

## Supreme M 721

### Chapter 721 Great Fortress Part 1

Since Quylla kept being useless, Morok stood up and conjured his strongest tier five War Mage spell, Wheel of Fate. Usually it had an area of effect too big to be used in a closed space, but the Reactor's maintenance room was big enough to accommodate two of such spells.

Four rings, each one made of a different elemental energy and as big as a ferris wheel surrounded the Reactor. Normally there would be five of them but without earth to manipulate, that part of the spell was just a waste of mana.

The four rings attacked the structure in turns. Darkness first to weaken the structure and all the spells it was imbued with, then fire to heat the Reactor until its metal parts were white-hot.

Then followed the water ring, to inflict a powerful thermal shock and drench the enemy in water, so that the ensuing lightning ring could seep through all the cracks that the previous attacks had opened.

Several mana crystals exploded and the lights in the room flickered while the spell relentlessly hammered the Mana Reactor, almost giving the now awake Quylla a heart attack.

"What are you doing, you idiot? If you destroy the opening mechanism, we will never stop the Reactor in time." She said.

"The what now?" Morok dispelled the Wheel with a wave of his hand.

"Can't you see the hatch on the picture?" She slammed the book under his nose. "We have no chance of destroying the Mana Reactor with normal spells. For the gods' sake, how can you think that something made to contain infinite mana can be harmed by mana?"

"Now that you point that out, it explains why my strategy wasn't very effective on the lower floor, but here the shielding is lighter. No matter how sturdy a dam is, it only takes a crack to take it down." Morok quoted his wise father.

"Yeah, too bad we are in front of the dam! I'm sure that Lith asked you to find a way to turn it off, not to blow us all in the greatest conflagration Mogar has ever seen. What part of 'infinite mana' isn't clear to you?"

"Fine, egghead. Then what's your brilliant plan?" Morok firmly believed that attack was the best defense, especially when there was nothing you could say to make you appear less moronic.

"To fuel the Reactor, the Odi need to throw living creatures down that hatch, is that clear?" She asked and Morok nodded for her to continue.

"Then if we trick the system into believing that it's recharge time but we throw inside something hard to digest instead of fresh meat, the in-built safety measures will stop its functioning.

"I doubt that the Odi planned on dying at the first misoperation and since the Reactor is powerful enough to blow its way out to the surface, there must be a panic button or something. We just need to trigger it."

Quylla walked to the Mana Reactor and started to compare the picture with the real thing in front of her. It took her but a wave of her hand to get rid of the layer of frost covering the console and the several monitors.

"Good job, jackass! Most of them are broken!" She said while using water and air magic to dry everything, in the hope that at least some of them would start working again.

"Who cares? It's not like any of us can read that gibberish!" Morok acted tough, but he was starting to realize why his father had refused to Awaken him until the young Tyrant would learn to think more with his two brains and less with his two fists.

"Yeah, but at least we could have watched the fucking images!" Quylla would have stabbed him to death if the Odi hadn't taken everything from her but her Skinwalker armor. And not for a lack of trying.

Even a Golem's level of strength was pointless against an artifact capable of switching from the solid to the liquid state at will and that only responded to its master.

It was the reason why Phloria had been chosen as a guinea pig, using an inferior specimen to check if the Skinwalker armor would interfere with the body-swapping process before attempting it on their masterpiece: Quylla.

With her slender body and her mastery of light magic, she was the closest thing to an Odi they could get. Yet now that very similarity was working against them.

"Okay, I can't read the tags above any of these buttons, but judging from their positioning I can guess what they do. I think I can open the hatch, but that would lead us nowhere." She said.

"Why?" Morok asked.

"Because even though I can open it, the system has a double access to prevent energy leaks. First, it opens on our side, then we have to throw something inside, and only then will the hatch close from our side and drop the load in the reactor."

"Well, with the hatch open, a well-placed spell could break the inner door and..."

"Blow us all to the surface!" Quylla cut him short. "We need someone to sacrifice themselves, put them in the hatch, maybe loaded with all the alchemical tools we can find, so that once we drop them inside the Reactor, they can detonate themselves while the system is SEALED and activate the failsafe."

"Yeah, two problems. One, I'm not going to jump. Second, we've got no alchemical tool. Mister blue skin groped me for good as well. I've nothing left."

"He didn't grope me!" Quylla really hoped that what the Odi had performed was just a body search. Thank Lith, the armor had shielded her from any probing and body examination.

"Sure thing, sweetheart. The bastard was so thorough with me that I almost expected he would ask me out." Morok sneered. "Back to business, how do we stop it?"

Quylla looked at Morok, calculating her odds of throwing him down the hatch. Worst case scenario, it wouldn't help Lith but she would still get rid of him. Yet she was aware that some Golems might still be on the loose and she couldn't afford being distracted.

"We need to capture a Flesh Golem or Gaakhu. That bitch betrayed us, so in my book, she's expendable." Quylla replied. To be fair, Gaakhu had betrayed no one. Just like Quylla back at the academy, she had been enslaved.

The Odi had permanently altered her life force, making the slave item impossible to remove without killing her.

"Can't we just throw a couple of Assistants inside and see how it goes? They are much easier prey." Morok proposed.

"Yes, we could, but we still need something to detonate inside, otherwise we would just add new fuel to the Reactor." Quylla's reply shocked the Tyrant. He was just teasing her, never expecting that she would actually agree to such a heartless plan.

Quylla was disgusted by her own weakness just as much as she was from that of her colleagues. The lives of her sister and her best friend were at stake. To her, a couple of rambling idiots were now a small price to pay to save their lives.

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Lith stood up, watching at Rizo walking towards them. The God's Will array was gone and ready to be activated again at any moment. Unlike Jiira, Rizo was a master swordsman. With his strong body and the power of the elements coursing through his body, he was certain to be able to take care of Lith.

## Chapter 722 Great Fortress Part 2

Rizo was the one that was going to take Phloria's body. The other Odi might consider her ugly due to her height and strength, but to a fighter, she was just perfect.

"Get away from my vessel, kid. I'd hate for my new form to be tainted by the blood of a filthy beast." Rizo's movements were calm and controlled while he pointed his sword against Lith as a challenge.

"Fuck off." Lith replied, unleashing all of the spells he had kept at the ready for Jiira. The two men didn't understand each other's words, but their faces spoke volumes.

Rizo's was full of pride and contempt, whereas Lith's was brimming with unbridled rage and killing intent. Two hands made of living streams of lightning, each one the size of a person, clutched on the Odi while a jet stream of black flames pierced through his chest.

Lith's tier five spells Final Sunset and Death Grip struck Rizo to no avail. The swordmaster laughed while activating his Great Fortress armor's enchantment. By imbuing it with mana, it generated an energy barrier that blocked the incoming attacks.

Its limitation was that it required a lot of mana to protect its master from such powerful prolonged spells, yet mana wasn't an issue for Rizo. The Reactor made it the absolute defense, with no weak points.

"Not bad, kid. I wish I had some decent meat for a barbeque. Your flames make you a poor excuse of a mage but an excellent stove." Rizo laughed, showing the monster that a true noble didn't need the God's Will array to prevail.

Solus quickly analyzed the armor and gave Lith the results of her observations.

'Hence, that armor is almost perfect.' She thought.

'Thanks, Solus. It's just as I predicted. This guy is just a moron that uses a tool without having any idea about how it works. Let's teach him a lesson.' Lith replied.

Jiira had been a difficult opponent and Rizo appeared to be even worse, yet Lith thought nothing of him. After watching Yondra die between his arms, after seeing Phloria being tortured, he could feel something twisting inside of himself, clawing to escape.

He could feel it in the low rumble of the earth around him, in the unnatural warmth of the air in the room. Burning inside of him there was a black flame born of force and will that for some reason couldn't find its way out.

The Odi had taken a lot from Lith. The thought of being able to put an end to their entire race by killing those in front of him was the best payoff he could think of.

Lith moved his spells, making them flank Rizo and leaving his front exposed before hurling a river of Origin Flames which started to attack more than just the barrier, striking at its very enchantment.

"Origin Flames? Guuna, it seems we've got you a furnace!" Rizo laughed again, but the laughter died when he noticed that there was no end to the flames. Lith kept inhaling and exhaling as fast as he could, piling up more blue flames than he ever did before.

"It must be a monster, not an Emperor Beast. Only monsters are crazy enough to waste their strength like that." Rizo said. The first wave did nothing to his barrier. The second and the third produced no effect as well, but from the fourth onwards he felt that something was wrong.

No matter how much water magic he used to cool the surrounding air, Rizo felt burning.

'You idiot!' Guuna screamed inside his head. 'Our bodies were modified to withstand infinite mana, not your armor.' The Odi had no concept of pseudo core, but they had learned from experience that there was no enchanted object capable of perfectly channeling mana, not even those made of Adamant.

That was not because of a metal's fault, but due to the crafted pseudo core being unable to process the constant flow of energy. A pseudo core was just like a mana core: if abused it would overload and explode.

Unlike a living being, however, there was no risk of an Abomination being born, only of junk. Lith had aimed for the armor first, to strip his conceited opponent of an advantage that in the latest stages of the fight, when they were both exhausted, might have been decisive.

Now, instead, the Great Fortress armor's pseudo core was already on the verge of collapsing, before the fight even started. While Guuna cursed him for his incompetence in handling her masterpiece, Rizo finally activated the God's Will array.

Alas, it was too late. The two spells from Lith, his Origin Flames, and the powerful explosion that struck Rizo's back were the final nail in the coffin of the ancient armor.

Even though she was still shocked and traumatized from the recent events, Phloria refused to be just a spectator. While Lith hammered the barrier, she was taking care of the body-swapping machine.

Countless blades made of ice, fire, and earth had cut the entire device into pieces no bigger than a cup of tea. First, she had disposed of the stone table to make her weapons, then she had cut off all the cables in sight, and finally she had struck at the protruding mana crystals, making sure that their opponent would shield them from the conflagration with his own body.

Suddenly the Great Fortress armor was just a heavy lump of metal, offering no more protection to Rizo's exposed head and arms due to the collapse of its energy field. To add insult to injury, the Odi discovered that not even God's Will could do anything against Origin Flames.

The array had just been created but the blue flames were already eating at its entire structure, greatly reducing its effectiveness. Rizo could turn it on and off to once again reset it, but that way nothing would stop the Origin Flames from turning him into charcoal.

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"I'm going to search for a Golem, you stay here and don't touch anything." After a few tries, Quylla had already understood the Mana Reactor's basic commands.

Her problem was still the same. She needed a sacrifice loaded with enough firepower to damage the Reactor's internal mechanism but without damaging its outer shell. A Flesh Golem was her best bet.

During her imprisonment, she had all the time she needed to think about how to take them down and had ended cursing her own stupidity for not realizing it sooner. Yondra had been right since the beginning, fighting was the wrong move for Quylla.

"Are you sure you don't need a bodyguard? Those things are nasty." Morok asked.

"Damn sure. I might need your help to move them, though." Quylla went downstairs, making as much noise as she could. She had no idea where the constructs could be hidden, but she was certain that the Odi had to keep them close.

They had shown her multiple times that without the Golems' Warping Array they were incapable of using dimensional magic. Once back in the lower Reactor room, she used her Forgemaster spells to scan the walls and search for Recharging arrays.

Her efforts triggered a hidden mechanism that released the last two Flesh Golems. The rest had been destroyed, which was the reason why the Odi had ordered them to remain hidden.

## Chapter 723 Judgment Part 1

The colossi moved towards her, but Quylla's next move froze them on the spot. Instead of infusing her armor with mana to better defend herself, she shapeshifted it off, remaining in her underwear.

The Golems' first priority was her safety, they couldn't harm her. They stepped back as she advanced until they had their backs against the wall. They couldn't touch her without being deactivated but there was no spell in their arsenal weak enough to not kill a half-naked normal human.

Constructs had no access to first magic, only to the spells that they had been imbued with and Flesh Golems were war machines. Quylla placed her hands on them and turned the normally unstoppable dreadnoughts into huge piles of stone in a split second.

Only when she was sure that they posed no threat to her did she put her armor back on. Then, she used a Float spell on the Golems and brought them to the Reactor's upper floor.

"How the heck did you manage to capture two constructs without a scratch?" Morok's genuine surprise at the sight of the Golems made her sigh in relief. Quylla was afraid he might have been following her and peeped the whole scene.

"Finesse." She replied. "Now our question is if it's better to throw them both at once or one at a time and study how the Reactor behaves before making a final attempt."

Quylla used both Scanner and her Forgemastering spell to search for a self-destruct mechanism. As a Forgemaster, she knew how important it was to not give the enemy the opportunity to study a masterpiece.

Once she found the mechanism, she placed the constructs on the hatch before triggering it. The people grafted inside the Golems looked at her with eyes filled with gratitude, almost making Quylla feel guilty.

In any other time, she would have worried about finding a way to save them from their destiny and give their body back to them. Almost. She was now at war, and no matter her oath as a Healer or how innocent those people were, they still remained her enemies.

The hatch opened, making the Flesh Golems fall on the inner metal door that unlocked as soon as the outer door was closed. The constructs fell down into the pit the Mana Reactor was, filled with world energy, elemental forces, and the emerald green light of mana.

Their flesh was instantly consumed while their stone bodies withstood the maelstrom around them long enough to almost reach the bottom of the Reactor. The following explosion broke the balance between the three energies at work, forcing the machine to a stop.

The Reactor was still full of mana, but no more would be produced until the emergency wasn't solved. The world energy was now free to return where it belonged, making the shaking of the ground increase as a silver pillar of light descended from the sky, right above Lith's position.

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There was a reason why the Odi had been forced to merge all in one body, why they had abandoned their research in a hurry, and why almost no trace of their passage but ruins remained.

During the great war, while the people of the Galen continent fought for their freedom and the Odi did their worst to prolong the existence of their dying race, Mogar had passed its judgment on them, deeming them unworthy.

The Guardians had mobilized, ending the war that would have lasted a few more years in a matter of hours. The Odi knew about the Guardians, as well as that the only way they had to fight against such powerful creatures was to use the Guardians' best weapon against them.

By trapping the world energy in the Mana Reactor, not only did they achieve the key to unlimited power, but they also hid from both Mogar and its Guardians. Even in the case that Kulah were to be discovered, the Odi believed that they had enough weapons to take the Guardians on and beat them at their own game.

As long as the Mana Reactor was operational, the Guardians would be diminished, while the Odi would be unstoppable and the God's Will array would allow them to trample even Mogar's will over the elements.

As long as the mana Reactor was operational, which wasn't the case anymore.

The world energy flooded Kulah's underground floors, triggering the world tribulation that had been forcefully stopped since the moment Lith had listened to the words of the dying Golems.

"Oh shit!" Rizo said, unaware that now both humans were finally capable of understanding his language and vice versa. He had fought his whole life on the front lines, he could never forget the feeling that was now covering his whole body in a cold sweat.

The feeling of the presence of a Guardian.

A silver pillar descended from the sky while the normally hidden black one emerged from the ground, as if the fingers of two opposite gods were connecting right in the space Lith occupied.

Finally, the thing inside of him stopped clawing and erupted from his whole body, covering it in red and black scales, while two curved horns emerged from the sides of his forehead.

Phloria was so shocked that she almost forgot about Rizo. She had seen Lith transformed, but never like that. She had never seen the four upside-down wings on his back, the tail, the horns, nor the seven eyes all opened at once.

An inhuman roar erupted from his fangs-filled maw as his body grew past the two meters (6'7") and the whole room turned pitch-black. Countless eyes opened on every centimeter of the walls, ceiling, and floor, staring at Rizo in hatred.

Fearing for his life, the Odi decided to give his all, releasing a tier three spell from his sword. Even though the God's Will array was weakened, it was still capable of turning the simple lightning into something that exceeded even a tier five magic spell cast by a genius on Manohar's level.

The magical formation had been devised as an anti-Guardian weapon for a reason. The spell was faster and stronger than anything Lith had ever seen. It moved so quickly that even if he had seen it forming with Life Vision, even with his body infused with air magic, he couldn't dodge it from so up close.

It pierced through the layer of Orichalcum covering Lith's head, through the thick scales and bones protecting his brain.

Realizing that nothing was enough to stop such a force of nature, Solus did the only thing that she could. She used the split second the spell needed to overpower so many layers of protection to slip inside Lith's skull and cover his brain with her stone body.

Lith's armor vaporized, his skull caved in, and Solus was turned into small pebbles.

Yet not a single spark of electricity nor bone fragment damaged Lith's vital organ, allowing Invigoration to rejuvenate him in only one breath, thanks to the massive amount of world energy enveloping him.

'That was damn close. Thank you so much, Solus.' Lith thought, yet only silence ensued.

'Solus?' Lith could feel an immense void inside of himself where Solus's light usually was. He could still manipulate the glove, his pocket dimension, everything. Yet his best friend was lost to him.

An all too human scream of grief made the cave tremble so much that both Phloria and Rizo, who were still shocked at seeing Lith alive, thought that the whole of Mogar was about to collapse above their heads.

## Chapter 724 Judgement Part 2

"That's Lith's voice! Something must have happened to him." Quylla triple checked the Mana Reactor.

A lot of red lights signaled that the device had stopped working and the lack of all the buzzing sounds that had previously filled the air confirmed the success of her strategy.

Yet instead of declining, the rumble of the earth was actually worse than before.

Cursing her bad luck, she ran toward the room where the fight was taking place despite the fear of the operating table and of the blue monster who wanted to steal her life still burned vividly in her mind.

"Wait, I don't think you should go. You can't possibly help him!" Morok ran after Quylla, trying to stop her. He could imagine how hard Lith had worked to hide his real nature and knew that the Odi wasn't an enemy that could be underestimated.

On top of that, even though he couldn't see the silver and the black pillar with his human eyes, he could feel an enormous power at work. Such a small human like Quylla was likely to be incinerated simply by stepping too close to such a force of nature.

He grabbed her by the shoulder, forcing Quylla to stop. She followed her father's teaching, using the Ranger's yanking motion to add his momentum to her own and kick him in the nuts with all the strength she had.

Quylla was tired of his non-sense. She wouldn't waste a single moment listening to Morok, not while she could actually do something to help her family. If Lith and Phloria lost the battle, she was dead anyway.

Quylla much preferred spending her last moments with those she loved rather than with an annoying prick. Morok yelped while grabbing his crotch and fell to his side. Beast or not, enchanted protection or not, it would take him some time to recover.

When Quylla opened the metal door, she couldn't believe her own eyes. Phloria was still there, sitting on the ground and chanting one spell after the other despite the tears streaming from her eyes.

The room seemed to be out of a nightmare, filled with eyes of all shapes and sizes staring at the fight while inhuman screams coming from its walls filled the air. In the middle of it, someone that looked like the Odi Quylla knew but who wasn't him was battling to the death with a monstrous creature.



Phloria wasn't crying because she was afraid of death, nor because she had any idea of what had just happened. She was crying because the thing in front of her, somehow, was exactly as she had always imagined Lith to be.

She had always known that he was filled with a pain and anguish that usually he hid from the rest of the world, something that she had only caught a glimpse of from time to time. Now it was all laid bare in front of her, in a storm of claws, snarls, and fury.

It was the most inhuman and yet human being she had ever seen. She was crying because the darkness surrounding them resonated with that pain, allowing Phloria to share his grief and shed the tears that Lith couldn't anymore.

After the first lightning, Rizo didn't have the time to cast another that Lith had darted towards him, in a flurry of Origin Flames and fists. The first punch had been strong enough to lift Rizo from the ground, sending him crashing against the back wall.

His once prized Fortress Armor was now deeply bent and bore the mark of Lith's fist.

Rizo's earth and light fusion allowed him to remain conscious, but the strike had brought the both of them outside the God's Will array, forcing him to undo the old magical formation and create a new one.

That split second had been long enough that Lith had struck the Odi's face so hard and so many times to almost rip Rizo's head off. One of his eyes was swelled and closed, many of his teeth were now on the floor while his nose, broken in many places bled profusely.

Rizo hadn't taken the onslaught idly. He was a master swordsman and his blade was still in perfect condition. The Eternal Blade was the apex of the Odi weaponry. He had stabbed, cut, and deflected Lith's arms at each and every one of his attacks, but the monster didn't care.

The silvery armor covering his curved scales deflected most of the impacts and every wound started to heal the moment it was opened. Lith was using darkness fusion, but it wasn't the lack of pain that allowed him to fight in such a frenzied way.

It was the unbridled fury for having once lost once again someone precious to him.

'Solus is gone. I will not hear her laugh or cry anymore. She will not be with me the next time I'm happy or sad. She will not scold me when I do something stupid or insensitive. I'm once again alone and it's all your fault!

'You took her away from me!' Lith thought while his hands turned the Orichalcum of the now dead Fortress armor to shreds, bringing him just a few centimeters away from the beating heart of his hated enemy.

Until that moment, Rizo had completely focused on protecting his head, but cuts and bruises were being inflicted upon his now exposed flesh, forcing him to lower his blade.

'You have to end this quickly!' Guuna said in his head. 'Your precious little wench has destroyed the Body-Swapping machine and the Mana Reactor has stopped working. Once the stored mana goes dry, you'll not last a second!'

Rizo hated to agree with her just as he hated the mage's guts. Yet there was no point in denying the truth, so he used first magic and the green array to surround himself with white flames, forcing the monster to retreat and giving himself the time he needed to heal his injuries.

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The first thing that Solus saw when she woke up from the darkness that had shrouded her, was a luscious sea of green. The soft grass tickled her feet while a gentle breeze made her light bronze hair dance in the air.

She had no idea where she was, but she felt at peace. All of her pains and worries appeared like something distant in the past. The only thing she wanted was to lay down on the grass and stare at the blue sky above her head.

"Am I dead?" She asked while the memories of the recent events made her snap out of her reverie. "This is nothing like what I saw in Lith's memories and... By my maker, my skin is pink. I'm human! I'm really human!"

She tried to conjure a mirror of ice to look at her own face, but nothing happened. She couldn't feel her mana, nor any of her mystical senses seemed to work. To make matters worse, the only thoughts she could hear were her own.

"Oh dear, it's been so long since the last time I had a visitor. Let me wear something you can relate to." A disembodied voice said inside Solus's head, making her yelp in surprise.

The ground rose, twisted, and turned, until the lump of mud in front of Solus looked exactly like Elina down to the smallest detail. The only difference was her hair being of the six colors of the elements instead of light-brown with shades of red.

## Chapter 725 Lord of Destruction Part 1

"Where are we? Who are you? More importantly, am I dead? Is Lith dead too?" Solus asked. She felt as if she was about to faint, yet she was physically incapable of doing it.

"You are where no living being is supposed to be. Inside of my consciousness. As for who I am, usually you call me by many names. The All-Father, the Great Mother, but I think that recently Mogar is the most popular." The Elina-thing replied.

"Wait what? Why am I here? If I'm not dead, why I don't have any of my powers?" Solus was only getting more confused with each answer she received.

"You would be dead if you still had your original body, but the one Menadion bestowed upon you is too strong for a mere lightning to kill you. Not to mention that your life force is linked to the human's.

"You're in a state very close to death and since I was there when it happened, the most human part of your mind naturally returned to me. You don't have powers because you don't need them here. You're safe. Unlike him."

A wave of Mogar's hand made their surroundings disappear, returning Solus to the Odi's underground complex.

Solus suddenly realized that something was wrong. Mogar's presence was calm like that of any normal human, but there were three more pillars other than the one enveloping Lith.

They were much bigger than his silver pillar and so powerful that even in her current state, just being so close to them covered Solus in a cold sweat.

"What are you doing to Lith? What's the meaning of the silver pillar and who or what are those things?" Solus pointed at the remaining three pillars surrounding Kulah.

"I'm not doing anything that your friend didn't ask for himself. He calls for me so wearily often, but this time I answered his call." Mogar shook her head, shapeshifting into Rena.

"The silver pillar is the way I communicate with those like him. As for the others..." The second wave of her hand gave Solus the impression that the whole world was zooming out.

She could now see with her eyes three enormous beasts surrounding Kulah. A golden griffon, a black scaled dragon, and a white phoenix. Each one of them was standing on its hind legs which seemed to reach down to Mogar's core while their heads stood so tall that they were able to pierce the skies.

The closest comparison between the dragon in front of her and the emerald dragon they had met inside Huryole she could think of, was that of a volcano and a match.

"They are my Guardians. I brought them here to pass my judgment in the case that your friend dies." Mogar's warm and motherly smile despite the dire circumstances Lith, Phloria, and Quylla were, gave Solus the creeps.

"For too long those bastards hid from my sight, sucking my blood for their filthy experiments. I usually don't mind mosquitoes, but this one has got too big and too annoying to let it live."

"If you already have Guardians, what do you need Lith for? Can't you see he is suffering?" Solus saw Lith's seven eyes burning like torches. She had no idea if it was either due to his rage or the tears that in such a form looked like flames.

Even without their mind link, just by looking at his face, she could tell that he was grieving.

"Life is suffering, child. You should know it better than anyone else." Mogar sneered, assuming Jirni's features. "I still need many pieces on my chessboard and so far, your friend fits the bill. Do you know why magical beasts are born with two elements?

"It marks what their purpose is, what they are supposed to be. Take the Griffon, for example. Its elements are light and air. Together, they bring order and change. That's why the Griffon's duty it's to nurture what already exists.

"Back when people still believed in the gods, it was considered the Lord of Prosperity."

"The Dragon is made of fire and air, elements that complement each other. Both of them are shapeless and intangible. Together they bring the passion and the open-mindedness necessary to those who seek knowledge.

That's why dragons are usually wise and the first Dragon was considered the Lord of Wisdom.

"Last, but not least, the Phoenix. Its elements are light and darkness, twin elements that despite being polar opposites cannot live without each other. Together, they are an unstoppable force of death and rebirth.

"For something new to be born, something old must die. That's the oldest rule of the balance. The Phoenix embodies the radical changes that living beings must undergo in order to survive, both as individuals and a society.

"Its conflictual nature made the first Phoenix the Lord of War."

"Sometimes, however, change is not enough. There are things in every world that are simply born wrong and no matter how much they change, there's no fixing them, like the Odi.

"Do you know what are the elements your friend was born with? Fire and darkness. Together, they don't nurture, don't protect, nor do they change. Their only purpose is to cleanse and disinfect, to get rid of what is toxic.

"Too many mistakes on the evolutionary ladder have brought me to agree with your friend. I need a Lord of Destruction." Mogar pointed her slender finger at Lith's proto-Guardian form.

"By the way are you sure that you can afford to stay here and chatter? Things aren't going well for him."

Solus followed the images in front of her, noticing that there was more in play than the physical battle between Lith and Rizo. Now that the Reactor was still, its prisoners were finally able to truly die.

The souls that it had trapped for centuries were finally free.

Yet while some turned into shooting stars and disappeared in the sky, others were now free to look for their revenge upon their captors. All those whose hatred and rage was strong enough that it would've turned them into undead if they still a shred of a body to cling to, found in the abyss erupting from Lith's soul a beacon.

Each one of them tainted his mind and body, trying to force him to become the instrument of their reckoning. They projected into his mind all the atrocities they had endured, all the loved ones they had lost, adding their fury to his own, driving Lith on the verge of madness.

They couldn't offer him power, only rage, but that was something that he had plenty already. Feeling his body getting invaded by foreign feelings, Lith focused on Carl's death, on Yondra's, and on the painful void that Solus's absence had left.

The black fire inside of him burned brighter, attacking the dead souls clinging to him and forcing them to release their hold on him. The spirits changed their tactic, replacing their features with those of his loved ones, asking him to avenge them.

Rizo didn't miss the opportunity that the chaos Lith's mind currently was had created for him. He dispelled both the white flames and the God's Will array, charging forward in a downwards slash that would've split the monster asunder.

Lith managed to partially dodge, but the strike still managed to chop his left arm off. The pain snapped Lith out of his frenzy and before Rizo could even gloat for his success, black tendrils erupted from Lith's shoulder as well as from his amputated limb, reattaching it in a split second.

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Rizo knew that such a wound couldn't heal so fast and that Lith's left side was currently exposed. He lunged his blade at Lith's weak point, only for a silvery clash to stop him in his tracks.

Lith's wings were coated in Orichalcum as well, and since he couldn't move his left arm properly, he had shielded himself with his wing. Being upside-down, they almost resembled a hand with the thumb pointing down, allowing Lith to flex the upper part of his wings so to grab the enemy weapon.

Before Rizo managed to free the blade by twisting it and ripping part of the wings to shreds, Lith's right fist struck at the Odi's kidney just in time to dodge a horizontal slash that would otherwise chop his head off.

Phloria and Quylla didn't miss the opening, unleashing a burst of lightning that almost brought Rizo to his knees. He had yet to activate the green array again because once set, he couldn't move it.

Without a solid strategy, Lith's Origin Flames would have damaged it before he could exploit the advantage that God's Will granted to him. Also, the array was very mana expensive and with the Reactor down, Rizo couldn't afford to waste what energy he had left.

The moment his opponent faltered, Lith took a Gatekeeper prototype out of his pocket dimension and lunged for the kill. Alas, Rizo's title of blade master wasn't just for show.

The Odi managed to ignore the shock thanks to sheer willpower and deflected the prototype striking at the point where the metal was thinner. The difference in quality between the blades coupled with Rizo's skill allowed him to break Lith's weapon and use the recoil from the clash to launch a counter-attack at the same time.

The attack was too fast and too close for Lith to dodge it, so he had to once again resort to using his metal coated wings as shields. Much to everyone's surprise, the inner part of the wings was covered in faces twisted in anger and pain that could be seen moving right below its black membrane.

Countless black arms made of darkness and spirit magic erupted from the wings, attempting to grab both the sword and its wielder. Rizo managed to cut them all before they could touch him, but at that point, the strength of his attack had been neutralized.

"What's happening?" Rizo asked more to the Odi who shared the body with him rather than to the humans. "Where are these things coming from?"

More and more black arms came out from the surrounding darkness as the lost souls found a way to exploit their link with Lith to use Demons of Darkness in his stead. Soon there were more than just arms, but also heads and full bodies as well.

"Die!" Lith replied joining the onslaught. Thanks to the cover that the shadows offered to him, Lith managed to get close enough to lunge with his claw at Rizo's right lung, where the sphere that allowed him to conjure the God's Will array was hidden.

Even among the red sea of rage possessing him, Lith was aware that without the artifact, the enemy would be at his complete mercy. With just tier three spells at his disposal, not even a blade master would last more than a few seconds.

"Is that really Lith?" Quylla asked, finally recognizing the familiar voice. Until that moment, snarls and roars had prevented her to understand who she should root for. She had previously aimed her bolt of lightning against Rizo only because it was what Phloria had done.

"Yes." Phloria nodded. She instinctively tried to reach for her sword before remembering that the Odi had taken it away from her. "We have to help him, he can't win without a weapon."

Quylla was about to reply that she begged to differ since his claws had pierced through the damaged armor and the Odi's flesh, spraying blue blood everywhere, when Rizo reactivated God's Will in the nick of time before Lith's fingers could close around the sphere.

A wind-push as strong as a tornado sent Lith crashing against the wall while the vengeful shadows were dispersed. The God's Will array allowed Rizo to manipulate mana, not the lost souls inhabiting them.

Rizo could have used fire or lightning to kill him, but since the monster appeared to be immortal, if the attack failed and the thing still managed to take the God's Will from him, even the female humans might have been able to kill him.

"I don't want to stay here." Solus said. "How do I get back to Lith?"

Jirni-Mogar laughed with a sweet and silvery voice that would have been soothing if it didn't come from someone with Jirni's features. It sounded mostly creepy.

"You're so funny, child. I already told you: that's your mind-" Mogar pointed at Solus's human form.

"-and there's your body." She was now pointing at the arm protector visible on Lith's right arm, covering him from the hand to the shoulder.

"Do the math."

Solus still had a lot of questions, yet Phloria was right. Lith couldn't win without a weapon. Also, Mogar was right. With a broken life force and apparently also a broken soul, without her Lith was at risk of being possessed by the undead that he was currently manipulating.

She walked toward Lith, looking at her slender, pink hands one last time before overlapping her body with his own.

'Get up, we don't have a second to lose!' She thought. There were countless things that she wanted to say to him, but that wasn't the time nor the place.

Rizo had realized the threat that the two female humans now posed to the Odi's lives and with the body-swapping machine destroyed, they had no use for them anymore. He dispelled the God's Will, conjuring it again so that it enveloped the area between him and his prey.

Phloria and Quylla were at its fringes, but having their backs against the wall they couldn't escape. Not before he reached them and cut them down. Rizo was at the opposite side, darting through the array, leaving no blind spot that Lith could use to stop him.

The two women attempted to Blink, but the magical formation prevented them to.

Lith had yet to recover from the joy and shock to have Solus back yet he could already feel his heart squeezing from pain. He was about to lose one of his closest friends and the only woman that he might have ever loved.

His body moved faster than his mind and faster than Rizo. The Odi's elemental fusion was more powerful, but Lith's body was stronger and his limbs longer. It allowed Lith to reach Phloria and Quylla before his enemy.

'Solus, I know that I can beat him, but I need your help. There's one last trick that I didn't dare to attempt before because it will put your body at great risk and I hoped that giving you some time to heal, would allow you to recover.

'Thank heavens, I was right. I know that it's unfair to ask you to suffer again even though you've just returned but...'

'I know and I'm deeply grateful for everything you've said and done for me, but now stop wasting time. I trust you with all of my heart, so do what you must.' Solus cut him short.

'We'll face this enemy like we faced and will face anyone who stands in our path, together!'

## Chapter 727 One Shall Fall Part 1

"Begone!" Lith screamed at Rizo while using his wings to cover his arms, creating a multi-layered protection to stop the incoming slash.

Rizo laughed at the monster's stupidity, this way he could kill all three of them in one fell swoop. He activated the powers of his Eternal Blade, fueling them with an enormous amount of the power that the Reactor still had left.

The Odi's masterpiece was now surrounded by a white aura, strong enough to literally cut the air in front of it and even to split matter down to an atomic level. Lith's black wings evaporated, unable even to withstand the intense heat and power the Eternal Blade emitted.

'Wait! Why are the wings black?' Guuna pointed out. She was a genius on Solus's level, so she couldn't possibly miss what was happening.

'What the heck are you saying? This Scourge has always been red and black!' Rizo ignored her remark, putting all of his weight and focus behind the strike.

'The monster, yes, but his armor was silver! Where is its armor?' Guuna had noticed that Lith's wings were back to being pitch-black, only made of flesh and bone.

The answer to her question came in the form of a silvery sound as the Eternal Blade was pushed away by an unstoppable force. Rizo could only curse at his stupidity when he saw that the armor wasn't the only thing to have disappeared.

The arm protector was gone as well and, in their stead, there was a silver bastard sword between Lith's hands. Its shape reminded Phloria of the Gatekeeper, but it was clearly made of Orichalcum and had a green and a yellow mana crystal on its hilt instead of two blue crystals.

Lith had made Solus's stone body took the form of his once prized blade and given her the entirety of the Skinwalker armor to protect her from harm. As the final step, by injecting his mana inside the armor, he gave to the makeshift weapon the same properties of mana boosted Orichalcum.

Yet Solus was more than what even the Gatekeeper once was. Not only could she channel Lith's elemental fusion, but also add her own, further enhancing all the blade's and Orichalcum's properties.

The Adamant alloy was semi-liquid, so no matter how many times the Eternal blade's aura pushed the liquid metal aside, new Orichalcum kept flowing to replace the missing parts while its energy field clashed with Rizo's weapon.

Lith's strength plus Solus's while combining their fusion magic was enough to almost rip the Eternal Blade off Rizo's hands. Both blades were now above their masters' heads, but only one of the fighters still had a firm grip and both hands on his weapon's hilt.

Lith's body was wounded and battered, his mana almost depleted.

Too long had passed from the last time he had used Invigoration and even more since he had actually slept. Yet thoughts of his broken existence back on Earth were filling every corner of Lith's mind.

Almost losing Solus had reopened all of his old wounds. It had reminded him of the differences between the loveless world, devoid of anything worth living for, that he had left behind and Mogar, which was filled with people who needed him.

Rizo was now defenseless from his midriff to his chin, yet it wouldn't last for long. Lith moved his blade in a downward diagonal slash, to cut Rizo from his right shoulder to his left hip.

Even if with only one hand, Rizo managed to strike at the Soluskeeper with his own blade, preventing the cut from being deep by pushing the edge down and away before it could pierce his organs.

With his other hand, Rizo imitated the spell that Jiira had previously used and emitted from his palm a red beam of concentrated first magic aimed at Lith's heart.

'If the striking the head doesn't work, this thing must be like a vampire.' Rizo thought. 'Burning his heart should do the trick.'

The green array made the beam too fast and powerful to be dodged, not that Lith would have done it even if he could. Rizo had almost taken Solus away from him, Lith wouldn't let anything happen to Phloria or Quylla.

'No matter how powerful, that thing it's still fucking chore magic!' Lith thought as his red eye burned with mana of the same color, infusing both Solus and the enemy's spell. The red light born from the eye tilted the beam enough that his blade's aura was enough to push it aside.

Lith adjusted his grip on the Soluskeeper, following the motion from the previous attack to draw it near his chest in a horizontal stance and then lunged at the enemy. The combined beam parry and sword stab took Rizo by surprise.

He tried to deflect the Soluskeeper again, but his one-handed grip was too weak compared to Lith's double-handed form. Lith's blade pierced his chest, forcing Rizo to fly back to not be impaled.

'Stick to what you know, you moron!' Guuna scolded him. 'You're no mage, your control over first magic is pathetic at best and that thing has three eyes flaring with mana. Judging by their colors, you have to avoid fire, darkness, and water magic.'



'What do you want me to do, then? Heal him?' Rizo rebuked while a jet stream of Origin Flames tried to strike at him, only to be stopped by both the God's Will array and a bolt of thunder.

'No, you idiot! Use your damn blade and the advantage that having hostages gives you. He stood still to defend the women before so...' She stopped the moment she noticed that Quylla and Phloria hadn't remained idly.

They had used Lith's cover to get out of the array and free him from the need to fight inside the magical formation.

'Damn! Why am I the only one who is partnered with idiots?' Guuna thought.

Lith followed his enemy and now that everyone was out of the array, God's Will was reduced to be just a tacky decoration on the floor. Rizo used the thunderbolt from his blade again, but without the array, it was just a peak tier three spell that Lith deflected with a flick of his blade.

Once the two men were engaged again in close quarters combat, the difference in weapons soon become overwhelming. Just like the Skinwalker armor protecting her, Solus had no definite shape.

She adapted after each clash, making the parts of the blade that Lith used to block thicker at the right moment and shapeshifting it to be shaper and more curved whenever a hit connected, causing a deeper wound.

Rizo had a hard time following the Soluskeeper's movements, mostly because the blade kept changing its form, making it hard for him to hit its tip to easily deflect an attack.

'Fist it was double-edged, then single-edged, and now it's a goddamned curved sword! What the heck of a weapon is that?' Rizo had to predict both the movements of the Soluskeeper and its wielder, who despite being less skilled than the blade master had a vastly superior physical prowess.

Quylla didn't understand anything of what was happening, so she focused on Lith's non yellow eyes and the enemy's array, trying to find a way to help her friend. Phloria instead was in awe for his performance.

She had often heard the term "being one with the sword" but it was the first time she was actually seeing it. Solus wasn't just a powerful magical artifact, it was also part of Lith's body, allowing him to bring all of his techniques to a new peak.

## Chapter 728 One Shall Fall Part 2

Phloria's amazement didn't stop her from also using her brain. Afraid that their enemy could once again steal the power of their spells, Phloria used earth magic to change the pattern of the floor to Lith's advantage, making it slippery where Rizo was and rough where Lith stood, giving her friend a better footing.

Sometimes she would make small bumps appear where she predicted the Odi would move, making him almost trip more than once. Fighting three against one without the green array was too much for Rizo.

He conjured it again, but before it could fully form the Eternal Blade was ripped off his hands, quickly followed by his head. Lith knew what was going to happen, so he quickly stepped out of the

array as Rizo's remaining life force was detonated to buy the time necessary for the next Odi to step out.

'I need to rest, sorry.' Solus slipped back to Lith's finger and the Skinwalker back on his body. Between her near-death experience and her weak core, Lith was surprised that she had lasted for so long.

He gave Solus his most heartfelt thanks while hurling a constant stream of Origin Flames against the green array. By the time the explosion had faded and Veiga's body was fully formed, the magical formation was in shambles.

"Rizo, you damn idiot!" Veiga said, taking her magical staff out of her dimensional ring. Thanks to the array's power amplifying effects, her tier three spell filled the room with ice shards as big as a person, giving her prey no chance to escape.

Phloria used her tier four earth spell, Tidal Wall, to make the ground in front of her and her allies rise like a wave, buying Lith enough time for a full breath of Invigoration.

Veiga sneered at the ugly female's attempts to stall for time, conjuring one volley of shards after another, in a constant onslaught that soon brought the magical protection on the verge of crumbling.

She didn't care about how much mana was left in the Reactor, the only thing that mattered was her own survival. Lith pondered his options, trying to find a way out of that pinch.

'Dammit, that's a spell worthy of the name Checkmate Spears. I can't Warp in due to the array and since the offensive spell covers the entire room, I have no place to dodge. I could tank a wave or two, but I would die long before reaching that crazed mage.' He thought.

Quylla shared his opinion, but while Lith had fought putting his life on the line, she had done the best that she could to study the God's Will array. Quylla was no Warden, but she knew the Array detecting spell and how magical formations worked.

She also knew many more runes than Phloria, especially those the Odi used due to her thorough study of their magical discoveries. After seeing the green array being used so many times and how the various missing runes affected its working, she had a pretty good idea of how to make the assault stop.

She focused her Disarray spell on a single rune near one of the array's power nodes, triggering a domino effect that the already faltering magical formation wasn't able to bear.

Its structure collapsed, reverting the above tier five spell into an average tier three. When Veiga realized that despite the fact that the God's Will was still standing, its effects had completely disappeared, it was too late.

Lith exploited that opening to Warp in front of her, ripping the sphere from her chest with his left hand and squashing her head like grape with his right hand. Without the God's Will array, there was no need to dodge the life force explosion, so he could breathe a stream of Origin Flames that engulfed the corpse and smothered the detonation.

While the next Odi was still forming, Lith ripped her heart off before hurling a new jet of flames. He kept killing them non-stop, even though he felt that something was wrong.

Invigoration or not, he had never used Origin Flames so many times and his instincts screamed at him to stop. His life force was close to suffering more damage.

"Please, have mercy!" Guuna said when her turn came. "You are killing an entire race. This is genocide."

Lith's reply was to tear her asunder before stepping back to avoid the ensuing explosion. His eyes were blurring and his strength dwindling yet he didn't dare stop his work.

Only the Odi could actually see that as more of them died, the eyes in the room converged into a single point until they assumed a physical form that got closer and closer until they could feel its breath down their necks.

The black hands had disappeared once the spirits of the dead had been dispelled by the God's Will array but now Mogar's consciousness had coalesced to be ready to take her prize, leaving only the darkness originating from Lith behind.

Each of their forced rebirths drained more mana from the Reactor until nothing remained. Without its nourishment, the lump of flesh in front of Lith stopped squirming as time finally moved forward and demanded its toll from the Odi.

Their collective body withered and aged until they all turned into dust.

Only then did Mogar disappear. Finally its mistake had been mended and over time, from all that death life would blossom again. Along with the planet's consciousness both the silver and the black pillar disappeared, leaving Lith back into his human form.

"Well, that was interesting." Salaark said. "I'd say it was worth the trip.

"Really? I think the fight was really good as well, but from a battle crazed warrior like you I was expecting a lot of criticism about that poor kid." Tyris said. "Also, the only effective part of the Odi's plan was managing to hide themselves from us. Reactor or not, they wouldn't have stood a chance."

"I'm not talking about the fight, even though I have to admit it was pretty decent. I was referring to the anomaly's companion speaking with Mogar. It rarely speaks to non Guardians. By the way, what do you think the two pillars mean?" She asked while looking at Leegaain.

"It's a good sign. The first time the anomaly underwent a tribulation, the pillar was black, like that of an Abomination. Now there's also a silver one, which probably depends on the fact that he's not technically a beast and we've never seen the pillar related to humans.

"I think the two pillars mean that his nature is getting more stable, no more lost in between species but giving birth to a race of his own." Leegaain replied.

"It's more than that." Mogar materialized in the middle of its Guardians, appearing to each one of them in the form it had assumed back when they had met the planet's consciousness for the first time.

To Salaark it appeared as a blood-stained beast, to Tyris like a pregnant woman, and to Leegaain as the World Tree.

"Both hybrids are conflicted about their nature and are troubled to accept the changes they are still undergoing. Yet while the female is driven by her feelings and hindered by her memory loss, the male is almost a lost cause.

"He keeps living in the past, carrying a burden that drags him down no matter what choice he makes. That's why he still carries the mark of Abominations."

#### Chapter 729 One Shall Stand Part 1

"At the same time, the male hybrid fights for his future. It allows him to move forward and accept the change, rather than trying to foolishly bring back a forever lost past. It'll be interesting to see which side he'll choose, if he ever makes his mind." Mogar said.

"Are you saying that he might remain a hybrid?" Salaark asked. "I always thought that hybrid was just a temporary state of the spawn of powerful species before they reach maturity."

"And you were right." Mogar nodded. "But things are different now and so am I. A hybrid is now walking the path towards Guardianhood and even the Abominations I had forsaken as a lost cause have managed to evolve into something new.

"Things are changing pretty fast for my standards, and only time could tell if it's for the better or the worse."

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Meanwhile, inside the Body-Swapping room, Lith was fighting to retain his consciousness. His cracked life force was on the verge of breaking, his stamina was depleted, and all the mana he had left wasn't enough to light a candle.

Lith had fought, ran, and cast spells non-stop for hours now, to the point that Invigoration would bring him back to less than 20% of his max strength. The fight with the Odi, with the necessity to constantly keep the Skinwalker armor in its boosted state, had drained his energies like never before.

"Are you alright, Lith?" Phloria asked while helping him to lie down on the floor.

'Are you alright, Solus?' Lith was still so scared from almost losing her that he constantly checked on her condition.

'I'm peachy, stop asking me that.' She giggled.

"I'm fine. I just need to sleep for a few hours. A week tops." He replied to Phloria.

"Shit, shit, shit!" Quylla was kneeling right next to him, checking his vitals. "This is really bad. He needs absolute rest. He's this close to further reducing his life span."

She then blew away the nearby pile of dust that once had been the lost Odi race and imprinted Ellkas' dimensional ring, taking back all of her stuff and Phloria's. Quylla had brought several potions with her, some of which were needed to stabilize the life force of a patient after a Body Sculpting procedure.

She forced Lith to drink a tonic, a stabilizer, and then she used tier four light magic to make sure that his body had the necessary energy to recover from its many wounds. All the damage his wings sustained had been carried to his human form as open cuts on Lith's back.

Lith protested for a second or two before the strain from the healing process and the stress from the fight made him fall asleep. Only once Quylla was certain that both Lith's body and his life force were out of danger did she allow herself to relax.

"We have a lot of catching up to do." She said while throwing a meaningful look at her sister. "You two have a lot of explaining to do, but right now I'm too tired and too happy to care about answers."

She hugged Phloria, enjoying her warmth. While she was working in the Mana Reactor's control room, Quylla had hated herself for abandoning Phloria in the hands of the Odi. She knew that Lith would have done anything to defend her, but to Quylla that wasn't an excuse.

She had no idea what Lith was, but, in her eyes, being a little inhuman was a small price to pay if it meant being powerful enough to protect those she loved. Then, she checked Lith's condition one last time before falling asleep as well.

Even if the red chains had healed the hole in her chest, her stamina was depleted by all the healing she had performed and the life force she had passed to Lith. Taking care of those two Golems had taken quite a toll on her mana as well.

Phloria's physical condition was pretty good thanks to Lith Invigorating her after killing Jiira. She armed herself to the teeth, standing guard in the case that more constructs, magical beasts, or whatever the Odi had left might pop its ugly head up and threaten their lives.

When the metal doors opened, her blade moved so fast that Morok's neck started to bleed even before he managed to notice the wound that the tip of her estoc had opened.

"First your sister kicks me in the nuts so hard that I don't know if I'm still able to have children and now you almost turn me into a kebab? What's wrong with you Ernas?" He asked while pushing the blade away with a finger.

"Have you ever heard of knocking? Not only it's a very polite thing to do, but also prevents others from thinking you're a fucking enemy trying to sneak inside and finish us off." She said.

"Point taken. Can we leave now? I'm sick of this place and I've no idea if there are more Golems left."

Phloria pondered about her options. Normally she would worry about rescuing her soldiers and the Apprentices, but the fact that they had left with no care for her well-being while even Morok had come to help, royally pissed her off.

"We have to wait until their condition stabilizes a bit. Then we get the heck the out of here." That was how long she was willing to wait for her comrades to return. They were all perfectly healthy whereas Lith needed medical attention.

"Do you want me to look around for our runaway friends while you guys rest?" Morok asked.

"No. I can't take on several magical beasts at once or a Flesh Golem and defend them at the same time. I need you here."

"Don't worry, I counted them. If those that attacked us back in the Living Quarters were all of them, there are only two left. If they are smart, they'll keep away from us."

"Quylla and I killed one on our own." Phloria said.

"Even better! Then there's only one left. The chances it attacks us are almost... Shit!" His optimism died as the metal door opened again, letting the last Golem in.

Solus was very tired but she was incapable of sleeping outside of her tower, so she was watching and hearing everything in the room.

'Maybe Lith is right. Maybe jinxing stuff really is possible.' She thought.

Yet the construct moved slowly, its arms raised in the air and its power core was exposed, protruding from its stone shell. Now that every single Odi was dead, the imprint on the slave runes carved into its life force had disappeared.

It was now free to do whatever it wanted as long as it didn't clash with its protocols, like self-harming. Seeing the pain and anguish in the eyes of the man grafted to the construct, Phloria's hand hesitated.

Killing out of mercy was different from doing it out of self-defense.

"Please, I n..." The creature attempted to say while using sheer willpower to hold back its screams of pain.

Morok had no such problems. He had seen enough Golems for a lifetime and couldn't wait to retire. His hammers smashed the power core, putting the creature out of its misery.

"He was trying to say something!" Phloria said.

"Then it should've talked faster. I'm not putting at risk the last Royal Forgemaster... I mean, my precious friends for a dead man walking." Morok hoped that Phloria wouldn't notice the greed with which he was staring at the silver wand in her pocket.

## Chapter 730 One Shall Stand Part 2

By the time Lith woke up, all members of the expedition had returned. They had mustered the courage to check the outcome of the battle only after they had realized that they had no way to open the closed doors.

Quylla returned them their items from Ellkas's dimensional amulet and Phloria left took Morok with her to explore what remained of the room Gaakhu was still alive, and she couldn't afford to leave their back exposed to the alleged traitorous mage.

She didn't have to search for long since the missing Professor's corpse was waiting for them in the next room. No one would even know that just like the Odi, their slave seal on their victim's life force required the Mana Reactor to work.

The moment the device had run out of power the spells engraved in Gaakhu's life force had consumed her life in the attempt to prolong their existence. Phloria stored the corpse in her dimensional amulet. Traitor or not she didn't deserve to be left there to rot.

After Quylla checked Lith's condition, Morok Warped them all to the Tek's breeding facility and Phloria activated the dimensional runes until she found one that led to a safe corridor.

No one had any desire to walk until they found a way back to the surface, so after Phloria marked the rune on the outside so that Royal Forgemaster could spot it and easily get access to Kulah's lower floors, they used earth magic to dig their way out.

From that point, returning home was easy. As soon as the army could pinpoint their communication amulets again, Commander Berion sent a rescue team to their position.

Less than an hour later, the members of the expedition had said their goodbyes and had been sent to their homes.

Lith was brought to the Ernas household since Quylla refused to let him go anywhere until she was certain that his life force was stable, his life span was unaffected by the strain of fighting a literal one-man army of Odi, and she hadn't got some answers from him.

Kamila was overjoyed from seeing him and appalled by his condition.

"Good gods, you look terrible." She said while looking at his pale face and battered body. Even though Lith had eaten non-stop since he had regained his consciousness, to reattach his arm and heal all of his wounds had made him lose a few kilograms.

"I missed you too, babe." He said, holding her tight for a few seconds before giving her a passionate kiss. After feeling so close to death for so long, he needed to feel alive again.

"Stop right there!" Quylla separated them. "No action, of any kind is allowed to you until you have recovered. You're too weak for anything more 'romantic' than a hug. Healer's orders."

"Can we at least eat together? We both need to get some weight back." Lith asked, prompting Phloria's stomach to rumble in agreement. She had been too tense to eat properly after escaping from Kulah.

The three of them told their story in turns during the late dinner they consumed with Orion and Jirni, soon joined by Lith's family that wanted to see him as soon as the Jirni informed them of his condition.

Later, when Kamila and Lith were cuddling in their bed, Lith couldn't stop thinking that the Ernas had accommodated him in the very same room where years ago he had spent his first night with Phloria on purpose.

Sharing that bed with another woman was really awkward for him.

"How is Zinya doing?" He asked, trying to find a way to introduce the topic he really cared about. During the last few weeks, Lith had shared so much with Phloria, and now even Quylla knew part of his secret.

Yet Kamila, the most important woman in his life, was still completely in the dark. He would have lost her at the hands of Fallmug if not for Jirni, but due to the distance separating them and the countless impending threats at the time, he had failed to realize the real meaning of such an event.

After almost losing Solus, after finally holding Kamila between his arms, looking at her pale and gaunt skin, he now understood how fragile human life was.

"She's doing pretty well. Fallmug's death was a huge shock for her, but I think that having her children back made her too happy to waste even a moment of her time grieving.

"She also received all of his possessions as compensation from the abuses Fallmug inflicted upon her over the years. Between Vastor's testimony and Fallmug's attempt on my life, the judge had no qualms imposing the maximum sentence."

"Is she still at my parents' home or has she gone back to her house?"

"Are you kidding? Neither Zinya nor her children want to step foot again in that horrid place. She's selling the house and everything within it to get a fresh start. Zinya has moved to Lutia now, to stay as far away as possible from Fallmug's family and our own."

"What? Where?" Lith asked. The implications of that piece of news startled him a bit.

"She's bought a house near yours, so our families are neighbors now." Kamila blushed a little, but hid her embarrassment by burying her face in his shoulder. "Your parents did a lot for her and she has fallen in love with the warm climate of the south.

"She can now afford a tutor for both herself and the kids to get them homeschooled. They've been apart for so long that she wants to make up for the lost time and give them the freedom they never experienced.

"Their grandparents weren't as harsh as Fallmug was, but so far their childhood has been reduced solely to fear and duty. They deserve to know happiness as well as their mother.

"It's all thanks to you, you know? First, you gave her sight, and then you gave Zinya her life back." Kamila snuggled up to Lith, searching for his embrace.

"Nope, it was all thanks to you, Kami. It was you who never stopped fighting for her, even at the cost of your personal safety. By the way, there's something I'd like to tell you..."

"Is this about me losing too much weight? Do I really look that bad?" She asked. Embarrassment was the only thing that gave a bit of color to her face.

"No, but actually yes. I mean, you're bordering on putting at risk your 'assets'. You can't afford to skip even one meal. The fate of Mogar depends on it!" Lith replied with an overly dramatic tone while checking her goods.

"Stop it." She moaned. "You heard your Healer, you need rest."

"This is no foreplay, just a medical examination that I'm conducting as your personal Healer. We can always call Quylla, if you need a second opinion."

"Pervert! That's not your professional face." She said before giving him a slow, deep kiss.

"Is it important?" She asked, receiving a serious nod in reply.

"Can it wait, please? I've already had too many emotions for today. The only thing I want right now is to enjoy your company and the first happy moment I have since Fallmug's attack."

"It can wait." Lith said. That speech had been on stand-by for so long that a bit more couldn't hurt.



They had both quite a lot of pent up stress and being so close reminded them how lonely they had felt without each other. Yet Quylla's instructions prevented them from doing what they really wanted.