

Supreme M 711

Chapter 711 Green Array Part 1

Lith rushed back to the Warp room while keeping Life Vision active.

'It must have happened after Yondra disposed of the magical beasts. That's why no more dimensional corridors have been opened, our enemy must have captured Rainer while we were busy!

'They didn't want us meddling to be sure that they would manage to take him alive, dammit. This means that I have no time to waste. If Phloria and Quylla have been captured as well, the Odi can start the body-swapping procedure at any time!' Lith was right and wrong at the same time.

It hadn't been a plan, like his paranoia suggested to him. The Odi had simply exploited the opening that had been created the moment the group had split. Also, they would never start their experiments before being sure that nothing could mess with the first opportunity they had in centuries to walk Mogar again.

"Enemy incoming in front of you!" Lith said when he saw dimensional energies gathering in front of his comrades.

Yondra thought Lith meant "from behind" and tried to turn around, but Morok knew better and kept her still while summoning the tier five Battle Mage spell, God of Water.

A full armor made of ice covered his body while all the moisture in the air condensed throughout the room in spheres of water that would allow Morok to replicate the effects of all tier three and four water magic spells he knew without the need to cast them.

It was the spell that coupled with his blue eye had allowed him to take single-handedly down a single Flesh Golem with relative ease.

A Warp Array opened, letting Jiira join his guests. He clapped his hands, mostly to compliment himself, for a job well done.

"Too bad that old coots never survive being turned into Flesh Golems. With a brain like yours, you'd make an excellent slave." He said as a green array formed all around him, enveloping the whole room.

Jiira had watched the fight through both cameras and small dimensional gates. He had always been a huge fan of gladiator pits, and the last show he had witnessed had taken place centuries ago.

"As for you, filthy beast, no matter what form you take. You can't hide from us."

Morok had no interest in listening to Jiira's ramblings and attacked the Odi the moment he appeared. He didn't care about the green array nor the warning Lith had received from the dying Golems.

'This is going to be easy. The fucker can't even use dimensional magic. So far they have always opened Warping Arrays, not Warp Steps.' Morok thought as he commanded half the water spheres to freeze his enemy while the other half turned into icicles that darted toward Jiira.

The Odi just laughed at Morok's efforts and the green array flashed for an instant. All of Morok's attacks stopped a few centimeters away from Jiira, as an invisible force had prevented even the energy from moving further.

"What the fuck? Morok and Yondra said in unison. The Ranger was flabbergasted. Suddenly he couldn't feel the God of Water spell anymore, yet its effects were still visible in front of his eyes.

"Nice suit of armor. I wish we were capable of such spells." Jiira was engrossed by the dramatic changes that Silverwing's legacy had triggered in the development of new forms of magic.

"Yet to be really safe, you should wear it tighter, like this!" Jiira clenched his fist, and the ice armor turned into a torturing device which trapped its wearer and stabbed him with countless small ice shards.

A flick of the Odi's wrist made all the conjured icicles fly across the room, to get rid of the beast and the old woman in one fell swoop.

'Now I understand why the Golems warned me about the green array and why Rainer failed to defend himself despite the arrays Yondra had left him.' Lith thought while studying the events unfolding in front of his eyes with Life Vision.

The moment the green array had flashed, Morok's energy signature had been replaced by Jiira's, allowing him to take control of the tier five spell.

Yondra had no mystical senses, but years of battle experience let her understand that conjuring a spell before having a clear idea of the opponent's abilities might do them more harm than good.

She used her defensive amulet, which created an energy barrier that stopped the icicles and crushed them to bits.

'First weak points of all arrays, they can't be moved.' Lith thought while using spirit magic to drag both of his companions outside the room without stepping inside the Odi's magical formation.

"What is that?" Spirit magic was supposed to be invisible, yet Lith's tendrils of mana were clear as the day the moment they crossed the green array's threshold.

One of the many reasons the Odi had lost the war was the Emperor Beasts' revenge against them. They didn't need Silverwing's legacy to create tier four or five spells and just a few Awakened of them could turn the tides of every battle.

The green array, also called God's will, was the solution they had found after countless experiments and sacrifices. To perfect it, many Odi had died and because of its limitations, it couldn't be used outside Kulah.

Jiira was too surprised to react in time, so Lith managed to save his companions and dispel the tendril he meant to use to snap the Odi's neck before it could be used against him.

"We have to run, now!" Lith said, unwilling to fight a losing battle,

'Solus, how the heck can he conjure an array that fast? I thought that only Golems could do that due to their power core.' Lith asked.

He was confident about killing the Odi with his physical abilities alone, but he had no idea if the array had more than one ability or what to do if a Flesh Golem joined the fray.

'There is a small bead hidden inside his ribcage.' Solus replied. 'That's the source of the array, yet it doesn't explain where the Odi takes the mana to fuel it. That thing combines the worst of a Golem's power core and Silverwing's Hexagram.

'Even an Awakened one using Invigoration would have a hard time keeping it active. It seems that Quylla's hypothesis about the Mana Reactor was correct.'

"Where's Rainer?" Yondra asked.

"Taken. Ellkas is dead." Lith said while Morok broke free from his armor with pure brute force. He was bleeding from many cuts, some even deep, yet they couldn't afford to slow down.

Yondra gritted her teeth. All of her plans, all of her hard work to protect her beloved assistant had actually doomed the youth to a fate worse than death.

"There's no point in running away." Yondra abruptly stopped. "If we can't defeat a single Odi, then we'll never manage to save anyone."

"We can, but only if we take down the Mana Reactor first!" Lith stopped as well, but only because Jiira was once again in front of them.

He had placed the Golems in strategic positions, allowing him to freely Warp from one point to another, sealing off the only escape route they had.

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"Don't worry. This is exactly the kind of situation for which I devised my Dampener." Yondra took the small tuning fork from her pocket, imbuing it with her mana.

"Come on, you bastard. I dare you to try and rob us of our spells again."

Lith would have considered it an excellent plan, if not for the fact that the enemy was likely to have endless mana.

'She's right, though. If all Odi have one of those things, I must find a way to neutralize it if I want to have a chance to save Phloria and Quylla. We still have the advantage of numbers and Yondra's artifacts. It's worth a try.' Lith thought while unleashing a Final Sunset.

Jiira activated the God's Will array again, hijacking Lith's spell as if it was just a chore magic trick and stopping the ray of black flames in its tracks. Lith fought with all of his willpower, trying to keep his energy signature and the control over the spell.

Yet just like he had feared, it wasn't a matter of will as much of mana. Jira was simply flooding Lith's spell with his own energy. Final Sunset required a lot of mana, so there was a limit to the amount of energy Lith could employ before becoming too weak to keep fighting.

Yondra's Dampener absorbed a speck of Jiira's mana and analyzed its energy signature, allowing her to disrupt his control over Lith's spell.

Final Sunset resumed its advance, yet Jiira seemed to be more amused rather than scared. No matter how much of his mana the Dampener scattered away, the Odi just had to inject more.

"Finally a true challenge that can put to the test the fruits of our endeavor! I praise your efforts. You're not bad for a bunch of hairless monkeys." Jiira said, yet no one understood his words.

"It's not working, we have to go before it's too late!" Lith replenished his reserves with Invigoration, but he knew that Yondra couldn't keep up.

"Fuck, no. He's almost done. Ekidu!" Morok reverted to his Tyrant form using the black eye on his chest to produce a black pillar of energy that his weapons captured and amplified.

He didn't care for his secrete so much as for his survival. Morok darted forward, getting past Yondra and into the array. His Emperor Beast's body was boosted by fusion magic, allowing him to move as fast as a shooting arrow.

He had learned his lesson. No more spells, only physical attacks. Meanwhile, Yondra was sweating bullets. Even though Lith had given her a bit of energy, she didn't have much mana from the start.

Disabling the arrays, unlocking the doors, and using the tier five Magic Knight spell Empty Prison had only made things worse. She needed sheer willpower just to keep standing, so when Yondra saw Morok's real body she didn't even flinch.

One small mistake and Lith's spell would kill them both.

The Tyrant's red eye showered Jiira with flames, but countless ice crystals intercepted and smothered them into nothingness. Thanks to the Mana Reactor, Jiira could empower fist magic to the point of making its effects as powerful as tier three magic.

In such a state, he was even superior to an Awakened. First magic required barely a thought and willpower to be shaped, it had no casting time. The cold wave slowed Morok enough that Jiira had the time to lift his right forefinger before the Tyrant could hit him.

It emitted such a condensed stream of fire that it was almost solid. Morok managed to raise his blades at the last second, deflecting the energy beam aimed at his head. The impact was so strong that it pushed the Ranger back and bent his blades.

Even though they were made of Orichalcum, without the darkness energy coursing through them they would have been pierced along with their master. Morok cursed, sheathing and unsheathing his weapons to repair the damage they had sustained.

Jiira smiled, amazed by the many marvels that were waiting for the Odi race on Mogar's surface. Everything seemed to be ripe for the taking. His forefinger flicked three times, emitting as many fiery beams.

The first two were deflected by the Tyrant's blades, but the third found the way to his heart, opening a sizzling hole the size of a golf ball. Morok sprawled on the floor in a pool of his own blood. His body twitched for a bit before becoming still.

Yondra had barely the time to register what had just happened, putting all the mana she had left in her Dampener. Lith's Final Sunset was their only hope and it was now just a few centimeters from the Odi's face.

Jiira gave them one of the cruelest smiles Lith had ever seen, something that usually appeared on his own face when he outsmarted an enemy.

A simple wave of the Odi's hand made the tier five spell turn 180 degrees, making it now aim against the two humans.

"There's nothing better than leaving maggots like you a shred of hope. You fight so hard when you believe that you actually have a chance. Then, when I take away that hope, when your expression turns into despair, that's the moment that makes me happy to be alive." Once again, Jiira wasn't talking to them, just to himself.

Yet Yondra didn't need to understand the Odi language to realize what was going on. The tables had been turned too suddenly to be just because of her getting weaker. The enemy had played them all along, like a cat with a mouse.

The energy beam almost reached her face before stopping again, in a last act of idle cruelty.

"Any last words, maggot?" Yet he didn't wait for a reply, resuming the attack the moment he was done with his mockery.

Realizing what was about to happen, Yondra used the last spark of mana she had left to slow the hijacked spell long enough to change its trajectory and give Lith the time he needed to retreat.

Unfortunately, Lith's Final Sunset boosted by Jiira's mana was fast and powerful enough to strike them down almost at the same time. The spell opened a hole in her chest, cauterizing it while piercing through Yondra, before striking down Lith and engulfing him in black flames.

Jiira laughed while waiting for Lith's body to stop moving, and closed in on Yondra. Her Dampener had shattered when Final Sunset had struck it, but her Royal Forgemaster wand was still intact.

Jiira had no notion of dimensional items so he searched both her and Morok, taking away everything he could find before Warping away. The moment he disappeared, Lith dispelled the black flames, thanking his cunning and the Odi's ignorance about tier five spells.

Once Lith had understood Jiira's intentions, he had recalled his Final Sunset, using it to protect himself from the enemy's attack. Jiira had no idea that what he had captured with the God's Will array was just a portion of the spell, nor that the part outside the array was still under Lith's control.

Between the mana boosted Skinwalker armor and his own black flames, Jiira had only managed to inflict upon him small burns. First Lith went to Yondra's side, using Invigoration to check on her condition and lessen her pain.

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"Thank the gods you're still alive." Yondra said between gasps and stuttering. The wound being cauterized had prevented her from bleeding out, but she still experienced all the pain such a wound implied.

Yet it wasn't the tennis ball sized hole in her chest that struck Lith like a fist in the stomach, but her collapsing mana core. He refused to surrender, using Invigoration to replenish both her stamina and mana, but to no avail.

Her blue mana core kept leaking everything he gave her and was already turning cyan.

"I'm sorry. We should've run away like you wanted." Tears of pain and regret streamed down her cheeks while all he could do was ease the pain of her last moments.

"No, there were Flesh Golems waiting for us. The moment we Blinked they would have trapped us with their arrays. We could only fight." Lith replied.

Yondra raised her hand in an attempt to reach his cheek. Lith bent down to make things easier for her while supporting her hand with his.

"Please, tell my children that I didn't abandon them and that my last thoughts, even this last caress was for them. Tell them that I'm sorry I could never be the mother they deserved. I wasted my life, always giving priority to the wrong things.

"In the end, I let everyone down. My family, Rainer, even you. If only I could have one more..."

Year? Chance? Breath? Lith would never know what Yondra Mefaal was about to say, nor did he care. All he cared about was that she had died in his arms, crying, after everything she had precious had been taken from her.

Not even death could make despair disappear from her eyes or face. Lith stored her corpse inside his pocket dimension before going to Morok's side.

"Are you done playing possum?" Lith asked.

He knew that such an amount of blood was not enough to kill an Emperor Beast and when he had looked at both his fallen comrades with Life Vision, the Tyrant's vigor wasn't what Lith would expect from a dying man.

"Yes, and thank you for nothing, jackass. While you were playing the hero, I was working my ass to bleed enough to fool that moron without dying. I guess he mustn't know that Tyrants have two hearts. Losing one is painful, but not lethal.

"By the way, I need food or I'll die for real. To heal these wounds, I need energy and that fucker has stolen everything I had but my weapons." He showed Lith the two holes in the metal blades. Jiira had left them thinking that they had been damaged beyond repair.

Yet Morok only had to sheath and unsheath them again to return them to mint condition.

'Normally, I would point out to Lith that the trick behind Morok's apparently indestructible blades lies in their scabbards. As he told us back in the camp, they are part of his enchanted weapons, so both the mana crystals and its pseudo core are actually there.

'The blades are just an extension that can be regenerated as long as the sheaths remain intact. Yet I don't think that Lith cares about that right now. Yondra's death shook him quite badly.' Solus thought.

Lith gave the Tyrant lots of foods while his mind couldn't stop replaying Carl's death, Nana's death, and his own. The look in Yondra's eyes was the same Lith had when he had looked at Carl's corpse through the obituary glass for its identification.

The memory of his own reflection still haunted him to this day.

"Our deal his off." Were the first words Lith said once he snapped out of his own memories.

"Without the wand, there's no way out unless we rescue Phloria. She won't leave without Quylla and neither would I.

"You have two choices: you can stay here alone and either die of starvation or by the Odi's hand or you can help me."

"That's not much of a choice." Morok said while finishing his meal. "I'll help you, but since we don't have much time, you should fill me up with energy. All this fighting has left me drained."

Lith Invigorated both Morok and himself, wondering how many uses of his breathing technique he had left.

"What's the plan?" The Tyrant asked.

"First, we go check the prison ward. If my friends are still there, we rescue them and Warp ourselves here. If not, we have to find and destroy the Mana Reactor. Without it, the Odi don't stand a chance against true mages that can use spells above tier three."

Morok nodded and used a bit of his new mana to repair his armor. Before leaving, they searched Professor Ellkas's body, discovering that Jiira had already taken away everything but his clothes.

They followed the trail of broken cameras to the prison, but Lith didn't need to enter to know that they were too late. There was no energy signature inside, not even the jailer Golem that Rainer had told them about.

"It seems that shit has hit the fan. They have everything they want. I'm really sorry about your friends." Morok said. His voice was honest and his pain sincere. Without a Royal Forgemaster they were as screwed as the Assistants.

"It's not over yet." Lith replied. "I know the way to the lower floor and we both can see the Mana Reactor. Follow me."

They ran along the corridors, following Ellkas' instructions that Lith had copied inside Soluspedia.

"My plan is as follows: If on our way we don't find the place where the spare bodies are held, we destroy the Mana Reactor, slaughter all the Odi, and then wait until the noxious gas fades.

"If we find the lab and my friends are still alive, we will be forced to split. You take care of the Reactor and I'll save them. They think that you are dead and if we keep things that way, they will not realize our plan until it's too late."

"Is that the reason why you're not destroying the surveillance devices anymore?" Morok asked.

"Yes. They will be too busy bickering and preparing the body-swapping procedure to look at the surveillance mirror. If I were to destroy more devices, I could trigger some alarm and alert them. This way we'll know that our cover has been blown the moment a Golem Warps in front of us."

"Wouldn't it be bad?"

"Quite the contrary. I could Blink through its Gate and reach my destination. With all eyes on me, you'd be free to continue with our plan."

"Are you kidding me? How am I supposed to open doors and stuff by myself? I'm no Forgemaster, so it would be better to switch our roles. I'll go help your friends and you take down the reactor." Morok said.

"Yeah, right. How long do you think you can last against someone with infinite mana?" Lith replied.

"By the way, what are your specializations?"

"Battle Mage and War Mage. I was forced to attend the freaking Fire Griffon to learn the upper tiers of spells because my father couldn't be bothered with me."

"Gods, you're really useless. Focus more on creation and less on destruction, if you want someone to Awaken you. Right now, you're just a rude, walking disaster." Lith knew only a few spells of

Morok's specializations, but all of them could be easily turned against their own caster by the green array.

'If push comes to shove, we could split.' Solus proposed. 'I could go with Morok and help him open the doors and shut down the arrays.'

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'No way.' Lith refused Solus's offer right off the bat. 'To stand a chance, I need to be at 200%, which means that I need both your smarts and help. Don't get me started with the consequences that revealing your existence might cause.'

While they were running along the corridors, Lith and Solus reviewed their fight with Jiira, noticing several things out of place.

'Why did they send only one Odi to take us down and how was he linked to the Mana Reactor?' Lith pondered.

'I doubt they can have made many spheres capable of creating the green array and even if they did, giving someone infinite mana and conjuring such a powerful array is something even my tower form can't achieve.

'It probably takes the full output of the Mana Reactor and geyser to just fuel one person. As for the link, beats me. If I had to take an educated guess, I'd say they have Forgemastered their bodies.

'After all, the reason why the Body Forgemastering procedure on the specimens failed was that they didn't have enough mana to fuel the enchantments, but if part of the Forgemastering process gives them access to infinite mana...'

'The problem is solved.' Lith completed the sentence for her. 'That also means that all those linked to the Mana Reactor can't leave Kulah without getting a new body first since their survival depends on a constant supply of mana.'

The further down they went, the clearer Lith could see the Mana Reactor. It was a giant structure, at least 30 meters (100 feet) high, placed right in the middle of the natural mana geyser.

Somehow, the Reactor siphoned most of the Geyser, which explained why despite they were right in the middle of one of Mogar's most powerful natural phenomena, all of their mystical senses worked, whereas in the crystal mine Lith and Solus had been blinded.

'I guess this also explains where he Odi found so many crystals. This place had to be a mine in the past.' Lith thought, while observing the constant stream of world energy being sucked and spun inside the reactor.

Lith couldn't see how it was shaped, only how the energy moved inside the device. The world energy was then divided into all of its components before being reassembled in the form of pure mana.

The process was intriguing, but Lith was more concerned looking for Quylla's and Phloria's energy signatures. He was afraid of arriving too late, to see their expression fixed by death in a state of pure despair like it had happened to Yondra.

Even worse, he was afraid to arrive just in time to see their bodies perfectly fine, but occupied by someone else. Lith wouldn't hesitate to kill someone who was just borrowing Phloria's appearance, but it would still be the proof that he was as helpless now as he had been on Earth.

'Calm down, the body-swapping procedure is bound to be difficult. No one can remove the Skinwalker armors except for their wearer, so they'll probably leave Phloria and Quylla for last.'

'That, or they'll shatter my prototypes with their ridiculous array. Damn me and my avarice. Why didn't I prepare something better for them?' Lith thought.

When they reached the fifth underground floor, the two Rangers perceived an odd vibration running through the metal structure surrounding them. Lith also heard muffled screams, but both Solus and Morok confirmed to him that the corridor was actually silent.

Lith had been feeling strange since he had discovered to be able to understand the words of the Odi's victims, but now that sensation was getting stronger with each step he took.

Something was stirring inside of him, almost triggering his memory about it, but every time he was about to recognize it, the feeling stopped. It was like listening to a familiar jingle, but only to its first notes, making it much harder to remember the name of the song.

On the sixth underground floor, Lith almost felt dizzy. The noise ringing in his head was becoming unbearable and not even Hushing his ears worked. The silver lining was that they had reached the Mana Reactor's level.

Both Rangers could clearly see it in the distance and were near to their destination. Lith's stomach was churning because they had yet to find any trace of his friends. For security reasons, the stairs leading to the upper and lower levels were located at the opposites ends of each floor.

He had hoped that he would find Phloria by looking through the walls, ceiling, and ground on his way down, but reality had proven him wrong. Lith was about to ask Solus for an analysis of their situation when he noticed that all the shadows that the lights projected were now filled with angry mouths and eyes.

They would appear and disappear every time he blinked. Once again, Lith was the only one who seemed to be able to perceive the strange phenomenon. To make matters worse, now the ground was trembling so much that the Rangers thought that an earthquake was about to happen.

'Don't worry about them Lith. If something bad had happened to Phloria and Quylla, we would feel it.' She said, trying to calm him down.

'That's bullshit and you know it. When my brother had the car accident, the only thing I felt was the urge to get a cab and go to work. Where the fuck are they?'

'My guess is somewhere near the Reactor. According to Kalla, the Odi laid the foundations for Lichhood, so we can assume that the Reactor works akin to a phylactery.' Solus said.

'They didn't use it to win the war because the further they get from it, the weaker they become. Ripping someone's life force away and replacing it entirely is a mammoth task, on par with splitting and removing a mana core like a Lich does.'

'I think that the lab where they Forgemaster the Flesh Golems, use the Life Merging process, and perform the body-swapping are all near the Reactor, so to maximize their odds of success.'

'Based on what happened to Kalla and what we know about Forgemastering, they only have one shot for each body. There are no do-overs.'

Lith thanked her, focusing on Life Vision even more while scouting his surroundings. He much preferred a hard truth to wishful thinking.

The Reactor was a beacon, the Rangers didn't need to read the signs to know where to go. Much to Lith's dismay, the door leading to their destination was blocked by two Flesh Golems.

Clearly the Odi were at least as paranoid as he was and they weren't willing to take any risk of their improvised plan to resurrect their civilization to be ruined just because they had miscounted the hairless monkeys.

"Fuck, we have to fight them one on one. I'm not much worried at the idea of facing a Golem again as much of wasting our time and blowing our cover." Morok said while scouting the area from around a corner.

"Don't worry, we'll kill them so fast that when mister see-through arrives we'll already be next to the Mana Reactor. At that point, we'll have the upper hand. That kind of device is delicate, fighting in its proximity means destroying it." Lith replied.

"What makes you so sure of our success?"

"We're both highly motivated." Lith shapeshifted into his hybrid form "Phloria is in a room nearby the Reactor, so neither of us has any reason to hold back. It's do or die, and I've got no intention of dying."

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The late Professor Neshal was right. For a single Warden keeping two arrays at the ready was impossible and so was for two different Wardens to activate both their arrays at the same time.

Unless, of course, they shared a mind link that allowed them to synchronize their very thoughts and perceptions.

'As soon as we are done casting, I want you to use Invigoration and recover your strength. An array is too much of a burden for your green core. I want you at your 100% to face that Odi's anatomy model.' Lith thought.

'But the strain on your body...' Solus objected.

'I don't give a damn about having a perfect body just to die like a lab rat at the hands of those madmen!' Lith cut her short. 'Don't worry about me, worry about yourself. If something happens to you, I'll never forgive myself for dragging you to Kulah.'

"Jump on my back and strike at their power core on my mark."

"I can't see their power core, you dimwit." Morok replied.

"My Soul will light your way."

Morok was about to sneer at the happy-go-lucky bullshit Lith had just spewed when the hybrid unfolded his wings, using a flight spell, air magic, and air fusion to fly as fast as a bullet.

When the Flesh Golems noticed them, Lith activated his Earth Blocking array while Solus used her Air Blocking and used light magic to draw an X where the construct's power core was located.

A second later Morok's hammers had smashed their target while Lith's Orichalcum glove had pierced his own. Lith used Invigoration on the door in front of them to release its lock while keeping an ear at the creatures' last breaths.

"Grid. 325627. 32562..."The female construct said while searching for Lith's eyes with hers.

"893465. 893465. 8934..."The male Golem repeated his message as fast as he could, but to Morok it was gibberish, so he ignored him.

Lith didn't miss that the door in front of them just had a card reader, making such numbers pointless. Two small wisps of light came out of their remains, but instead of shooting towards the ceiling like it had happened before, Lith saw them getting sucked through the door and into the Reactor.

"What the heck was that?" Morok asked, but Lith could only shrug in reply, reverting to his human form. The door clicked, revealing an enormous cave, at least thirty meters (100 feet) high and 50 meters (166 feet) wide.

In the middle of the cave, there was a pillar made of metal and mana crystals that pierced the only part of the ground not covered by the metal plates, digging deep into Mogar's crust.

Even though the pillar was so tall that it reached the ceiling and was larger than any tower both Rangers had ever seen, they could barely distinguish its features. In front of them, there was a green grid made of energy that blocked their path just after a couple of meters from the door.

"So much for our blitz." Morok whined. "Hod did you miss something this huge?"

Lith had no idea how to reply since both he and Solus could see only with their conventional sight. The energy net was invisible to their mystical senses.

The Tyrant had enough surprises for a lifetime, so instead of trying to Blink, he tried and failed to open a Warp Steps on the other side of the grid. Somehow the two points in space couldn't be connected.

"I could say the same about your eyes." Lith said, noticing that the Odi had crushed the holographic pad on the outside, leaving intact only the one inside the barrier.

"Grid. 325627." Lith repeated, sending a tendril of mana through the barrier. He could still reach the other terminal with spirit magic. Or so he thought until a fizzle and a shower of sparks crushed his hopes.

"This is not magic." Lith said understanding the nature of the obstacle in front of them. "Nor is it a spell, a construct, or an array. This is pure mana, without an energy signature that I can recognize."

They couldn't afford to waste time, but Lith was actually thinking out loud to better study their situation and giving his partners the means to help him. He noticed that just like normal barriers, the grid didn't completely seal the cave from the external world.

Light and air could still pass through, so all he had to do was follow the Odi's lead when they had forced the Assistants to leave the camp.

"This is going to hurt." Lith said while generating a strong light from a high point behind him, making his shadow grow long enough to reach the holo pad. Then, he infused his mana into his own projection, to give it life as he had already done in the past.

"That's amazing! How do you call this spell?" Morok had never seen such a trick, not even from his father.

"It has no name." Lith was too focused and embarrassed to tell him that his personal variant of spirit magic had a cringy name like "Demons of Darkness." Lith had used that name during his mission in Zantia for his play with Friya.

The thing on the other side was half shadow and half made of Lith's mana, so he knew that it was only a matter of time before the barrier recognized it as a threat or at least an anomaly.

"3-2-5..." The shadow needed to be solid to interact with the pad. At the three Lith felt his skin crawling. At the two, the green energy of the barrier started to seep into the dark streak connecting Lith to his double, forcing him to double his focus to counter that invasion. At the five, it was as if he was touching a live wire.

"6-" The green energy was now invading his body, charring Lith's feet while it worked its way up

"2-" Lith was forced to use darkness fusion to cut off his pain receptors and a massive amount of mana to stop the grid from reaching his mana core.

"7!" The green dot on the pad was replaced by a red one as the grid disappeared.

Morok Blinked right behind the Reactor, bringing Lith with him and preparing for the arrival of the enemy. Lith was doing his best, helped by Solus, to cleanse his body by the still lingering green energy.

His mana core was shaken from both the assault and the strain it had sustained, to the point that Lith didn't feel safe using Invigoration. If his mana core mistook the pure mana for world energy, there was no telling what damage it could inflict upon him.

Only when his body was once again filled with mana carrying his own energy signature did Lith use his breathing technique to heal his wounds. Solus didn't have the heart to tell him that he was almost charred from the waist down, but the hunger that overwhelmed Lith once he was able to stand on his own again wasn't so kind.

Lith had started gulping down the second of Solus's disgusting nutrients tonics when two more Flesh Golems appeared. Life Vision allowed him to see that Jiira wasn't with them.

Also, they had Warped right next to their fallen comrades, which likely meant that the grid was off-limits to them as well.

Chapter 716 Mana Reactor Part 2

Lith shared his discoveries with Morok while closely following the Golems' movements.

"I guess our cover is blown." The Tyrant sighed.

"No, only mine." Lith shook his head. "I collected the corpses of both Professors not only to return them to their families once we get out of here, but also because if one of them goes checking the place where we fought the Odi, they will think I destroyed the bodies of my fallen comrades.

"Remember that mine is the only death that hasn't been confirmed, whereas the hole in your chest was pretty convincing. Also, our cover was blown the moment we took down those constructs."

"Okay, two questions, then. First, how do we dispose of them? Second, the Reactor is really big. Any idea of how to destroy it?" Morok asked.

Lith looked around the room before answering. There were three doors leading outside. The one they had arrived from, the one leading where Phloria and the others were, and a third one he had no idea what purpose could it have.

Lith couldn't see any energy coming from behind it, so it was useless to him. He had no time to explore the compound.

"I have a plan for the Golems. As for the Reactor, we still have one code from the Golems we have just defeated. Let's search for a holographic pad with numbers. Maybe it's the shut down code." Lith said.

"I take back what I've said earlier about your eyes. Speaking with corpses is damn useful. By the way, how do I distinguish Odi letters from numbers?" Morok had never bothered learning how to recognize them because he had all the Professors' notes stored in his dimensional amulet, but now it was lost.

Lith groaned, making a copy for him of both the code and a comparative table between the Odi's numbers and their own. Meanwhile, the Flesh Golems outside the room had completed their report and moved toward the door.

Lith stepped out of his hiding spot, checking for the presence of surveillance devices while spreading tendrils of spirit magic in every direction. As he expected, the room had no cameras, likely to avoid the security codes from being spied and because the mana grid was already a formidable defense.

Contrary to his expectations, one Golem entered from the door while the other one Warped in front of the room where Lith's friends were, making him curse. His trick was likely to work only once and it needed the constructs to attack at the same time.

'Do you want me to cast the elemental blocking array?' Solus asked.

'No, I can't afford wasting more mana in arrays, and neither can you. Invigoration has only a limited number of uses and we have yet to face mister anatomy model.' Lith thought.

Luckily, the second Golem had just gone checking that no one had entered the lab before moving to the Reactor room. The lab's door lead directly inside the grid, allowing it to operate the commands and let its partner in.

Both constructs were surprised seeing the intruder and the energy field deactivated, but being more machines than persons, their feelings caused no delay in their response to the threat.

One ran toward Lith while the other activated its Warping array to cover the distance separating them. Lith moved all the tendrils he had prepared at once, touching the holographic pad and restoring the grid.

The Warping array instantly collapsed, cutting the first Golem in half while the remaining tendrils of mana wrapped around the second construct that was already inside the energy cage and sent it slamming against the barrier.

The results were impressive. The moment the Golem touched the green grid, its body was pulverized as if it was sand passing through a sieve. Lith's only gripe with his strategy was that by instantly killing them, he had missed the opportunity to obtain more information.

"Quick, we don't have much time." Lith said while looking around for another pad. He left the grid active to prevent anyone from Warping while he was distracted. If even the Golem had been forced to use the door, the Odi were bound to do the same.

Especially since they seemed to be incapable of using dimensional magic.

"I really hope those were the last constructs." Morok's mystical senses were useless while in front of the Mana Reactor. Its raw power blinded him, so he could only use his natural sight.

Lith and Solus had the same problem, making them wish they had a Royal Forgemaster wand with them. Even by using Invigoration on the Reactor, it would take them quite a while to search it thoroughly.

"There's no pad, here. Just metal and crystals!" Morok said.

"Go check the other door inside the grid. If they protected it from dimensional magic, there must be a reason." Lith had yet to finish examining the Reactor with Invigoration and couldn't afford to waste one single second.

There was something wrong with the Odi's device, something that made it painful for him to use his breathing technique like usual. It had never happened before, yet Lith was too focused to care about the cold shiver running down his spine.

The only thing he could think of was cracking the mystery in front of him.

The Mana Reactor was just like Solus, it had both a mana flow and a life force, yet the two living artifacts couldn't have been more different.

While Solus was a person with her energy signature, her stone body, and the red wind of life coming out of it, the Reactor was a maelstrom of energy signatures, a bodyless mass of pure energy which emitted constant screams of agony.

Now that he was so close, he could see the red of life and the black of death endlessly turning into one another. Lith could swear that the Reactor was trying to pull him inside, just like it had done with the Golems' wisps.

Only his body prevented his energy from being stolen. Lith felt dizzy and nauseous. The longer he remained in contact with the Reactor the more he could feel the lives spinning inside its bowels.

"More stairs. They seem to lead to the upper floors again. Weird. Any news?" Morok asked upon his return.

"None. Use your best spells and find a way to shut this thing down. I'm going in." Lith didn't wait for a reply and ran towards the lab, his mind filled with doubts.

'Was the Golem trying to deceive me or did I fail to understand its message? After all, while the woman mentioned the grid, the man just repeated a sequence of numbers. Could it be another code for the grid's pad?' Lith thought.

'Unlikely. My best guess is that if you input the wrong number, you sound the alarm, cause the grid to fill the whole room killing any intruder, or both.' Solus thought while studying the defensive device pattern.

She was almost certain that the grid could be moved. The next room was nothing like Lith had imagined it. The wall on his left was filled with what resembled monitors to him, from which he could observe the whole facility of Kulah, both above and below levels.

The camp was still filled with the toxic gas, so using the elevator to escape was out of the question. The rest of the monitors didn't show anything interesting, just empty corridors and rooms.

Chapter 717 Immortal Body Part 1

There was a keyboard below the monitors that allowed its user to switch between the different cameras, but Lith had no idea how to operate it. There was no mouse and his coding skills were nihil for Earth's operating systems, let alone for alien technology.

On the right side of the room there was an empty cylindrical water tank, similar to the one that contained the pseudo-Balor in the Body Enhancement department, but much more complex and refined.

Several cables of different colors went from the nearby wall to and inside the tank. Every single centimeter of it was covered in runes of power that Lith had never seen before, making it both a powerful artifact and the focus of at least twenty different arrays.

Lith noticed that there was a single set of footprints going from the tank to the monitors and moving around the room. Lith followed them with his eyes, noticing that for some reason, the man from the tank had stopped in front of a wall.

Lith used Invigoration, discovering a hidden compartment that had been cloaked against detecting spells, Life Vision included. Triggering it was easy. One of the metal bolts was actually a switch that once pressed made two stone slabs slide, revealing a holographic pad protecting a safe.

"893465." After checking with Invigoration for traps, Lith entered the password. The pad disappeared while the safe opened. Inside there were three books, each one several centimeters thick.

Lith put them inside Soluspedia to examine them. He couldn't read the Odi language, but judging by the pictures, they were the schematics for all Kulah's successful projects.

'Fuck me sideways! The Flesh Golems folder doesn't help me one bit and neither does the Body Swapping book. The pictures are self-explanatory and I can't find any weak point just by looking at them. The Mana Reactor, however, is a different story.

'The part on this floor it's seamless. I doubt Morok could damage it unless he manages to make the mana crystals detonate. The schematics show that its structure reaches the upper floor, where there is a metal gate from which specimens can be thrown inside the Reactor for a reason I don't understand.

'I must inform Morok of this before...' Lith thought when he discovered that his "before" was already expired.

Jiira, the one that Lith referred to as 'mister anatomy model' due to his translucent skin that allowed to see his muscles and organs as if he was some kind of plastic toy, had just walked inside the same room where Phloria was.

Normally Lith would weave his best spells, preparing for the fight, but the enemy's green array made most of them useless, so he preferred to save all of his energies for those abilities that couldn't be turned against him.

'Okay, filthy bastard, just pick one of them who's not Quylla or Phloria, so I'll have all the time I need to inform Morok.' Lith thought.

Unfortunately, after examining all of their prisoners, the Odi had moved Phloria on the bottom of the body rankings and had decided to experiment on her to check if their body-swapping procedure was still effective on humans.

Despite her powerful mana core, with her height and build she was the least charming female specimen according to their standards. Even when they had mistaken her for a man, she ranked pretty low.

With her light bronze skin, fit body, and callous hands she was the embodiment of everything a noble Odi despised. Hard work under the sun was something that only slaves did, not to mention that her height was too far from what they considered perfection.

Jiira closed in on her and released Phloria from the red chains restraining her. Then he used an air spell to move her on what looked like a table. Lith wished with all of his strength for the Odi to go away again, so that he could speak with Morok while Solus freed his friend.

Once again, wishes proved to be a waste of time. Thanks to Life Vision, Lith could see through the walls that part of the energy from the Mana Reactor was flowing inside crystal cables linked to whatever Phloria was lying on.

Lith clenched his fist so hard that his knuckles turned white, yet before taking action he had to wait the moment when the Odi's full focus was on his best friend.

'Wait a minute.' Solus thought. 'If he takes Phloria's body, what need does he have for the other members of the expedition?'

'I'll ask him after I rip his head off.' Lith replied, darting inside the room the moment mana started to flow through Jiira's body.

Lith was in his peak condition, so he infused his body with all the elements and went all out right from the start. He entered the body-swapping room moving so fast to be barely a blur.

Inside, instead of the usual metal, the room was entirely made of stone carved out with earth magic, to allow the world energy to saturate its air. All the remaining members of the expedition were lined up along the wall in order of importance on Lith's right.

Each one of them was restrained by red chains that kept them healthy while preventing them from using magic.

In the middle of the room, there was a stone table where Phloria was. She was conscious but deadly pale. The red chains had healed her wounds, but without being properly fed she was so weak that she didn't have the strength to fight.

Above and below the table, there were bundles of cables that ended into two purple mana crystals, pointing respectively at Phloria's forehead and nape. Jiira had already activated the God's Will array to maximize the procedure's chance of success, so he managed to react fast enough to spread his fingers and release five energy beams.

Lith had already seen that trick and was expecting it. He bent down, passing right under the beams before stepping inside the array against his better judgment.

'I don't know exactly what the green array does, but if I can't attack from a distance, then close combat is my only option.' He thought.

Like Morok had previously told Lith, the Mana Reactor not only did provide the Odi with infinite mana, but also split the world energy into its base components, providing them with the next best thing to fusion magic.

Jiira kept the beams active, sweeping down his hand and cutting through stone and metal as if he was projecting a laser grid while he stepped back. Lith grinned, noticing that the array hadn't moved along with the Odi.

Lith crouched even lower, executing a right leg sweep that almost took his enemy by surprise. Jiira's air fusion allowed him to see Lith's move and react by taking a single step back, putting the enemy right under his line of fire.

Great was Jiira's surprise when the sweep struck at his legs nonetheless, sending him flying while his own energy beams almost damaged the priceless machinery. Lith had partially shapeshifted his body into his hybrid form to succeed.

His hybrid legs were longer than his human form's, something that he had worked hard to prevent the Odi from discovering. He then used the sweep's spin to pivot on his left foot and turn the sweep into a roundhouse kick.

The Orichalcum covered talons of his foot cut deeply into the Odi's chest. Jiira's outrage knew no bounds. The perfect body of a god had just been defiled by a hairless, treacherous monkey.

Chapter 718 Immortal Body Part 2

Two more beams departed from Jiira's eyes while he was slamming against the back wall, taking Lith by surprise. Both rays struck at Lith's heart with enough strength to make him bounce off the floor, filling it with cracks, and then crash against the metal door.

Jiira had used pure mana to attack, giving the beams the same energy of a speeding truck in exchange for the lack of any piercing ability. The results were nothing to scoff at. Jiira had clearly heard the human's bones shatter not only when he had been hit by the beams, but also every time Lith had struck a hard surface.

The small pool of blood forming under Lith's head was a clear sign of how deadly the Odi's aim had been. Jiira could sense the enemy's life force fading, so he focused on the Body-Swapping device to make sure that it had sustained no damage.

A snapping sound was all that warned him of the impending danger. Somehow, the Ranger was inside the God's Will array again, with his silver clawed hand aimed at Jiira's brain.

The Odi stepped back, emitting energy beams from both his eyes and hands, but Lith was fast enough to crouch down in time to dodge them. Then, he used his hands to deflect the opponent's to the side and his head to struck upwards at the Odi's chin, sending all of his ray against either the floor or the ceiling.

Jiira rage exploded when he tasted his own blood invading his mouth, something that had never happened to him, not even during the great war. Two more beams, this time made from the fire element erupted from his open palms, striking respectively Lith's head and heart.

Jiira could now see the reason why his opponent had managed to survive this far. A split second before the impact, Lith's whole body was covered by Orichalcum, which had absorbed part of the impact.

The two new rays were strong enough to push the metal liquid aside and reach their target. Even though their trajectory had been deflected by the Skinwalker armor's energy field, a smell of barbeque spread throughout the room as half of Lith's face evaporated.

The blood from his wounds generated a spray of red fog while his body crashed against the metal door again before sprawling on the ground

"Stay down, dammit!" Jira said while unleashing several bullets of darkness magic to destroy the enemy corpse.

Much to his surprise, the corpse wasn't a corpse. A simple wave of Lith's hand deflected the bullets. Out of habit, Jiira had used fist magic again, but outside the God's Will array the dark projectiles had returned to be just a very powerful cantrip.

Lith's body floated in mid-air allowing him to stand up, also revealing the flesh and muscles of his face regenerating at a speed visible at the naked eye, until no trace of the wound was left.

"That's impossible! Humans cannot have achieved an immortal body before the Odi!" Jiira refused to believe his own eyes. He knew about the existence of Awakened ones, but he had no idea what exactly their powers were.

Hence, he wasn't aware that each time Lith was about to be struck, instead of tensing up and clenching his teeth, he simply took a deep breath with Invigoration. That would make the healing process start even before a wound could be opened.

The destructive power of each energy beam had been greatly reduced because Lith's tissues and bones healed so fast that the beams had to damage each layer of his body multiple times before managing to go deeper.

Jiira wasn't a Golem. With each second of his stupor, he allowed Lith who was insensitive to pain thanks to darkness fusion to breathe regularly.

With every breath, his body healed. With every breath, his strength returned.

A snap of Lith's fingers made all of the chains restraining the prisoners open in unison, plunging the room into chaos. No one cared about how Lith had done it, the only thing they wanted was to get out of there.

"Well, you only need to shoot beams from your mouth, nipples, and crotch to have the complete set." Lith said.

He was usually deaf to the rantings of his enemies. Talking was just a waste of breath that would only encourage more babbling. Lith was a firm believer that during a fight less was more.

Unless of course, he needed to buy some time. Only in such a case, would he indulge the madness of his opponents. Like now, when he was waiting that Solus returned by his side.

The first time Lith had stepped inside the green array, he had made sure that the enemy was unaware of her existence and incapable of detecting her despite her half-artifact nature.

The second time, Solus had exploited the moment after the leg sweep to reach the prisoners unnoticed and spread her body between the chains before activating Zolgrish's Eraser.

The impression of a multiple Clean Slate spell being cast from a distance was what Lith needed to reinforce the enemy's shock and buy even more time.

"Quylla, follow my hand!" He said handing her the book about the Mana Reactor opened at the right page, while a trail of fire and darkness resembling a human hand flew through the air leading her toward Morok.

When Lith had arrived, Quylla had hoped to be able to fight by his side, but the two clashes she had just witnessed were more than enough to make her understand that whatever the Odi was, it was beyond her capabilities.

The idea of leaving her friend to fight alone against an ancient horror while her sister was still strapped to the stone table made her clench her teeth so hard that for a moment she thought they would break.

Quylla didn't raise questions nor objections, she just took the book and followed the mystical hand's trail, ignoring everything else.

Meanwhile, in the adjacent room, Ranger Eari was giving his all to damage the Mana Reactor, but to no avail. Not only was its metal exterior extremely sturdy, but also it seemed to weaken and absorb all the mana that came in contact with it.

Even destroying the protruding mana crystals had turned out to be quite hard and so far, it didn't seem to have caused any significant damage. No matter if he used tier four or five spells, the best he had achieved was to leave bumps and scratches.

"Fuck! This is just a waste of time. Since I can't go any further below, I might as well go see what's on the upper floor." He said, right before the door in front of him opened.

Morok made just in time to revert to his human form and hold back the spell he was about to unleash, thinking that the newcomers were once again Golems. Soldiers and Assistants were all so scared that none of them noticed the small figure of the Ranger near the Mana Reactor.

Quylla kept running to follow the mystical hand that was pointing to the door leading to the upper floor. She had seen the Reactor, the picture at the page Lith had handed them, and the door.

It was enough for her to do the math. Morok followed her, hoping to receive good news.

"Has Lith won already?" He asked.

"No, but if we don't destroy this thing, we'll all end up as spare parts." She replied while heavily panting. If not for the adrenaline rush, she would barely be able to stand, let alone think clearly.

Chapter 719 Doomed Race Part 1

The soldiers were terrified. Without their weapons and equipment, they felt as if they were naked, but the worst thing was the acknowledgment of being completely helpless. Even if they were still fully armed, there was nothing they could do.

Once freed, they had run away out of survival instinct, but now they realized that it had been a pointless action. There was no way out of the underground facility nor a place where they could hide.

The Assistants didn't stop thinking, they just kept running toward any door they could see, to get as further away as they could from that nightmare.

Quylla was getting weaker by the second, but since she seemed to know what she was doing, Morok gave her a bit of his life force and carried her in his arms up the staircase.

The door was unlocked, leading inside a room even bigger than the Reactor itself. The walls were covered in dimensional runes, which made Morok's heart flutter, at least until he remembered that he had no idea what was written on them.

"You have a Forgemaster wand, correct? We can escape if you activate one of those runes." He said.

"No can do. First, I'm not leaving my sister and my friend behind. Second, they took my wand. So unless you want to retrieve it, we're stuck." Quylla stared at the Reactor's upper part that entered the room through the floor, trying to make a sense of the picture in the book she held.

"Damn my rotten... Wait! You said they. They who?" He asked.

"The blue guy and Gaakhu, she has sold us to the enemy. That bitch speaks the Odi language, so she must have cut herself a deal." Since the situation still made no sense, Quylla used her Forgemaster spells on the Reactor, to understand how it worked.

The moment her first spell was completed, her eyes rolled back, showing only the white and she started to puke uncontrollably, crying her eyes out.

"What the fuck is going on?" He blurted out while trying to stop Quylla's seizure from harming her.

The Reactor's insulation was lighter on its upper part, so she had experienced something even worse than what Lith had felt while using Invigoration. The term Mana Reactor was just a fancy word to hide its real purpose.

In order for the device to work, countless lives had been thrown into the mana geyser below Kulah. The life forces of the Odi's victims had been modified, so that they could absorb the world energy and filter it with their bodies, turning it into mana.

The structure made of metal and mana crystal had only the function to store and contain the energy while the Reactor purified the mana produced from its energy signature to allow the Odi to use it freely.

Yet because of its nature, it wasn't just the energy that the Reactor had stored. Every single living being that had been thrown inside the device was still in there. The world energy would invade their bodies and mana cores, making them explode due to the failed Awakening process.

Yet thanks to the modifications they had sustained and the Reactor splitting the world energy into its six components, the light element would heal them the moment they were damaged, keeping the living fuel in an eternal cycle of death and rebirth.

Some of them had even turned into Abominations, but they were trapped as well. They had no advantage over their peers, quite the contrary. Their black cores were the perfect filters, so the amount of energy they endured was much greater and so was their suffering.

The Mana Reactor was akin to a cauldron where world energy, flesh, and souls were constantly burned to provide the Odi with unlimited power. Quylla's spells had made her feel just a spark of the suffering those trapped inside its bowels perceived every single second, yet it was enough to drive her insane.

When Jiira snapped out of his stupor, all of his prisoners had escaped. He considered it just a minor inconvenience since he could always capture them again later. What worried him was the odd creature in front of him.

Jiira had no idea how Lith could still be alive.

Surrender now, or she dies. Since the human had come that far to rescue them, Jiira assumed they were important for him. A condensed sphere of light was now pointing at Phloria's head, burning her hair.

"Do it and your precious machine come next." Lith pointed his hand to what looked like a console installed in the wall, to which most cables were linked. The bolt of lightning on his hand was strong enough to turn it into scraps.

None of the two men could understand the other's words, but their actions spoke volumes. Jiira realized that his earlier assumption was wrong. Even while he was making the female on the table scream in pain, the male was unfazed, still charging his lightning.

Lith was actually furious. Each one of Phloria's cries of agony, every single drop of blood she shed, was enough to make him lose his mind. The scene reminded him of his father, Ezio, beating his brother Carl while he could only stand and watch.

Yet Lith managed to control his rage, turning it into fuel to his power rather than fire burning his mind. In a hostage situation, giving in to demands was idiotic. The hostage had only value as a shield. If Lith surrendered, she was as good as dead.

Lith released his spell, making Jiira gasp in surprise for more than one reason. The console was inside the God's Will array, so instead of giving the thunderbolt a straight trajectory, Lith moved it along the array's borders, so that it entered the magical formation from the nearest point to the terminal.

Also, Lith hadn't wasted his time charging it with mana, but with his own will. Between the strong imprint he had left and the lightning's natural speed, Jiira was forced to commit his entire focus to stop the spell before it destroyed his life work.

Lith charged in, his hands turning into Orichalcum covered claws, one aimed to Jiira's brain and the other to the sphere embedded in his body that allowed him to use the green array.

Lith moved so fast that Jiira was forced to let some of the energy go and unleash a barrage of small energy beams, to not give Lith any place where to dodge. Much to his surprise, the human didn't dodge, but deflected the beams with his arm and legs.

Cracking sounds could be heard once more, but this time Lith only slid back of a few meters. The enemy attack didn't even have the strength to make him fly away anymore.

Jiira was shocked, throwing the lightning back against Lith only to discover that it was nothing more than a light show. While the Odi was starting to panic, Invigoration fixed Lith's limbs.

"What's wrong? Why doesn't our array work anymore?" Jiira said.

"Calm down, you idiot. Just look at its runes." Veiga pointed out.

It was only then that Jiira noticed that even though the magical formation was still standing, several of its power nodes had been destroyed. Lith hadn't blindly charged in, but had followed a methodical plan.

His attacks had always been just a distraction, to force the Odi to reveal his cards and making him fail to notice that Lith was using his spells to strike at God's Will's power nodes, just like Vastor had taught him.

Chapter 720 Doomed Race Part 2

That way, the array would still work, but its effects would be greatly diminished with each lost node. Even while Jiira was studying his predicament, he saw tendrils of Lith's mana coming from below the floor and crash another node.

"Come on, pal. You just have to turn it off and on again to reset it." Lith said while a blue aura erupted from his body and several spells could be seen on the verge of taking form.

Looking at Lith's savage smile, Jiira felt an endless fear taking hold of him. Sure, the Odi could do as Lith had suggested, but taking down the array meant remaining completely exposed to Lith's spells.

Jiira was in a pinch. As long as God's Will was active, the enemy could only engage him in physical combat. Yet the longer they fought, the weaker the array's power focusing ability would become.

Lith had attacked only one of the array's functions on purpose, to not make his opponent realize what was happening until it was too late. Lith could almost taste the blood of his enemy, almost hear his dying screams.

Lith's teeth became the size of small knives and his cheeks covered in scales. Jiira involuntarily took a step back from the grinning monster in front of him. The Odi had seen the monster moving, the second he needed to reset the array was a second too long. At least as long as the creature remained on the fringes of God's Will.

To make matters worse, he couldn't just move the array, so its area of effect was fixed until he replaced it with a new one.

A clicking sound made Jiira look down, just in time to notice that somehow, the human female was now free. Yet instead of running away, Phloria placed her hands on his abdomen, releasing a fireball from point-blank range.

What the Odi had confused for ramblings of agony were actually magic words. The moment a chance of survival had appeared, Phloria had started to cast all of her best spells.

Yet after seeing the Odi controlling Lith's spells as if they were his own, she had been forced to change her tactic. If she had to die, she would die fighting, without leaving the Odi anything but a broken carcass.

The fireball exploded too fast and too close for even God's Will to have any effect. The detonation made Jiira fly against the back wall and cracked both the table and the mana crystals.

Her own mana couldn't hurt Phloria, but it could still hurt Lith and Solus, who was hiding under the table after undoing Phloria's bindings. Lith rushed forward, uncaring of the flames and the heat.

It was his opportunity to both rescue his partner and put down his enemy. The Orichalcum enveloped Lith, protecting his lungs from the hot air that was making it hard for Jiira to breathe.

His midriff was shredded, only the constant infusion of light magic from the Reactor had prevented his viscera from being on the floor rather than where they were supposed to be.

Jiira saw Lith approaching, the air element coursing through Jiira's body allowed him to follow the monster's movements. The Odi joined his hands, focusing all the energy he could muster in the biggest energy beam he could conjure in such a short time.

He used water magic to cool the air and hopefully turn the enemy into a popsicle.

Even if weakened, the green array made the beam too fast for Lith to dodge, but weak enough to be blocked. Lith's right arm deflected it while his left arm pierced the enemy's brain first and heart later, releasing each time powerful spells that made the Odi's body parts explode like water balloons, emitting a wet sound.

Lith was about to strike at the sphere that controlled the array when Jiira overloaded his life force, causing an explosion powerful enough to send both Lith and Phloria crashing against the door.

'This is impossible.' Lith thought. 'There is no spell that can keep you alive with your brain and heart destroyed. I've seen his life force fade like it happened to all those who I killed in the past. How could he activate such a spell and why is the array still standing?'

Lith was right, Jiira was dead. Yet the same didn't apply to all the other Odi he was sharing his body with. When Kulah's researchers had understood that no one was coming to save them, they had used the Body Merging project to halve their numbers but double their lifespan by alternating who was in control of the body.

Only the active life force would be consumed, while the other would be preserved. Yet it also meant halving the speed of their research, since there was only so much work that a single body could do.

With each of their failure, the Odi's number would decrease, until they had decided to merge all inside a single body, to buy as much time as they could while waiting for rescue.

The tank where they had slept slowed their metabolism to one-tenth, so that each one of them would only lose one day of life force after 10 days. The Odi had spent the last few centuries switching from one body to another, prolonging the existence of their doomed race.

When the other Odi had felt Jiira's consciousness fade and his precious life span go to waste, they had activated the detonation spell engraved in his body to buy enough time for the next of them to take charge.

Lith used Invigoration on both Phloria and himself while trying to make heads or tails of the events. She was just wounded while his frozen right arm was second away from shattering into pieces.

Only when he saw Jiira's body shapeshift into another much more muscular body, did Lith understand what Life Merging meant. All the injuries he had inflicted upon his earlier enemy had disappeared and even though just the hair color distinguished Jiira from Rizo, their energy signatures couldn't have been more different.

Rizo took an elaborate longsword and a heavy armor out of Ellkas's dimensional ring that was now his own. Once their owner was dead, their imprint on an enchanted item would disappear.

Dimensional items were easy to use and the Odi had seen their specimens use them multiple times from their cameras, so the first thing they had done after killing the useless old coots was to find one and use it to store all of their best equipment.

In that single ring, there were the results of countless experiments conducted in Kulah, plus the best equipment that the Odi could craft during their empire's golden age.

"Wake up, kid!" After Quylla's seizure had stopped and Morok had made sure with his diagnostic spells that nothing bad had happened to her, the Tyrant had tried his best to make her regain consciousness.

Up to that moment, healing magic, buckets of cold water, and yelling had proven to be useless.

"If we don't do something, we're all going to die. At least tell me what the heck this picture means!" The open Odi book didn't make sense to him. It only showed a hatch and the Reactor, but that was something he could see with his own eyes.