

## Supreme M 61

### Chapter 61 A New Lesson

After finishing his delicious lunch, Lith had one hour off. No one had approached his table, and that made him actually very happy.

He was very fond of his personal space, not to mention he had no desire of wasting time doing small talk with a lot of kids.

Despite his physical appearance, Lith's mind was that of a grown-up man, that between his three lives had lived for almost forty years.

Except for being hormonal, due to his teenage body, and being addicted to oxygen, there was nothing he had in common with his classmates.

From that perspective, isolation was a blessing in disguise. If he spoke to no one, it was impossible for anyone to notice how different he was from his peers.

He and Solus had already discussed during the meal, both regretting that, for security reasons, the academy would not make any book available for the studying until the end of the first day.

- "It's such a pity." Solus said. "If we had them, we could already put them into Soluspedia, getting light years ahead of the other students. Instant knowledge!"

"Yeah. But I can understand the importance of this rules. Specializations are exclusives of the six big academies.

If they just delivered them at the students' homes, before the beginning of the year, their contents would be accessible to all the family members. This kind of knowledge can't be released without supervision."

"And what about once the students get the opportunity to go back home, at the end of the trimester?"

Lith mentally shrugged, his stood up from the chair and started walking towards his room.

"By that time, they already have gained the status of students. According to what Linjos told us in his office, they are both protected and kept under surveillance. My guess is that the books can't leave the academy's premises.

The only things one can take out, are what he has learned or copied in his grimoire. If you love your family, you will not put them into danger by disclosing state secrets that could cost them their and your life.

If you hate them, instead, the moment they try to coerce you, you just need to rat them out to get rid of them for good. It's a win-win situation." –

Once back into his room, Lith called his parents. He had left home only seven hours ago, yet the enthusiasm they showed him was like he had disappeared for years.

"My little bay!" Elina was on the verge of tears. "Are they treating you all right? Are you eating properly?"

"Yes, mom. Everything is fine." He lied through his teeth. "The Professors I met today were all amazing. My classmates are kinda stuck-up, but so far so good. Not to mention the food. I wish I could bring you some, it's just wonderful."

Contrary to his expectations, time flew by, and he was forced to leave Tista in a hurry, after giving her a consult about a patient of hers.

All the activities related to each year, took place on their own floor.

The problem was that each floor was so big that getting lost or taking a long detour was pretty easy. In Lith's case, he had miscalculated the time he needed to reach the classroom.

Only when he heard resounding the gong that announced the beginning of the lessons, he had realized how long he had spent chatting.

- "F\*ck! The first thing I'm going to re-invent as soon as I become a Forgemaster, is a damn wristwatch. How the heck does people keep track of the time?" -

Solus calculated that even going double time, Lith would have not made it, so he was forced to run. To avoid smelling on his first day, he used water magic to collect the sweat in his palm as soon as it formed, sending it straight in Solus' pocket dimension.

Despite all his best efforts, he was the last one to arrive. Luckily, thought, the professor in charge had yet to show up. According to the schedule, Lith would have met Professor Marth, the very same that had created Blood Resonance magic.

It was a great opportunity to get his attention, and maybe, if opportunity arose, share some of his knowledge with him. Having one of the Light department's top experts as his backer, or even better as a mentor, could be a real game changer.

- "Be cool, and try not to sound desperate, old man." Lith thought to himself.

"We have a full year ahead together, maybe even two. I need to play my cards right, keep my admission score while improving my status. I don't give a damn about friends. The other students are useless.

Allies, on the contrary, can help me keep my family safe from the like of Duke Hestia and provide me with the resources I'll need to set my own Forgemaster laboratory. I can't waste years grinding for gold, I need time to travel and find the answer to my resurrection problem." -

The classroom was much smaller than the one for the mandatory lessons. It was a square room, with each side twelve meters (13 yards). In front of the chalkboard, there were three rows of desks, separated by small corridors.

It could accommodate comfortably up to fifty students, yet according to Solus, there were only twenty-six students attending, Lith included. He occupied the closest spot to the chalkboard, sitting near the other students.

When they threw a mean glare at him, he just took out the Ballot, forcing them to shut up and mind their own business. After what had happened that morning, they didn't dare to move away from him.

Not to mention doing that would mean getting even farther from the chalkboard and the Professor. The floor was even, making it already hard to see through all the heads in front of them.

The man who walked in the room was outstanding in his own way. He was quite short, barely over 1.55 meters (5'1") high, at least sixty years old.

The top of his head was completely bald, the hair he had left on the sides was snow-white and so were his waxed handlebar moustaches. His belly was so big that it made hard to guess if he was larger than high.

That, together with his pure white robe, made him resemble a real life Humpty Dumpty.

"Hello, dear students. I'm Professor Vastor, and I'll guide you through your first steps in the light magic Master healer course."

Not everyone was as ignorant as Lith, most of them already knew what Professor Marth looked like. Before Professor Vastor could finish his introduction, the class was filled with saddened groans.

His disgruntled expression to such reaction, expressed clearly how angered he was by that blatant lack of respect.

"I'm very sorry to disappoint you, but as you should have predicted, Professor Marth can't waste his precious time with the likes of you. The whole light magic research department rests on his shoulders, so you'll have to settle for me.

Words cannot express how it saddens me, to notice that even country bumpkins have more manners than the high and mighty nobles."

He wasn't referring to just Lith, but to all the students that thanks to their poor background had failed to recognize him, looking at him with admiration despite his funny appearance.

"I have good news and bad news, for all of you. The good news is that we won't spend two hours in this class. I'll just explain to you the differences between tier three and four of healing magic, after that we will move in the academy's hospital.

There we will do some trial rounds of our resident patients, giving you the chance to meet both Professor Marth and Professor Manohar, if we are lucky enough."

The class exploded in cheers and applauses.

- "What the heck?" Lith thought. "Where do they think we are, at the stadium? Back on Earth my college professors would have skinned them alive for such behaviour." –

Vastor had a very Earth-like expression at the moment, his hands were trembling with rage, dilating his nostrils at every breath.

"The bad news..." He continued, cutting them short.

"...is that it means I will start evaluating you all right off the bat. Even today's rounds will help us evaluate your skills, separating the gold from shiny trash."

The room fell silent, most of the students in the first row had lost all their enthusiasm. Some were having stomach cramps due to nervousness, others seemed on the verge of puking.

It wasn't at all as they had imagined their first day of specialization would be.

Professor Vastor was delighted by the result of his speech, curling his moustaches with a sadistic grin on his face.

"Let's not waste any more time. I'm sure you can't wait to stop listening to my gibberish and become real healers, like your hero, Professor Marth."

- "Man, I don't need tier four magic to diagnose Professor Vastor a really bad case of 'Envy syndrome'. Being so petty at his age is really sad." Solus said.

"Yeah. Happens when you lose your throne to someone younger and more talented. I feel the same way." Lith replied, thinking how lucky his classmates were, being born with cyan mana cores, without having to work hard for years to reach that level. –

"First of all, who can tell me what are the greatest limitations of tiers one to three of light magic?"

Lith raised his hand, but so did everyone else. Vastor chose one of them at random to answer.

"You, with the snob face. Feel free to share with the class." He said pointing to a girl with shoulder length black hair in the first row.

"Professor, my name is actually..."

"I don't care." Vastor cut her short.

"I expect at least half of you to drop out within the first six months. I won't bother remembering your names."

Most faces turned red with anger, while Lith was inwardly smiling.

If compared to most nobles he had encountered in the past, Professor Vastor was really polite. At least he didn't discriminate, he treated everyone like cr\*p.

## Chapter 62 A New Lesson 2

The black-haired girl was simply outraged. She belonged to one of the ancient noble families, admired and respected in all the Griffon Kingdom. She had always been treated like a princess of royal blood, no one had ever dared disrespect her.

Now, not only she had to endure all those harsh words, but also had no way to bite back Professor Vastor. Threatening a mage belonging to an academy, was like spitting towards the sky, it would always backfire.

All he had to do, was give her a bad evaluation to put an end to her career as a healer. Having five siblings and being at the bottom of the line of succession, magic was her only redeeming feature.

She could only swallow her pride and answer:

"The lower tiers of light magic have two insurmountable limits. The first being that light magic can only enhance the recovery of the patient. If he/she suffered from an excessive blood loss or is already on the verge of death, healing magic is useless.

The second limit..."

"Okay, enough. Your turn, edgy face." He cut her short, pointing his finger at Lith.

"The second limit is that it cannot regrow lost body parts, be it organs or limbs. Clean cut fingers or extremities can be reattached, but only if well preserved and within an hour from the amputation."

"Correct and correct!" Vastor almost sounded disappointed.

"Now, who can tell me how, hypothetically, the first issue could be solved?" Everyone raised his hand, once again.

"You, with the pauper face." He said to a petite girl with long brown hair, sitting a few desks away from Lith. Because of her small and scrawny build, it was hard to imagine her twelve years old, she looked barely a day past eight.

Clearly, she had suffered from malnutrition for a long time. Lith's sixth sense told him that the academy's uniform was probably the first pretty clothes she had ever had.

With all the stress from her first day of academy, the threats and insults from Professor Vastor had been the last straw for her. When she tried to answer, only hiccups came out, she was fighting back her tears.

- "What a d\*ck." Lith thought. -

His hand instinctively played with the Ballot, but he didn't activate it. It was her problem, not his. She had done nothing for him when he had been bullied twice that morning, that made him eager to return to favour.

His movements, though, didn't escape Professor Vastor eyes.

- "Oh, for f\*ck's sake! I had almost forgot about the bum with the Ballot. If that thing is recording and he bothers reporting me to the Headmaster, I will be in deep sh\*t.

Linjos has been crystal clear that professors' tough love is now considered bullying, and has tried more than once to fire me. He's just waiting for an excuse to replace me with one of his angry lackeys. Dammit, I'm too old to lose such a good job."-

"I'm so sorry, young miss. I didn't mean to offend you. There, there. Take your time before answering." His voice was suddenly all milk and honey, offering her a handkerchief from his chest pocket.

Despite her frail looks, she needed but a second to compose herself.

"The only way to do it..." she replied sniffing from time to time.

"...would be to somehow infuse the patient with an external source of life force. But that's impossible. I worked as a healer since I was six years old, I've tried countless spells and always failed.

Light magic cannot create or pass energy, only nourish what is already there."

The whole class nodded.

- "Heck if I know." Lith thought. "The only patients I have ever failed were those that arrived too late for being saved. Not even my true magic could transfuse life force." -

"Correct, young miss!" This time he sounded genuinely happy, the class was starting to think he suffered from severe mood swings.

"And don't worry, here at the light department we will fix your growth problem in a snap, you have my word." After making sure to be outside hot waters, he resumed his snarky tone.

"The little one is right, light magic cannot do it. No matter how talented the mage or how complex the spell, it's impossible. Yet tier four light magic can. Anyone wants to take an educated guess?"

The classroom fell silent, no hand was raised.

Professor Vastor sneered at their ignorance, puffing his chest.

"Oh, oh, oh! Seems you still have much to learn. But you have come to the right place. The answer is: it's only possible by mixing it with darkness magic"

"What?!" "How?!" "The f\*ck?!"

Professor Vastor ignored their shocked expression and the exclamations filling the air, while waving his hands in the air, generating with first magic a black and white circle identical to Earth's representation of Yin and Yang.

"The greatest legacy left us from Magus Silverwing, is the knowledge that light and darkness magic are but one. They perpetually dance together in all things. When one pushes, the other pulls.

When light steps forward, darkness steps backwards and vice versa. When they are in harmony life thrives, otherwise only death awaits. The key to tier four light magic is weaving them together.

Dark magic takes the energy from the donor, while light magic allows it to enter the patient's body without backlashes. Balancing them is the key to success."

- "F\*ck me sideways!" Lith thought. "How can I be so stupid? I read that goddamn book hundreds of times, I should have understood this years ago by myself. I wish I was more talented in magic, or at least smarter."

"Hey, that's offensive!" Solus rebuked. "I'm way smarter than you, and I have failed nonetheless. The real problem is that our approach to magic is too naïve. By my maker, I hate feeling so useless. If only I still had my memories..."-

"Excuse me, Professor, I have a question." Snob face awoke them from their self-pity moment.

"If here at the White Griffon we mix light and dark magic together for healing, what's the difference between us and the Black Griffon? Can't they do the same?"

"The difference, dear snob face, lies in the purpose. Here at the White Griffon, we are proud of our light magic department, where we can cure almost everything.

At the Black Griffon, they specialize in destroying things."

The rest of the hour Professor Vastor showed them again and again the simplest tier four light magic spell, until everyone was capable of performing it.

The fastest students turned out to be young miss, an arrogant faced kid, snob face, and edgy face, in this order.

Lith had done his best. He needed to experience the spell with fake magic, before being able to reproduce and enhance it with true magic. Yet he ended up in fourth place.

After that, Professor Vastor opened a Warp Steps that brought them right outside the academy's hospital.

- "Lith, by keeping open the portal for so long, the Professor gave me the time I needed to clear its mystery. The reason why the staff can open them with such ease, it's because of the ring with the academy's insignia they wear.

The whole castle is a giant artifact, they simply use the rings to tap into its powers. If your uniform has so many functions, I can't even imagine what something as big and powerful as this building can do." -

Lith didn't reply, he just wondered how powerful Solus could be, compared to the academy, if she regained her old power. He had only found mentions of magic towers in fairy tales, and they were described as something unfathomable.

According to the lore, within his own magic tower a mage was nigh omnipotent. But fairy tales also told about fairy godmothers, elves, sprites and happy endings, and he had yet to meet someone that took any of those things seriously.

When he had spoken about them with Nana, Lark and the Marchioness, they had all mocked him for his childish daydreams.

When the students entered through the double doors, they found hard to believe to their eyes.

The academy's hospital ward would put any Earth's hospital to shame. The floors were able to self-clean, the beds would move and massage the patients' bodies to avoid bedsores, constantly keeping in check their vitals.

The air was fresh and clean, free of the smell of disinfectants that usually plagues those places. Everything looked more like out of a celebrity resort rather than a place where people went to die.

"What a marvel of magic!" Said the arrogant faced boy from before, a fifteen-year-old 1.65 meters (5'5") high with red hair. "But I suppose it was to be expected, since you were the one designing the whole thing, Professor Vastor."

"Yurial, my boy!" Professor Vastor finally recognized him.

"Long time no see. How is your old man, Deirus? Being an archmage is a big burden, you must be ready to step in and help him as soon as possible."

"My dad is doing fine, thank you. I'll send him your regards. With your help I'm sure I will be able to keep up the family tradition."

"But of course! Mage bloodlines are highly treasured here at the light department. I hope you'll show all those snotty nobles and poor commoners what a true magician is made of."

- "I stand corrected." Lith thought. "He does discriminate, just not the way I am used to. He seems to be a sucker to magical families instead of noble ones. I guess not every Professor can be like Trasque or Nalear." -

Just thinking her name sent a warm feeling through his body, that Lith hastily suppressed. He despised himself for his weak, hormonal body, wasting his precious time and energies on teenage delusions.

Lith could not afford any slip ups, the trial round was about to begin, and he was determined to shine among his peers.

## Chapter 63 The Importance Of Status

Professor Vastor was true to his word, he brought them to the hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU), and asked them in turns to diagnose the nature of the patients' condition.

Vastor would take notes about their answers, to confront them with the charts. He wasn't allowed to give them scores on their first day, but he didn't hesitate to harshly reprimand those who missed any detail, humiliating them in front of the class.

Because of the nature of the task, the class was split into two groups, right after each one of them had examined their first patient. The following rounds allowed Vastor to further split the groups based on the students' degree of expertise.

In the first group, belonged those who had chosen the Master healer specialization, lured by the prestige the title implied. Yet they lacked either any experience in the healer practice or the resources to have a proper tutor to make up for it.

Vastor was immediately able to spot them, since they were only able to use Vinire Rad Tu, the ubiquitous tier one diagnostic spell.

In the second group, instead, there were snob face, edgy face, young miss, Yurial and all those who had at their disposal a diagnostic personal spell or even more than one.

Much to his surprise, the archmage's son Yurial was equalled in talent and precision by the snob faced girl, while the young miss and the edgy faced kid ran circles around even them, standing out like hawks among crows.

Especially edgy face had proven to be capable of finding minor details, that even the academy's Master healers had missed in their diagnosis. It was nothing big, but he was also able to suggest ways to improve their prognosis, hastening the healing process.

Vastor hadn't arrived at his age and social standing by letting something insignificant, like his personal prejudices or preferences, stand in the way of his best interests.

- "Commoners or not, those two smells of success. Even that snotty faced brat is damn good, if she is able to hold her ground against a pureblood like Yurial. I have always been proud of my knack for recognizing true talent.

I don't care if the spotlight I'm under is mine or someone's else. As long I get to maintain my status and position, anything goes. I have to get in their good graces before anyone else.

After they get famous, I would be a nobody. Right now, I'm all their world. Time to jot down some names and remember them properly." -

"I'd say we have some winners." While talking to the top four students, Vastor's voice had lost any trace of sarcasm and disrespect. He spoke with a soft and amiable tone, like a grandfather talking to his beloved grandkids.

"Would you mind to introduce yourself properly to the class? It would motivate them to work hard enough to compete with you all."

- "If they are delusional enough to believe they even have a sliver of hope, of course." He inwardly sneered. -

In his mind, Vastor had already separated the cream from the milk, and the milk from the p\*ss. He was merely being polite.

"My name is Friya Solivar." Like everyone else, she was wearing pants not a skirt, so while doing the curtsy she held up her robe instead.



"My mother is Duchess Solivar, I hope you have heard about her."

Vastor's eyebrow rose, while he was racking his brain trying to remember.

"Ah, yes. I heard only praises about how she managed to stop that terrible flood last year. Such an ingenious woman was bound to have gifted daughter. I'm sure you have a bright future ahead of you."

He skipped Yurial, he doubted that even those boneheads could have missed him flaunting his status of archmage Deirus' heir.

After making a few gestures to one of his attendants, Vastor stood in front of the petite girl, smiling kindly.

"My name is Quylla from Cerea. I'm twelve years old." Quylla didn't know etiquette or how to introduce herself, so she just made a deep bow while sharing what she deemed to be relevant.

"So young yet so skilled! You truly are a diamond in the rough." Vastor received from his attendant a bottle containing a purple liquid, that he gifted to Quylla with a small bow.

"Here, this is one of the best tonics our master Alchemists can prepare. Drink a glass of it every night before going to bed, and you'll grow up like a mushroom. I'm sure you'll become a beautiful lady."

Quylla took his bait, line and sinker, blushing up to her ears for the compliments. She had never received anything so precious in her life, so she held the bottle like a baby, stuttering her thanks.

Contrary to his expectations, edgy face had taken out his notebook, literally jotting down what the others had said. He made the brilliant move of using water magic to write instead of a pen.

- "Perfect silent water magic. My gut never fails me." - Vastor's smile widened, he was sure to have struck a gold mine.

"Showing respect to your competitors is always a smart move, young man."

Following the etiquette books he had stored in Soluspedia, Lith took a step back, in sign of respect towards Professor Vastor, before performing a deep bow.

"I always write down everything that's significant, to make it easier to remember. The three of them are the only ones worthy of attention, after all."

After the poor figure he did during Professor Nalear's class, Lith was brimming with confidence. Thanks to Invigoration, he was certain to have performed better than anyone else.

For the first time in his life, he didn't feel anymore like a frog in the well. He had finally found something he was actually the best at.

After how his classmates had treated him, Lith didn't care to keep up appearances. He was already a pariah, someone they threw trash at without a care. He had nothing to lose anymore.

Lith would treat them just like they did to him, with spite and showing no mercy.

"My name is Lith from Lutia. I'm twelve years old too."

"Twelve years?! Lith?" Lith was already taller than him, (AN: Lith is 1.6 m aka 5'3" high) so Vastor had failed to recognize him.

"I've heard so much around you. Heck, everyone here has. Guys..." He was allegedly talking to the whole class, but he looked only at the other three, to make sure they paid attention.

"...Lith, here, is the one that cracked the so-called 'curse', a unique poison that had eluded even the best of us. Have you heard about it?" Friya and Yurial nodded, while Quylla and many others shook their heads.

Vastor's heart bled at the idea of wasting so much paper, but he couldn't make a single copy of the report just for Quylla. The other students would have complained about such blatant discrimination.

While his attendant was handing the reports, he kept tending at his gold mine.

"A twelve-year-old hexacaster, with great talent in light magic to boot, that's how he got his admission."

Between his build, height and everything they had learned in the last minute, Lith's classmates were looking at him with new eyes, even a hint of respect. Friya and Yurial regretted what they had done earlier.

If instead of throwing trash at him they had managed to get on his good book, maybe he could have taught them so much. For a second, Friya thought that she was the only one to have another chance.

After what happened earlier, this Lith was clearly sensitive to feminine charms, and she was quite pretty. But when she smiled at him, opening her mouth to start chatting, he sent her a cold glare that sent shivers down her spine.

His eyes were empty, like those of a predator that's about to rip its prey apart. Friya swallowed back her hopes and pretended that nothing had happened.

"Lith, my boy, you should smile more. If you keep glaring at everyone, how could they notice how handsome you are?" Vastor patted his shoulder.

- "Me? Handsome? What a bootlicker! How can he even think I didn't notice his 180° turn of attitude?" Lith thought.

"I think he knows you did, he just hopes you don't care." Solus replied. "As for the handsome, yeah, you are not at Trasque level, but maybe if you drop the teenage serial killer look..." –

Quylla too was regretting what had happened earlier, but for entirely different reasons. She didn't do anything against Lith, but she hadn't helped him either. Like the others, she had always kept her distance.

In hindsight, she maybe would have helped another commoner of her own age. But he was tall and scary, so she mistook him for a noble. Not to mention that her class scared her even more.

"Well, enough with the rounds, I already got what I need. Let me show you all where the real magica happens."

Vastor walked them through few corridors and into another ward. The plaque above the door was self-explanatory "Missing Limbs".

"As you should have realized, this is where we move the patients that have lost one or more limbs, after stabilizing their conditions. We can actually regrow them from scratch, but it's a long and difficult spell. Follow me."

The ward was almost empty, only a couple of beds were occupied. Unlike the ICU, it was filled with flowers and magic paintings, making the atmosphere soothing and relaxing. The walls were magic frescos, depicting sunny woods, so vivid to seem true.

Professor Vastor brought them around the bed of a twenty something years old blonde guy, that was missing his right arm. Only a small stump remained.

"Students, allow me to introduce you captain Zarran. He lost his arm in a skirmish against the Gorgon empire, while defending the northern borders of your Kingdom."

The man was clearly embarrassed. Unlike most of the ICU patients, he was awake and clear-headed. Despite they were politely greeting him, he couldn't help but feel like a horse at the market, ready to be probed and examined mercilessly.

Suddenly, the ward's double doors opened again. The man that walked in, drew the attention of all the staff and almost all students. From their gasps of admiration, Lith could deduce that he was either Professor Marth or Manohar.

- "Bright blue mana core." Solus pointed out. "My money on him being Marth."

"Not accepting the bet." Lith replied. –

"Professor Marth, so nice to see you." Vastor said with a smile from ear to ear.

"I was just about to explain the fourth-year students the regrowth procedure. Do you want to do the honours?"

## Chapter 64 The Importance Of Status 2

Professor Marth was a man around forty years old, about 1.78 meters (5'10") high, with thick blonde hair. Aside from his goatee, his face was perfectly shaven, revealing a calm and youthful appearance.

Judging from the bags under his eyes and the slouching posture, it was evident that he lacked sleep. It was no wonder that he had asked Professor Vastor to stand in for him.

When he saw the students, he straightened up, smiling at the small crowd.

"Gladly, dear colleague. Sorry to have missed our appointment, kids. Since Professor Manohar returned, things have been hectic, there's a lot he needs to catch up with."

The class made a small bow, accepting his apologies, eager to learn from one of the two most famous heads of the White Griffon light department.

"First of all, the impossibility to regrow limbs or organs is a common misconception. The human body actually has such capabilities, but they are normally dormant. To temporarily awake them, is necessary a huge amount of energy.

We are talking about so much mana, that is impossible for a single mage to perform the spell alone. Usually the procedure requires two teams. The first one to perform the spell, setting the regeneration process in motion.

The second one, instead, has to give energy to the patient for him to survive. Otherwise, the strain from growing a full limb in a matter of minutes would drain his body of all the nutrients, killing him on the spot.

Most organs are even trickier, since time is of the utmost importance. A single mage can regenerate small ones like kidneys, but bigger or vital organs usually require too much energy. It's best for a lone mage to keep the vitals stable while calling for help."

- "Interesting." Lith thought. "Based on the little I know, maybe the large mana expenditure is due to the fact that what they actually do without knowing it, is collecting and stimulating adult stem cells in the patient's body."

That or in this world they have a healing factor, but I highly doubt it.

If I am right, with true magic I could do all by myself, but it would take days if not weeks. The on/off nature of fake magic, makes things too hard for both the healer and the patient. True magic, instead, allows to divide things by steps, like I did for Tista." -

Professor Marth continued.

"You are in for a treat, since I was just to about to start growing captain Zarran a new right arm."

The soldier smiled awkwardly, he wasn't feeling like a market horse anymore, more like a lab rat.

"The first step is to take in consideration the sex and the build of the patient, then choose the best limb template at our disposal."

"Template?" Lith echoed dumbstruck, drawing on himself reproachful looks from his peers.

"Yes, template. We can't allow the new limb to grow endlessly, the spell needs specific measurements to work properly."

An assistant brought to Marth a cart full of wooden arms, that the Professor compared to the remaining limb, searching for the most similar one.

"Each of these models corresponds to a different spell. Here at the White Griffon we have the biggest archive of regenerating spells of all the Kingdom. I like to think that in part is thanks to my work."

After choosing the best fit, Professor Marth called the rest of the team via his communicator amulet, forming two teams of three mages each.

"Technically, two mages per group should be enough." He explained. "The third one is to be sure that everything goes fine. This is no warzone, there is no need of taking unnecessary risks."

Both the spells took only a few seconds to cast, the new arm started to grow back at an amazing rate. After about half an hour, the new limb was completely formed. The class exploded into an applause, all the medical staff accepted it with a small bow.

Captain Zarran was crying out of joy, flexing his new fingers. He still couldn't believe it, in his eyes it was a miracle. He was a cripple no more, soon he would be able to resume active duty, instead of being locked behind a desk.

The only discordant note in all that joyous atmosphere was Lith. He was closely looking to both arms, noticing the differences. The real one was much more muscular, with a higher bone density plus the new one was even a little shorter.

He offered Zarran both his index fingers.

"Squeeze them as hard as you can."

After that test, he shook his head.

"Professor Marth, is it normal for the new arm to be so out of proportions and weak?"

He could see most of his classmates glaring or signalling him to shut up.

- "Morons." He inwardly sneered. "In any scientific field, researchers are always looking for curious people, that make questions and challenge the standard knowledge. They have no need for trained monkeys that just follow orders.

Without doubts there is no progress, only stagnation. Kids are so naïve." –

"Yes, it is. It will take a couple years of training and therapy, but after that, it should be as good as the old one. Good catch, is rare seeing someone so young showing such attention to the details, instead of pestering me to teach him some spell."

The praises made his classmates feel stupid as sheeps. Professor Vastor was giggling.

- "I knew it! Pure gold. Thank the gods for my knack." –

"Why? Is there something wrong? What would you do differently?" Marth asked.

Lith pondered for a while before replying. He could not believe that such opportunity would have presented itself right off the bat. All those years spent preparing to teach Tista healing magic, were about to get him an unexpected pay-off.

"Professor, I do not mean to be rude, but how much do you know about anatomy?"

Professor Marth tilted his head by the side, surprised by the apparently silly question.

"I know everything I need. The shape and position of the bones, what and where are the various organs, and so on. I'm a healer, not a doctor. I only need to know the necessary for magic to perform at its best."

Realizing how shallow was their knowledge, Lith understood that the use of magic must had slowed down, if not completely stopped, the scientific progress in the Kingdom. He wasn't disappointed, quite the contrary.

It just made what he had to offer even more precious.

Lith ripped off a blank page from his notebook and then used water magic to write down in detail one of his fake magic personal spells that he had created for Tista years ago.

"An image is worth a thousand words." He said handing the page to Professor Marth.

"Are you really willing to share your diagnostic spell with the academy and the Kingdom?"

Professor Marth was dumbstruck, while Professor Vastor was pale as a ghost.

- "He can't be that dumb! Why the heck is he giving up such an advantage against his competitors? Can my knack have finally failed me?" He thought. –

"It's not a diagnostic spell." Lith explained. "It's something I created long ago to get a better understanding of the human body. I don't even use it anymore, but I think it could be critical to your research in this field."

Both the Professor sighed of relief, they both had seen too many talented youths so eager to please to make irreparable mistakes.

Full of curiosity, Professor Marth studied the spell. It was really easy, without a doubt a tier one spell.

"Done. Now?"

"Please, use it on the captain's original arm."

After performing the hands signs perfectly, Professor Marth said:

"Vinire Mark Urth!" Generating a small wisp of light, that on contact, enveloped the arm in a warm white light. Suddenly his mind received streams of information, that left him speechless.

The spell was an intentionally weaker, flawed and inaccurate version of what Lith was able to see thanks to Invigoration. The difference between the two were like heaven and earth.

The spell was incapable of showing injuries, to detect the mana flow or core or even the life force. To prevent Tista to accidentally stumble on true magic, Lith had made sure that everything was as he had planned.

It had no hint about any of those elements, the only way to add them to the spell, was rebuilding it from scratch and knowing already what to look for. Its purpose was to teach Lith's sister anatomy in detail, without dismembering humans, like he did.

As it was, Vinire Mark Urth did nothing more than show a fixed 3D imaging of the body part it was used on, giving the user a perfect understanding of the patient's body.

"This... This is..." Professor Marth was flabbergasted, considering all the possible applications of the spell.

"You see, If I were in your shoes, using this spell..."

"Hold that thought!" Marth cut him short, running away with the page clenched in his fist.

He returned after barely a minute, dragging another man from the arm, like a petulant child.

"No means no!" The dragged man screamed. "You cannot disturb me every time some stupid noble is about to die! Be it the King or his children, I don't care. If I spend another hour with all that paperwork, it will drive me crazy!"

"For the last time, no one is dying! Shut up and listen!"

Everyone was pointing to the new guy like he was some mythical beast.

- "Purple core! My money on him being Manohar." Solus yelled.

"Why do you keep trying to con me? What use do you have for money?" –

While Lith and Solus were having a mind-quarrel, Marth explained everything to Manohar, handing him the spell. After he performed it too, both Professors looked at Lith with eyes full of expectation.

Manohar was a man in his late twenties, with black hair and shades of silver. He was around 1.74 meters (5'9") meters high, with a slender build and a stubble at least three days old.

"Please, continue." Said Marth.

"As I was saying, I would use this spell before sending the most valuable soldiers to the front to be able to recreate their original limbs if necessity arises. That would avoid all the side effects of the spell that you just showed me.

Also, in cases like this one, I would take the information from the remaining arm and use it to generate a mirror image to replace the lost limb. The left and right limbs are not the same, but the result would still be much better than this one."

"And that is not all!" Manohar chimed in, a crazy light had appeared in his eyes.

"We could even devise a spell that's capable of taking that information by itself, and generate the limbs accordingly! We could finally throw away all those useless templates, using only one spell instead of many."

Everyone was shocked at the idea. Manohar often disappeared without notice or acted like a tantrumming child, but that kind of madness was the sign of the true genius. He had been able to see farther than the spell's creator in a matter of seconds.

Manohar took out his communicator amulet, opening the connection with the administrative department.

"What's your name, kid?" He asked.

"Lith from Lutia, sir."

"Ah! I should have known it! Finally, another smart mage to talk to. You have no idea how hard it is for me. Only Marth and a few others are able to have a proper conversation, everyone around here is so stupid!"

"Harrumph." A voice from the communicator amulet stopped his ramblings.

"Oh yes, I almost forgot. Points assignation for the student Lith from Lustria for sharing a tier one spell. 1000 points."

"1000 points?!" Repeated the male voice from the communicator amulet in disbelief.

"1000 points!?" Exclaimed almost all his classmates becoming green with envy.

"1000 points?" Asked both Lith and Quylla, that being for the first time in the academy had no idea if they were many or few.

"Yes, 1000 points! Is it so hard to understand?" Manohar was outraged by the academy having the gall to hire a clerk dumb or deaf if not both.

"I know it's too little..." He said apologetically to Lith.

"... but I can't give you more until I discuss it with the board. Also, you'll get compensation for each and every one of your suggestions. Good ideas are priceless in the research field. Be kind and graduate quickly.

I need more people like you and less idiots like this secretary, around these parts."

"Sir, the communication is still open." The clerk did a great job keeping his voice emotionless.

"I know it's open, you idiot. That why I'm telling you to get your ears fixed. I can't do nothing for your brain, but never give up hope. Magic advances every day by leap and bounds."

The clerk politely hung up the call.

"How did you create this spell?" Marth's interest was piqued. The idea was simple yet groundbreaking.

"He can save it for his biographer!" It was Manohar's turn to drag Marth away by the arm. "To the paperwork, for the life on me! And then to the board! You do the talking, I don't speak stupid."

The gong resounded once more, marking the end of the lessons. After saying his goodbyes to Professor Vastor and to his three competitors, Lith walked away towards the Prize Hall.

Based on his understanding, it was time for a little shopping spree.

## Chapter 65 Judging A Book By Its Cover

In the White Griffon, like in all the six big academies, students from different years had no common spaces, to avoid the older and stronger seniors to haze their juniors.

This feat had been achieved simply by having each academic year take place on a single floor. On the ground floor of the castle, there was the welcome area for the visitors and the Secretariat, where clerks would take care of the academy's paperwork.

The first floor accommodated the first year of academy, the second floor the second one, and so on.

Above the fifth floor there were the staff's living quarters and their personal labs, but most of the space was noted on the map as either empty or assigned to nondescriptly named departments.

Lith suspected that all the academy's private business, like the hidden specializations' training courses, took place there.

In that moment, though, while looking at the castle map with Soluspedia, Lith wasn't wondering about the academy's mysteries, rather he was cursing its faulty design.

- "Dammit! It's no wonder that the Professors always move around with Warp Steps. I didn't realize it at first, but even a single floor is like a small city, much bigger than the whole Lutia village.

The Prize Hall is quite far from the hospital. It will take me at least ten minutes to reach it, and much more to return to my apartments. I hadn't planned on doing this much cardio! I'm tired, the only things I want to do are sleeping and eating.

The only silver lining in this situation, is that everyone is suffering the same fate. After the gong, Professor Vastor left on his own, leaving us stranded in the ward." –

With all that had happened during his first day, the psychological burden on Lith's mind was enormous.

Facing bullies, holding himself to use true magic, being forced to tolerate so many idiots without kicking their asses, was something he was no longer used to. Since his rebirth, he had always kept the human interactions to a minimum.

Now he was constantly on alert, he couldn't lower his guard for a second, the Ballot always at hand. He couldn't wait to lock the door behind him, and finally have some peace and quiet.

- "I don't know if we'll ever be allowed to use Warp Steps in here..." Solus pondered.



"...but why exactly aren't we floating, flying or something? There is no rule against the use of magic within the academy, except if used to harm or harass others."-

Lith froze on the spot, facepalming because of his own stupidity.

- "Either I'm too tired to think clearly, or you are definitely smarter than I look. I love you, Solus." Lith thought.

"I love you more." She replied. –

Lith pretended to cast a personal flight spell, and then zoomed away sticking with his back on the ceiling. The ten minutes trip became a one minute flight at low speed, Lith couldn't risk crashing against someone else.

During that time, Lith contemplated how having a symbiotic relationship had changed his life. He was not thinking about Solus having a 360° 40/10 sight, her pocket dimension or any of her capabilities.

What never ceased to amaze him, was how he had come of being used to think of himself as "we" rather than "I" in his own thoughts. Despite the terror that she had struck in his heart after their first meeting, Solus was now closer to him than his sisters.

They shared even his dreams, while he was asleep.

When he arrived, the Prize Hall was a complete disappointment. Lith had imagined it like a library, but filled with magical treasures, with the shelves occupied by items and their descriptions.

He had thought about browsing through them, asking the clerks' help from time to time, but reality begged to differ. Squeezed between the Battle Mage and the War Mage training halls, stood something that closely resembled an ATM.

On the flashing display there was the blinking image of an opened palm, so Lith followed the fool-proof instructions, sending mana into it. The display turned bright, making a 3D hologram of a clerk appear.

It was a chubby woman in her thirties, with a tired face that put Lith's to shame. Her eyes focused on his face, Lith could see her fiddling with some kind of crystal.

"You are Lith of Lutia, right?" The crystal in her hands was projecting a detailed image of his facial features.

Lith nodded.

"Is anyone there with you? Is someone forcing you to spend your points?"

"No." Lith was cynical and paranoid, yet he was surprised by how bad things in the academies had to be, to enforce such protocol.

The woman pressed another crystal, and a bubble of light enveloped Lith.

"You are in a safe zone. No one can see or hear us now. Do you need help? I can send you a guard in a second with Warp Steps. Are you sure everything is fine?"

"Yes, I am fine. Thanks for your kindness."

"1000 points on your first day?!" The woman sounded sincerely amazed.

"Kid, you have hit the motherlode, feel free to check our inventory."

On the screen appeared something similar to a web page, that he could navigate through by using mana.

Dimensional items' prices ranged from the 100 to over 300 points, magic storing rings costed 100 points per tier. There were also weapons available, but Lith had never held a real one.

His training, back on Earth, made use only of wooden swords, knives and spears. The balance was completely different, and without a proper training they would be useless against a skilled opponent. Potions were the cheapest objects, costing 10 points each.

The most expensive item was the uniform, costing 5000 points. That would allow Lith to keep it even after concluding his studies, and have it looks changed to something less flashy.

Sadly, there was no wrist or pocket watch available.

He bought the cheapest dimensional amulet (80P), one magic storing ring for each of the first three tiers (600P), and a physical enhancement potion of each type (30P). Lith now had all he needed to mask the use of true magic and Solus.

The clerk sent him the items via Warp Steps one at a time, asking him to imprint them in front of her, for security reasons. Even the potions were no exception.

On his way back, he stopped at the canteen. It was too early for dinner, but he was in dire need for comfort food, so he stored a hot chocolate cup and some pastries before going back to his room.

The books had yet to be delivered, so he could finally relax and contemplate his purchases. The first thing he did, was use the speed, strength and skin hardening potions, comparing their effects with Fusion magic.

After filling them again with coloured water, all he had to do was to pretend to drink one of those to be able to activate Fusion magic without arising any suspicions, as long as he kept the effects similar.

Only when he went to the bathroom, he realized how big his room was. It was very similar to a one-bedroom apartment, around fifty meters (55 square yards). It had a double bed in the top right corner, his chest was in front of the bed.

A couple of meters to the left, against the wall, there was a wooden wardrobe.

On the left wall there was a hardwood desk and a chair for his studies, with a couple of empty bookshelves mounted above it. Furniture aside, the room was empty, making it appear even bigger.

An inner door lead to the biggest bathroom he had ever seen, occupying over a third of the room. There was a real toilet and a sink in front of a mirror, both with running water.

Lith was on the verge of tears, after all those years he had almost resigned himself to pee\*ng in the wind and poo\*ing in a hole in the ground. Even at Count Lark's home the best he could get was a chamber pot.

Most of the space, though, was occupied by a bathtub big enough that could comfortably accommodate four people.

- "Is it me, or whoever designed this room has a dirty mind? First the double bed and now this?" Lith thought.

"Makes sense, considering they are piling up teenagers without parental control. Remember the spell Nana gifted us before going to the Lightning Griffon?" Solus pointed out.

"Actually, I had almost forgot it. But seeing how fast Tista and Rena developed, even at twelve years it mustn't have been hard for Nana finding a partner. I am tall for my age, but still hairless and shorter than most my classmates.

Not to mention that, even the idea of touching a kid makes me want to puke." –

Lith then took the most magnificent, comfortable dump since his rebirth. That moment alone made every hardship he experienced since coming into the academy fade away like a bad dream.

After that, he took a long hot bath, or at least that was the plan. He had barely dipped his body and lathered his hair when someone knocked at his door.

"I knew it! This should be the fourth law of thermodynamics: whenever a body and soap meet, a parcel arrives!"

Furious, with a wave of the hand he used water magic to remove most of the water and soap from his body, pulling out his uniform from the pocket dimension right on his body, like he had never undressed.

As predicted, a clerk had come to deliver him all the books required for the fourth year of academy. Noticing his frown and wet hair, the clerk guessed what had happened and left after making Lith sign his register.

After a bath and another call home, Lith went to dinner.

He was about to consume a delicious stuffed blinker when something unexpected happened. His perfect solitude was interrupted by three known individuals approaching his table. Lith stopped them before they could sit down.

"Sorry, but we have a saying in my village. The best way to enjoy a blinker requires only two guests: me and the blinker."

"We didn't want to share it, we just wanted to sit here, with you." Yurial said.

"Really?" Lith knitted his eyebrows. "Aren't you afraid of the consequences of associating yourself with a pariah?"

Yurial laughed at the idea, drawing all the eyes in the canteen. The only thing the others knew, was that the four of them belonged to the same specialization. Expecting a fight to break out, the room fell silent.

"What's there to be afraid of? My father is an archmage, he can wipe out most of these guys with a finger snap. Besides, powerful mages should stick together."

"Yeah? What about the glass flask you threw at me this morning? Or the dirty handkerchief she hit me on the head with?" Lith said while pointing at Friya, who became red from the embarrassment.

"How do you know it? I was right behind you."

"I'm that good."

"I admit it, we started with the wrong foot, but there's no reason we cannot be friends." Yurial said with a confident and charismatic attitude.

"Friends?" Lith stood up, the audience even stopped chewing, trying to eavesdrop their conversation.

"That's the son of an archmage!" "Guess he doesn't fear the coward's end." "I hope they kill each other." These were some of the comments that Lith and Solus managed to perceive.

"If you were in my shoes, would you really be friends with someone that first mistreated you, only to act all friendly when he has discovered your talent? My educated guess is no.

You all should have been smarter, and not have judged a book just by its cover. Lucky for me, you revealed your true nature, so I won't buy your nice act."

"I admit it, I was wrong and I apologize for that." Yurial was unrelenting, Lith had to give him that much. "You may not like us, but try to be more pragmatic. If they see you with us, your life will be much easier."

"Point taken." Lith replied. "But right now, I don't feel like making 'friends', maybe another time." He extended his hand to Yurial, who promptly shook it.

"Thanks for not threatening me with your dad's power. Much appreciated."

"Would have worked?" Yurial asked with a smile.

"No, I would have called your bluff. Neither you or any archmage, strikes me as someone so petty and short-sighted, of making an enemy out of entire academy for something so trivial."

Yurial accepted the compliment and walked away, closely followed by Friya. Quylla remained behind, staring at Lith with her big puppy eyes.

"Sorry for not helping you this morning, but I was too scared to move." She said in a low tone.

"They aren't bad guys, I think they deserve a second chance. They have been really nice to me."

Lith snarled, closing his face to hers in a threatening manner, but his voice was actually calm and caring.

"Listen well, short stuff. Never trust people just because of a few cheap words or presents. To them our talent is just a tool, they do not consider us as equals.

People will always be nice and friendly until you serve your purpose, but at the first mistake they'll drop you like garbage. Stick to those two, but don't let them use you. And now go, before someone thinks we are friends.

Either you take a Ballot too, or stay the heck away from me. Go!"

Lith yelled the last word for the others to hear. In his eyes Quylla was destined to end up like Nana, unless she managed to wise up and shed away her childish naivety.

Finally alone, Lith sat back down and started to wolf down his dinner.

- "You'll see, you bastards. It's only a matter of time before this young snake from Lutia becomes a dragon and swallows you whole." -