

## SUPREME MAGUS

### Chapter 17 Encounters 2

While Lith was approaching Selia's house, he felt a profound sense of shame tormenting him.

"It's a shame to waste so much good equipment and horse meat, but I have no plausible excuse for it. Our farm could really use a couple of horses, but what if someone recognized them? Too many risks for so little reward, destroying everything was the right thing to do."

Once he had finished with his experiments, Lith used darkness magic to wipe out any trace or proof of what happened, turning everything into dust.

Selia was so excited seeing the two rabbits to let slip her dire need for them, to fill the order of a very generous client.

Respecting his master's teachings, Lith exploited the situation.

"Hunters don't do favours, they make deals." He quoted.

In exchange for the snow-white rabbits, Lith managed to get a full set of warm clothes of lower quality and Selia would personally tan the remaining pelt for free.

That and the three rabbits ready for the cooking earned him great praise from his family, except Orpal. Over time he had started to consider all the food that Lith brought home for granted, so his hatred and envy returned stronger than ever.

"That little Leech! Hunting with magic is easy, any idiot could do it. Everything he does is a slap in my face. I never get the respect that I deserve as the firstborn, and it's all his fault! First, he flaunts his luck hunting, then he plays martyr, asking mother and father to let that piece of trash of Tista be the first to have fur clothes. What can Tista possibly do with them? Getting ill with style? No, Lith did it on purpose.

He knows that my stupid parents still resent me for telling the truth about that cripple. Lith did it only to make me lose face compared to him."

The truth was quite different from Orpal's self-centred interpretation.

Lith really loved Elina (mother), Rena (big sister) and Tista (ill sister), while Orpal was never on his mind. He cured anyone in the family without being asked to, except for Orpal. But not out of spite or anger, but simply because his existence was irrelevant in Lith's eyes.

If Orpal lived or died it was not his problem. He would not do anything to harm him, but would not help him either. For Lith they were complete strangers living in the same home.

The reason why he had wanted Tista to be the first to benefit from his luck, was that Lith hoped that with warm enough clothes his sister could finally spend more time with him and Rena during winter, playing in the snow.

In Lith's eyes the image of Carl would often overlap on Tista's visage. He loved them deeply, and both of them were victims of a cruel fate.

Lith wasn't willing to let anyone or anything, not even a congenital condition, take his loved ones away from him.

He suffered at the thought of how little of life she could enjoy. To give Tista the opportunity to experience speed and the feeling of the wind on her face, Lith built for her a swing with the help of their father, Raaz.

It was nothing special, just a wooden plank attached to four tight ropes hanging from a reversed U-shaped wooden framework with triangular standings. Yet the result was awe-inspiring for his family.

Swings seemed to be unknown in the new world, or at least they were in the Lustria County.

Raaz looked at the result of their work in admiration.

"It's amazing. Why the three wooden beams instead of just one?"

"Safety reasons." Lith explained while using earth magic to make the last 10 centimetres (3.9 inches) of the beams sink underground, making the swing impossible to topple by bad weather or a too vigorous movement.

"That way both ends are like a chair. Multiple legs mean that the weight is equally distributed among multiple beams, making the stress per beam significantly inferior."

"Off course! Now that you explained it is so simple. By the way, how do we call this thing?"

Lith was at loss for words, he had no idea what the word for the swing movement was and he could not ask that now.

"Err... It's a rocking chair."

"Dammit, why I always screw up with the little details? That's not a rocking chair, but it's the closest thing I could think about with my current vocabulary."

Tista fell in love with his present, and the rocking chair became soon a popular pastime in the family, to the point that Raaz had to build a couple more to avoid quarrels.

Furthermore, after his experiments with dark magic, Lith spent the following months trying to apply both Life Vision and Invigoration while treating Tista's symptoms.

"If I can manage to have for Tista's body the same imaging that Invigoration grants me for my own body, I could have a better understanding of her underlying condition. That would mean having much better chances of finding a cure!"

In the blink of an eye it was almost winter again, Lith's fifth birthday was approaching.

Lith was determined to capitalise on every single day before the great cold arrived, to catch as much game he could to fill the house's storeroom to the brim.

He had no idea how cold the incoming winter would be, and even if he was probably strong enough to survive a storm, he doubted his parents would allow him to test his theory.

During the last year Lith had explored more and more of the Trawn woods, learning how to move without alarming the animals. He had also discovered new uses for dark magic.

His newest spell, the Shroud, allowed him to cancel out his body smell and aura by enveloping Lith in thin layer of dark energy, making impossible for most animals to notice him, either by nose or instinct.

But it wasn't an easy task, even a small misstep would turn the Shroud into full-blown killing intent, making the whole woods aware of his presence.

That day Lith was raiding a new area, deep in the Trawn woods, investigating an odd feeling that had tormented him for days.

In certain areas of the woods, Lith could hear an annoying buzzing sound, and until that day he had always ignored it. Lith had always thought that it was the call of some weird, unknown animal, but in the last days the noise had gotten stronger and persistent.

"Damn, whatever this is, it reminds me of my desktop's Uninterruptible Power Supply unit whenever there was a black out. It's ear piercing."

Lith could not help but to imagine it as a desperate cry for help. He did not understand how he got that idea, but his gut was telling him that it was something important.

Ever since Lith had learned martial arts back on Earth, he had always followed his gut feelings when he had nothing to lose, and this was definitely the case.

The closer he got, the louder the noise. Lith knew he was on the right path.

He was running at full speed when he heard a bone chilling howl. Lith immediately used two of his life saving spells, Shroud to conceal himself, and the air spell Lightsfeet to float a few centimetres above the ground, making his movements noiseless.

Both required a lot of concentration, but it was better to spend some mana rather than stupidly endangering himself. Calm and focused, he searched for the source of all that noise.

"Holy sh\*t! That's a Ry!" Lith exclaimed inwardly after quickly hiding behind a huge tree.

A Ry was a magical wolf beast, the apex predator of the Trawn woods. Magical beasts were more common and weaker than monsters, but they could still easily take apart a fully armed soldier.

Not many animals could turn into a magical beast, they needed a great talent for magic and enough time to feed off the world energy.

Once an animal became a magical beast, it could use its mana to boost its physical prowess and even developing spells that employed elements they were attuned with.

The Ry was almost as big as horse, with a fire coloured thick fur.

Lith could not understand why a Ry would come so close to a human settling, Rys were intelligent beasts that avoided unnecessary trouble. If humans did not disturb them, they would return the favour.

Lith felt pity for its prey. After making sure being upwind he cancelled both spells to save precious mana, getting a better understanding of the situation.

The Ry kept howling and growling, as it was in pain. Lith noticed that every time the Ry's snout got close to the ground, the buzzing sound would become high pitched and the magical wolf would whine in pain.

Now more curious than afraid, Lith activated Life Vision to estimate the Ry's power.

What he saw made him gasp loudly.

The Ry was unbelievably strong, with a mana flow almost on par with Lith's. But the real reason for amazement was a second mana flow, that belonged to the source of the buzzing sound.

It was a little stone, smaller than a thimble.

"What the f\*ck? That pebble is alive? That explains everything! The noise it emitted must have lured here the Ry, just like it did for me. Taking into account its reactions, the noise is much more annoying for the Ry than for me. I never heard of rocks with mana flow, that thing must be a magical item. I cannot let that brute destroy it."

Throwing caution to the wind, Lith decided to take action and save the magic stone.

"The Ry's lifeforce is incomparable to mine, but if I manage to avoid it getting close, I know I can win. His mana flow is inferior to mine, and from what Selia told me magic beasts have no offensive spells."

First Lith activated Shroud again, then he started weaving his strongest spell.

"Plague Arrow!" A bolt of dark energy flew from his joined hands, hitting the Ry from its blind spot while it was trying again to crack the noisy stone with its teeth.

The screeching sound and the spell hit both at the same time, making the magical beast almost lose its footing.

Plague Arrow was a spell that injected a dense mass of darkness magic in the victim, disrupting both the mana flow and the life force. Lith had charged it as much as he could, to get as much advantage as he could.

Before the Ry could turn around to search for its enemy, a stream of lightnings erupted from Lith's palms, hitting the magical beast with enough strength to knock it down.

While increasing the distance between them, Lith cancelled Shroud for Life Vision. Despite the sneak attacks the Ry was still alive and strong.

Lith focused his spirit magic, using both his hands, trying to break its neck as he had already done countless times.

The Ry wasn't stupid, as soon as it felt the ominous sensation on his neck, it contracted its muscles, reinforcing it with mana and making it harder than steel.

"F\*ck! So much for my advantage. If only I could use fire magic you would be already roasted to death. Could you please go away? That thing is mine! Mine!"

Lith conjured several ice javelins, throwing them at the magical beast from multiple angles simultaneously.

The Ry easily dodged them all, retaliating with a powerful magical roar.

Lith was only saved by the distance, having the time to realize that a massive wind blast was heading his way. He stepped back at the moment of the impact, using his own wind magic to dissipate the blast.

His sleeves got turned into confetti, but aside from some flesh wounds he was fine.

"F\*ck me sideways! Thanks a lot, Selia. Magical beasts do not have offensive spells, sure. It seems this Ry never got the memo, though."

The Ry charged at Lith, using its wind blasts to disrupt his rhythm. Lith did his best to keep the beast at bay, but the difference in physical prowess was overwhelming, it was only a matter of time before getting caught.

"Okay, when you can't win, just run. Plan B, fight dirty!"

Lith stopped running away, to prepare his last attack plan before throwing the towel.

He conjured many ice javelins, but did not throw them, he left them floating in mid-air all around him.

After a moment of hesitation, the Ry chose to ignore them charging straight at that insolent pest.

"That's a good boy! Eat this! Twin spell! Flash&Bang!"

Lith's right hand produced a massive flash of light, for a moment it was like a second sun had appeared. His left hand, instead, used wind magic to produce a noise comparable to an explosion.

The Ry tumbled from the pain, its eyes and ears bleeding, while Lith was unscathed. He had learned long ago that as long it was infused with his mana, his own spells would do him no harm. He could cover himself in fire, ice or lightning without a scratch.

When the Ry crashed against a tree, Lith finally used the javelins, throwing them with all the force he had. All of them hit the target, but the thick magical fur prevented them from impaling it, piercing only through a few centimetres of flesh.

Lith immediately checked with Life Vision, the results appalling.

The Ry was definitely wounded and weakened, but far from being dead.

"Dammit! So much effort for so little damage. If it continues like this, I am the one who is most likely to run out of steam or luck. The Ry only needs one hit to kill me. It's not worth the risk."

Lith used spirit magic to recover the magic stone before running for his life. The stone was full of teeth marks, its sharp surface prickled Lith's skin.

"So long, sucker!" Lith screamed at the still stunned magical beast.

"See you again in a few years, let's see if you dare attack me again!" Small drops of blood touched the stone, and the noise stopped.

The Ry was still trying to make head or tails of what had just happened. It only wanted the damn noise to stop hurting his ears when that fierce man-pup showed up.

The Ry had tried to scare him away and to teach him a lesson, but it ended to be the one getting schooled instead.

"Bah, who cares." The Ry thought. "I wanted to get rid of that stupid rock and in one way or another I got the job done. That was one feisty pup, though. I pray that he shows more consideration towards his pack than he did for me. Otherwise when he grows up, he will be a scourge to his kin. Stupid humans and their greed bring only troubles. They are incapable even of taking care of their own."

The Ry, leader of all the packs in the Trawn woods, shrugged away the javelins before returning to its family.