

SUPREME MAGUS

Chapter 18 New Solutions, New Problems

Lith kept running until he was out of the woods, turning his head from time to time to check with Life Vision if he was being followed.

"There is no trace of the Ry, but better safe than sorry. I'm afraid I have pissed off that thing quite bad. It's better to give it some time to vent off and search for easier preys."

He was near Selia's house, when he finally remembered about the magical stone. Lith activated Life Vision, getting a good look up close.

The first thing he noticed was that the rough edges on the stone had smoothed up, it did not prick his skin anymore. The surface was still rough, but now looked like a stone marble.

The buzzing sound had stopped from a while, and the magical stone's life force, despite being still at the same level, had changed significantly.

Back when he saw it for the first time, its life force was like a candle about to burn out of wax, now it had become steady, with a regular pulse.

Warning Selia about the magical beast took priority, so he hid the stone in a leather pouch he always carried at his neck before knocking at her door.

Lith explained her everything, describing in detail the size and power of the Ry, leaving her flabbergasted. Of course, he never mentioned their fight.

Lith told her that he had fled as soon as their eyes met, and that he got away only thanks to his magic, showing his tattered sleeves as proof.

"Good gods, kid." She still refused to call him by his name. "You have been really lucky it took it easy on you. Had the Ry decided to give you chase, we would not be having this conversation. Nonetheless, thanks for warning me first, instead of going to your parents." Selia ruffled his hair.

"How do you know I came here first?"

"Because if you didn't, your parents would have probably locked you up in your house, and one of them would have come here to warn me in your place."

Lith froze up. He had just dodged a bullet much scarier than any Ry.

"You are right. Is better not to tell them, otherwise my hunting days may be over forever."

"Yeah. I suggest you taking the rest of the morning off. Make up and excuse for those sleeves and go home." Selia walked over the shed near her house where she kept her game maturing.

"Take these as a thank you for the heads up." She handed him a rabbit and a blinker, ready to be cooked.

"I was about to go in the woods. I think I will follow my advice, instead, and keep tanning the remaining pelts. I'll go to hunting in the afternoon, when it should be safer."

Lith thanked her with a deep bow, he knew how precious meat was in Lutia, even for a huntress as good as Selia. Not to mention she had just saved him from perpetual house arrests.

He spent the rest of the morning trying to understand how to use the magic stone. It appeared to be feeding off Lith's mana. Not leeching it like a parasite, more like nibbling at the mana that he naturally released being talented in magic.

The stone would simply breath in what Lith's body breathed out, nothing more.

Lith tried injecting mana into it, but to no avail. Then he casted elemental spells while holding the stone, to check if their strength, cast speed and area of effect were affected in any way.

All of his experiments gave no results, the stone looked just like any other.

"Stones do not have such a clear mana flow, and certainly they do not have any life force. Maybe this thing needs time to heal, to recharge or something. The Ry messed it up quite bad, let's hope is not broken. Unless it starts harming me, I'll keep it. Maybe is some kind of treasure, or maybe I can find something about it on Nana's books. I just have to be patient."

The last days of autumn passed on uneventful, until winter arrived.

Having reached the five years of age, Lith revealed a little more of his magic talents, proving to be invaluable to his family.

He would wake up first and warm up the whole house with magic, even the floors. At that point the fireplace was lit only because was cozy, and because rounding up around the fire, especially during the stormy winter evenings, was a family tradition.

Even the cooking was entrusted to Lith. Elina would prepare the meal, and Lith would cook it faster and better than a ventilated oven, keeping the soup warm for everyone during the whole meal.

He could not go hunting anymore because of the bad weather, his parents had been adamant on that. But Lith could still go to Selia's house to perform the chores for her.

During the last year, she had become so lazy to become dependant on Lith for keeping her house clean and her tools sterilized.

This meant killing two birds with one stone for Lith. Now he had an excuse to go fetch his private stock of meat whenever he got hungry, and Selia had to pay him for the chores.

Lith would do it for free, just to get out of the house, but his parents would not agree. So, Selia paid him a few copper coins to clean her house, and some more for Elina to do her laundry.

Both Elina and Raaz would welcome any extra income, and doing the laundry for eight instead of seven wasn't much an effort. Especially since Lith provided her an endless supply of hot water.

"Nice to meet you, I am Lith, boiler supreme." He would grumble inwardly every time.

In the first weeks of winter, Lith made a very important breakthrough. He finally understood how to use Invigoration's body imaging on others.

He was now able to let his mana seep into another person's body, and slowly take control of their mana flow, allowing Lith to know everything about the subject's physical condition.

The only way to achieve such a result was to keep physical contact, searching way ins for the mana without harming him/her.

Lith immediately used it on Tista, and his findings were appalling.

Her body was full of the tar-like substance, that for the lack of a better term, he had dubbed impurities. And the cause of that was her lungs.

Barely half of Tista's lungs were made up by a healthy tissue. The rest appeared like a black-brown mass that actively produced impurities, that over time filled the healthy tissues of her lungs and windpipe, making her cough first and ill later.

After giving it some thought, Lith was sure to have found a fix better than everything he had done before, but much more embarrassing.

Even though now his real age was that of a thirty-year-old man, he was still in a five years old body, which found extremely uncomfortable the idea of speaking of certain matters, especially with the family women.

After some deep breaths to calm down, he called Raaz and Elina to ask for their help and permission.

He had to dumb down the procedure quite a lot to get them to understand.

"Basically, I cannot cure Tista, not yet. But I discovered a way that should make her feel much better. In the best-case scenario, she could even get rid of most of her symptoms."

"And in the worst-case scenario?" Raaz asked full of worries.

"At worse she will be the same. That's I'm certain of it. But I need you to trust me."

Contrary to his expectations, they did not make any objections or question. Their trust in Lith's mastery of magic was boundless, and in their eyes, he was just a five-year-old, while Tista was barely seven.

She had yet to mature in every way, for them it was like yesterday when they bathed together in the wash tub.

The first phase was the easiest. Lith would take control of Tista's mana flow, overloading her body with his mana, and forcing the impurities to move away from the inner organs and toward the skin.

She would just feel hot the whole time, like having a mild fever.

Once most of the impurities were about to surface, Lith demanded to be blindfolded and that either Elina or Rena witnessed the process.

Tista was just a kid, and Lith feared that overtime suspicions might arise. During Earth's middle ages, incestuous relationships were disgustingly common, and he rejected even the idea of being thought of as a pervert.

The second and last phase required Tista to be soaking in the wash tub, that had been previously filled by Lith with hot water and soap.

He clearly remembered the stench the impurities gave off, and during winter ventilating the house was difficult, especially in Tista's condition.

Cold was her worst enemy.

Then, he could finally extract the impurities by using water magic, creating and manipulating flows that would massage Tista all over her body. Lith would destroy the impurities as soon as possible with dark magic, preventing them to release their smell.

It was a difficult process that required using water and darkness magic, all while keeping Invigoration active. After the treatment, he would also use water magic to remove all the water still on her body, and then mix fire and wind magic to obtain a makeshift hairdryer.

When it was finally over, Tista looked like she was just back from a spa, while Lith looked like he had just got back from mining, drenched in sweat and out of breath.

"How do you feel?"

Tista made some deep breaths.

"I never felt so good! Like, ever! Also, I always dreamt of having a winter bath, instead of having to resort to warm water-soaked towels. Thanks, lil bro, you

just made two of my wishes come true!" She tried to hug him, but he raised his arms in defence.

"Please, no. I'm disgusting right now, do not ruin my hard work. I now need a bath, some food and two hours rest, minimum."

Both his mother and big sister, nodded.

"Lith, dear, what was that thing with the water that you did?" Elina asked.

"Do you mean the..."

"Dammit, I can't tell her I was imitating a hydromassage, they do not have latin here. Nor I can call it a Jacuzzi or something. Whatever, I'm too tired for this sh*t."

"... water massage?"

"Yes, that! It seemed so relaxing. Tista has fallen asleep many times during her treatment. Sure it must be pleasant." Rena's words were filled with expectation.

"And that thing for drying her hair, could you do that again too?" Elina raised the ante, their aim more and more obvious by the second.

Lith was on the verge of collapsing, he had no time to spare with niceties.

"Are you implying that you would like a hot water massage too?"

More nodding followed, their hands joined in a silent plea.

"But... but..." Lith stuttered. "Both of you are..."

He was trying to find a polite way to say "hot". Lith could still remember Elina's naked body when he was still an infant, and she had aged very well.

Rena was now eleven. Maybe it was the countryside lifestyle, maybe it was related to the new world, but she had already begun her growth spurt, developing some curves, being nice and soft in all the right places.

Lith already had so many qualms for his little sister, and Tista was as flat as a board, only her long hairs gave her away as a girl instead of a boy.

"We are family. And all of us have dreamt of being able to take a bath during winter without catching a cold or worse. You have no idea how smelly we become by working in the barn, surrounded by the livestock smell and their dung. Sometimes the smell is so bad we can't even sleep at night. Couldn't you help us too?" Elina, his mother, completely oblivious of Lith's worries tried to play the guilt card.

Lith gave up.

"Fine, just let me rest a bit and then I'll help you. But you still need to blindfold me, and I demand a witness!"

They both started laughing out loud.

"Why so many qualms? You are just a baby, not some thug."

"I would like to say that I am a gentleman, but I do not know the word for it. I could say that I am a man, but that would make them laugh even harder. Stupid five-year-old body." He thought.

"Decorum." It was the only word in his vocabulary he could resort to.

"Damn, this is going to be a fricking long winter."