tried to use Accumulation when the mana core was still at its peak size. The world energy would be rejected by the mana core, going wild through his body and damaging it.

By continuously undergoing expansion and compression cycles, his mana capacity was already incomparable to when he was just a new born.

After discovering and practicing spirit magic, Lith had a much finer control of his mana, inside and outside his body.

He managed to modify the Invigoration technique, so that when he breathed in the world mana, he would combine it with his own, temporarily exceeding his limits

Then he would expand the resulting energy, moving it from the solar plexus outwards, until even his body hair would be overflowing with mana.

Ever since he invented Invigoration, he had noticed qualitative changes to his body. Lith was now better at withstanding cold and heat, and he would hardly ever get sick.

When his whole family would catch a cold, he would either get over it before the symptoms manifested or recover in a few days.

"Unless it's all a crazy coincidence, improving Invigoration is the only mean at my disposal to temper my body. If I am right, this means that I can use it as a crutch until I get big enough to do physical activity." He thought.

"Hopefully, it should also help me overcome my bottleneck periods faster. It's a gamble, but it shouldn't do any harm. Also, between hunger and bottlenecks, there isn't much I can do as a seven months old baby."

As for his family life, it also experienced some changes during the following months.

After the soup incident with Orpal, a divide opened between the brothers. Lith was vengeful by nature, and so was his brother.

Sometimes, when Orpal was angry, would call him Leech instead of Lith, since he always called him like that in his mind.

Every slip of the tongue would cost him a serious scolding, and when he did it while harshly arguing with his parents, even a good spanking.

Orpal blamed Lith for all of his misfortunes, the little runt always giggled when he was having a hard time.

The relationship between Lith and his parents, instead, kept getting better and better.

He had already started saying babble words, making sure to say "Mama" when Elina embraced him and "Dada" whenever Raaz came near him.

"If this world is even a bit similar to Earth's middle age, is better to stay in my old man's good book until I am self-sufficient." This was Lith's reasoning.

He was still very afraid of father figures, and the two of them didn't had much a relationship anyway. Raaz would always be busy with something, letting his wife and eldest daughter spend the most time with the baby.

To his defence, he had just wrongly assumed that Lith was too little to notice, and that they would have time catch up later in the future, like he did with his other sons.

Raaz really loved him, and Lith never ceased to amaze him. He couldn't remember him crying for no reason, not even when teething.

If someone bumped into his cradle or raised his voice while Lith was asleep, or at least pretending to, he would not make a sound, just look around before going back to sleep.

Lith increasingly grew fond of Eliza, it was more like a loving aunt than a sister to him. He could see himself in her, taking care of her little brother like he did with Carl.

He would have loved to express this love, but all he could do was smile and laugh as soon as he saw her, and call her "Lala". She was in fact the only one, beside his parents, to have a babble name.

It wasn't much, but it meant the world to her.

And so, time went by. After six months from his arrival, Lith was put on the ground for the first time and started to crawl under strict supervision. At the

ninth month he started to walk and graduated himself from babble words to real ones.

On the day of his birthday, after discovering they had birthdays in that world too, he allowed himself to use simple phrases and started to make questions to complete his vocabulary.

Knowing nothing about babies, it was very stressful finding the right timing for every little thing. Luckily, Lith could always resort on cheating to find out the proper time for him to "learn" to do something. He was already capable of understanding most of what he could hear, so he would always be open to "suggestions".

If Elina was dying for him to finally say "Mommy" instead of "Mama", he would wait a couple of days before making it happen. If Raaz cheered for Lith running to him, he did.

The real problem was paying attention to everything Raaz, Eliza and Elina said while being seemingly completely oblivious about their words.

Another problem was that once they let him roam free in the dining room, they gave him also small wooden toys expecting him to play and explore his surroundings.

Lith already knew the dining room as the back of his hand, and there was not much to see in the first place. Yet he had to pretend to be curious about it.

That was the hardest thing he had ever done since becoming a baby, and scared him to death. He had no clue how a child would explore such bland environment, and his paranoia about blowing his cover made him sweating bullets.

Seeing the expectation in their eyes, he started from the nearest thing, the fireplace. The fire was not lit, the logs were cold and covered in ashes.

When he got closer, Raaz stopped him.

"This is the fireplace. Now is safe, but fire is bad. Fire hurts. No touching it, never."

Lith looked at him, seemingly confused, before trying to put his hand in the ashes. Raaz grabbed his hand, blocking him.

"Fire is bad. No touching it. Never." His father repeated.

Lith stared in his eyes like he was deeply in thought, before asking: "Fire bad?"

"Yes, very bad." Raaz replied while nodding.

"Okay." Lith moved away from the fireplace and got close to the table. When he tried climbing up a chair, almost falling down with it, Elina ran to his rescue.

"Good gods, this little one sure likes danger." Seeing their increasingly worried expressions, Lith believed to have found a way out that torment.

He would keep putting himself in danger, trying to climb on the table and going into the kitchen rummaging through pots and knives.

Quickly they decided that adventure time was over. They made him sit on an old cloth spreaded over the wooden floor, and gave him toys to play with while they recovered from the stress.

He had a little wooden horse, some kind of cart, and an odd-looking dog thingy. Playing was much easier to him. Lith did not need to create stories or explaining what he was doing.

He could just use playtime to practice spirit magic. Lith would actually never use his hands to move the toys, making them float as close as possible to his fingers.

He really enjoyed those moments. Lith could finally openly rejoice, scream and laugh anytime he made a new discovery or a breakthrough, and all his parents would see was a happy child lost in his fantasies.

"Who would have ever thought that such a quiet little fellow could have such a vivid imagination." Raaz said with a big, proud smile on his face. "Look at him. All he has is just some old toys, yet it looks like he has the whole world in the palm of his hand."