

Supreme M 731

Chapter 731 Gains Part 1

Only Lith's exhaustion saved them from a long, awkward silence. Due to the constant fighting and use of Invigoration, he had lost all of his body fat along with part of his bone and muscle density.

Lith fell asleep the moment he closed his eyes to sniff Kamila's hair, giving his metabolism the opportunity to fix all the damages he had sustained.

Thanks to all the nutrients he had ingested during dinner and Lith's ability to assimilate world energy, his body was rebuilt from its foundations, pushing the impurities within it away from the new tissues and closer to his mana core.

Lith spent the next two days doing nothing but eating, sleeping, and using Accumulation. His enhanced metabolism sped up his recovery, making him regain weight at an astounding rate, but that came with a price.

Healing and evolving required a huge amount of energy that Lith decided to take only through conventional means. His choice was based not only on the fact that his recovery speed was already unnatural, but also because in his condition, using Invigoration would do him more harm than good.

Despite all of Quylla's and Lith's treatments, his life force was still unstable. Forcefully injecting a strength that his body might not have been able to handle yet was as risky as it was pointless.

Aside from the headaches Lith got by standing so close to Kamila and yet being forced to keep his hands in his pockets, there were no threats in the Ernas household. Also, he had noticed his impurities moving and by using Accumulation instead of Invigoration he could exploit that opportunity.

His entire body was being flooded by world energy, rebuilding itself stronger and denser than before. Using Accumulation allowed him to speed up the natural process of moving the impurities towards his core so that he would experience the next breakthrough the moment his body was ready for it.

It was a win-win situation for him which allowed Lith to strengthen both his body and mana core at once. Also, it gave him the time to assess his loot from Kulah. He still had in his pocket dimension Rizo's Eternal Blade, the bead that activated the God's Will array, but more importantly, the books he had found in the lab's safe.

The Ernas Household was one of the most ancient and powerful magical bloodlines of the Griffon Kingdom. Their library could easily compare with that of any academy, covering almost all topics known to mankind.

It also contained several books about lost languages and all the dictionaries Lith needed to make heads or tails of his possessions. Or better, Solus did and he just reaped the fruits of her endeavor.

They were both overjoyed discovering that one of the books was a detailed explanation of the Body-Swapping technique, of which the Life Merging process was just an incredibly hard and mana expensive variation.

'Building the necessary equipment might take a lot of time and resources since I don't recognize half the ingredients listed in here, but this is a great start!' Solus had devoted her whole time since they had gotten back to checking Lith's condition and translating the book about body swapping.

'Agreed, also, we might not even need all of them. The Odi were stuck with tier three magic in all fields but light magic and forgemastering, whereas we can use all tiers of true magic.' For once Lith shared her enthusiasm.

Not even he could find a sour note in such a discovery. Sure, there was no certainty that it would work, nor that they would manage to understand the underlying mechanism of the process, but it was a start. More than they had ever had.

'I'm so happy to have you back Solus.' Lith was brimming with joy like it didn't happen since the day he had healed Tista from her congenital disease. 'When I thought I had lost you, I almost went insane.

'I'm really sorry that while we are here I can't spend more time with you, but isolating myself would arouse even more suspicions than my recovery speed already does.'

'Don't worry, we have all the time in the world, I'm not going anywhere, you big oaf.' Solus mana enveloped Lith's body, while her mind pushed her feelings of joy to the fringes of his mind, in what was the closest thing to a heartfelt hug she could give him.

'By the way, there's something you need to know.' Solus shared with him all of her memories about her encounter with Mogar, the existence of the Guardians, and Lith's alleged role during the tribulations.

'Fuck me sideways.' Was his first reaction. 'I don't like this at all. Do you think that Mogar has manipulated me so far? That all the bullshit that happens to me depends on some kind of cosmic scheme?'

'Honestly, no. I didn't feel any malice from her, and I consider myself an expert in recognizing cold-hearted manipulators.' Solus replied while looking at Lith first and then to Jirni.

She was teaching Kamila about Royal Constables' protocols and revising with her some of the most controversial cases as simulation exercises.

'Mogar also said that it's you who constantly call upon her, not the other way around. I'm more worried about the Guardians. What if they feel threatened and decide to kill you? We don't stand a chance against such powerful creatures.'

'Please, that's fubar paranoia, even by my standards.' Lith replied. 'I doubt that they care about someone as weak as I am, just like I don't stomp all ants I see because they might evolve into something more powerful.

'We must focus on the good news. Mogar didn't call me a monster or an alien, which means that either even this planet doesn't know what I am or that it doesn't care. Also, your out of body experience has finally given us conclusive proof that I was right all along.

'You are human and have a nice C cup.'

If Solus had a body, she would have blushed from head to toe. She had completely forgotten about having checked her body back then and now she had shared all the knowledge she had acquired

about her real form.

'You- How can you focus on my breasts during such a dramatic moment of my life?'

'It's just a memory, we're safe now. Also, cut me some slack. I'm only human, after all.'

"How are you feeling, Lith?" Orion's arrival saved Solus from her predicament. She really didn't want to hear Lith's opinion about her build, especially not in the over-aroused state he was.

"Weak, but aside from that, I feel great. Thanks." Lith was sitting on a bench in the manor's park, located nearby the veranda where Jirni and Kamila were working. After being underground for so many weeks, he really missed the sun.

"I will never be able to thank you enough for saving my little girls, especially Phloria. It was really brave of you to face that monster alone instead of running away once you rescued the rest of the expedition."

"As I already told Jirni, our friendship runs deep. I would never let something happen to them on my watch. By the way, what's the status of the sword?" Lith asked.

"It's coming along nicely, but since I'm really serious about it, it will take some time. I don't think you want something half-baked again."

'What the actual fuck? What kind of monster Orion is if the Gatekeeper was just something he did for fun?' Lith thought.

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"Of course not. After all, you have to compensate me for three Orichalcum Skinwalker armors. You better give it your all, old man." Lith actually said. His smug expression hid his awe at the idea of what Orion could craft for him if he actually went all out.

"Yeah." Instead of mocking Lith back, Orion nodded. He hadn't forgotten how Lith's armors had already saved her daughters plenty of times. Orion would make the best he could without breaking the Kingdom's laws.

Royal Forgemastering techniques could only be employed to craft authorized equipment. Doing otherwise was considered treason.

Lith then decided to strike the iron while it was still hot and exploit Orion's unusual meek attitude. Lith told him about the discoveries about runes he had made during his stay in Kulah, putting the blame for his forbidden knowledge on Neshal and Yondra, while keeping Phloria out of it.

Dead mages told no tales and the Kingdom could not put dead mages to trial.

"I'm really curious about runes. Is it a hidden specialization like those that are taught in the academies? How do I get to learn about it?" Lith asked.

"How the heck did you squeeze so much information from them?" Orion was taken aback by such a request.

"I told you. Kulah was filled with old runes, so they had to explain to me how to operate the dimensional runes and counter the Golems. Also, my Forgemastering analysis spells can detect runes, which made them all the more eager to recruit me for their academies." Lith replied with his usual blend of truth and lies.

"You're a bit too young for this stuff. The Kingdom doesn't accept Forgemasters who don't have a history of loyalty to the Crown. So far, you've been quite useful but no one thinks that you're loyal to no one but yourself." Orion sighed.

"What about Phloria and Quylla? They already have wands and know runes. What's with the double standards?"

"Kid, do you really want to compare a grassroots mage to an ancient household? Do you have any idea how many people owe me favors? I'm not waiting for the moment of my death to collect them.

"Since my daughters are interested in Forgemastering, it's only natural that I do the best that I can for them. Phloria is determined in pursuing her military career, just as Quylla wants to become a teacher for one of the six great academies.

"That's something the Kingdom is willing to bet on, at least with me vouching for them. But you? In a year you'll be out of the military and who knows, maybe even out of the Kingdom. Would you give away state secrets to a rogue mage?" Orion said.

"So, you can't teach me or you just don't want to?" Lith asked.

"Both, but I can at least answer your questions. Runesmithing is just a branch of Forgemastering, just like the Bonding process. As for how you can learn about it, there are only two possible ways.

"Number one, you commit to the Kingdom. Become a permanent military member, an echelon of the Mage Association, get a role in an Academy, whatever works for you and roots you to the Kingdom.

"Number two, marry into a family important enough to give you access to the resources you want. That's another kind of bond that can't be overlooked and works just fine."

"Isn't there at least a third way? Learning from an Emperor Beast or from another rogue mage?" Lith asked.

"Sure, that's not against the law. Good luck finding someone who possesses that kind of knowledge and is willing to give it away for free." Orion sneered at the idea. "Any more questions?"

"None that you're willing to answer to, thanks." Lith stood up and went to the kitchen. He hadn't eaten in almost two hours and his stomach was rumbling.

While eating a T-bone steak with roasted potatoes Lith pondered about what to do with his loot. After a thorough analysis with Invigoration, he had discovered that the magical artifacts were useless to him

They had a safeguard mechanism that would react to the imprint of a non-Odi destroying them, not to mention that the God's Will bead required a mana output that put Silverwing's Hexagram to shame.

The sword was at least covered in runes that Lith could study and its pseudo core was worth replicating.

'What if we trade the God's Will to the Crown in exchange for something?' Lith thought.

'The problem is in exchange for what? If we give it away now, there's nothing we want, whereas if we reveal its existence later, you could be charged with treason. We have only until you give your report to decide.' Solus replied.

Those two days soon became very boring to him. Not being able to practice magic and being forced to rest was something that Lith didn't experience since his childhood.

The only silver lining of that situation was that thanks to Solus using Invigoration on Kamila to speed up her metabolism and send the nutrients to the right places, she was recovering almost as fast as he was.

Quylla examined Lith multiple times a day, to check that his life force hadn't sustained any more permanent damage. She believed that just like Death Vision, Lith's transformation was due to the damage he had received by saving Protector.

That maybe their life forces had interacted, awakening some latent trait belonging to one of Lith's ancestors. It was impossible to think that Raaz wasn't Lith's father. The two men looked too much alike for their resemblance to be just a coincidence.

The truth was that Lith's current condition was due to the abuse of Origin Flames. The powerful technique required to mix a tiny speck of life force with world energy, but no matter how little it was, it would still put strain on the life force of its user.

To fight the Odi, Lith had pushed his body to the limit, resulting in his precarious state.

"You still need to rest, but tomorrow you might be able to do some light exercise." Quylla said at the end of the second day. Lith's life force was stable, but she would like for him to wait at least another full day to let it settle properly.

"Lith, I know it's none of my business, but I have to ask you anyway. What the heck did happen in that cave? What was that thing you became?" Her voice was genuinely worried.

Lith could see from her eyes that she wasn't afraid of him being a monster so much as of being sick. As if his second life force was a disease to cure instead of another mystery in his life.

'I wonder what did I do to deserve such people in my life.' Lith thought.

'You did the right thing for the wrong reasons, but it's paying off anyway. Be careful about what you say to her. You have yet to speak with Kamila. The more people know before she does, the more it will hurt her.' Solus warned him.

"Beats me." Lith honestly replied. He still had no idea what a world tribulation was nor why he was a hybrid even though both his parents were humans. "It started off back when I went to Kandria, but only recently I became able to shapeshift.

"I don't know how to explain it, but I've got two life forces."

"That's impossible." She said after examining him with Scanner again. "There is no such thing as a second life force."

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"Look deeper. The second life force is hidden by the first one, like a faint melody can be easily covered by loud music." Lith said.

"Wait, are you saying that you can hear life forces as well? Gods, that's a relief. I was starting to think it was a sign of insanity." Quylla said with joy, having finally found a kindred spirit.

"What do you mean? I thought that every talented healer could."

"Manohar is the only one who has no problems admitting that he hears life forces and as you know, being like him is not considered a good thing." She chuckled, making a second attempt at Scanner.

"Good gods! This is amazing." Quylla said after finally finding Lith's second life force. "It looks like that of an Emperor Beast, but theirs isn't surrounded by a black sphere, nor do they appear to be battling. I've never seen anything like that before."

Nor she would ever be able to. Scanner required physical contact and usually, those who touched an Abomination wouldn't live to tell the tale.

If the human life force looked like a mix of lego blocks and erector set pieces, while the Emperor Beast life force looked like a burning star, the Abomination's looked like an empty black sphere.

"When exactly did you visit an Emperor Beast?" Lith asked. Even he had been able to make the analogy only after treating Kalla's failed attempt at Lichhood.

"Light magic is something most beasts are terrible at, so when they get injured, the Lord of the forest sends them to the academy to be treated. I always wanted to understand why magical beasts can use a different kind of magic and I think the answer lies in the difference between our life forces. They are nothing alike."

'That's because we are two different species.' Lith thought. 'The difference lies in the beast being born partially Awakened but limited to two elements, whereas we humans can always use all elements but we have no innate affinity to them.' Lith thought.

"Your condition is truly unique. Your two life forces complement and strengthen each other. This probably explains why you always recover so fast." Quylla said over his musings.

"Meaning?"

"Whenever you take damage, your human life force tries to fix it, like it happens to every other person. What makes you special, is that your other life force is capable of helping and nurturing the former by sharing part of its energy.

"Which means that, at least in theory, not only could it lead to fixing your human life force over time, but also that you might actually live as long as a normal human being. Twice the life force, twice the life span." She said.

"I'm sorry, Quylla, but I think that's not the case. My life forces are intertwined, when one runs out the other will die as well. Also, if you take a good look at them, they share the same energy.

"I haven't got double the amount of life force, it just flows from one form to another. Otherwise the crack I sustained while saving Protector would have already healed." Lith sighed.

Quylla used Scanner on him again, this time focusing less on the marvel that a patient with two life forces was and more on what the implications of such a thing could be.

"You're right. It's like two bottles sharing the same liquid. Yet it still makes no sense." Quylla was suddenly at a loss for words. She loved Lith like a brother, yet the fear of the unknown started to seep inside her heart.

If the second life force wasn't a disease, nor a consequence of saving Protector, then it opened the question about what Lith was. At first, the fear of dying at the hand of the Odi hadn't left any space for doubts and then, once they returned home, her affection for him had trampled her caution.

But now that that Quylla was forced to face the bits of truth that Lith could offer her, she didn't know how to react. On one hand, she was supposed to be scared of the unknown being sitting in front of her, but on the other hand Lith was always Lith.

His strange abilities didn't change the fact that he was her first crush, or all the time they had spent together, or the several times he had risked his life to help her, just like against the Odi.

Yet she couldn't just shrug everything off as if nothing had changed.

"Do your parents know?" She asked.

"No. It's not the kind of thing that you can tell lightly. Hi, Mom. Hi, Dad. Do you remember when Orpal said all the time that I'm a monster? Well, guess what, he was right." Lith replied with a sad smile.

"That's not true, you're not a monster!" Quylla blurted out before she could think about her words, surprising even herself.

"You're very kind, but we both know that most people would put me on a lab table just because I'm stronger than the average Joe, let alone if they knew I'm whatever this is." Lith waved at his body.

"Does Phloria know?"

"Of course she does. I would have never dragged her in a relationship without letting her know the mess she was walking into."

"It was really brave of you. Of both of you, I mean." Quylla wondered if she would be able to accept as a boyfriend a man-something hybrid.

"Nah, it wasn't bravery, at least on my part. Once I realized that Phloria was falling in love with me, that things were getting serious, I revealed myself to her in the hope to scare her away."

"Wow, that's a dick move if I ever heard one. Almost as bad as breaking up with her with a letter." Quylla said with a chuckle. For a monster, Lith was pretty damn human.

"You're right, but you know me, dick move is my middle name. She deserved someone better, someone normal. Yet she accepted me anyway and kept my secret for all this time. You have no idea how much it meant to me."

"Were you planning to tell me, sooner or later?"

"No. I didn't want to risk one of my only four human friends. Beside you, Phloria, Friya, and Selia, I've no one. I didn't tell my parents for the same reason, because I'm afraid of their reaction." Lith said.

"So, no one beside me and Phloria knows?" Quylla didn't know whether to be scared or flattered by the burden she now had to carry.

"Protector knows about it too. As I told you, I've no control over the transformation. It also happened when I was trying to save his life, otherwise I don't think I would've told him either. Why do you think I chose to work alone as a Ranger?"

"It's to stay away from people as much as I can."

"What about Kamila?" Curiosity was getting the better of Quylla.

"She doesn't know it, yet. But since we're almost together for a year, I think it's time to break up or move up. With all that has happened between us, I can't let her delude herself or make plans for the future without knowing anything about the real me."

Lith had no intention of making Protector's mistakes nor to play with Kamila's feelings. He had never planned to grow so fond of her and the idea of losing her hurt like hell, but hiding the truth would have only delayed the inevitable.

Chapter 734 True Friend Part 2

Quylla was about to rebuke that Kamila knew a lot about the real him, but this time her mind was as quick as her mouth and she managed to stop herself.

What she was about to say would have been hypocritical since Quylla knew Lith even better than Kamila did and yet she had no idea how those revelations had changed their relationship.

"Can I talk about it with Phloria?" She asked.

"Yes, but with no one else. There are too many lives at stakes."

"You have my word that I'll keep your secret, no matter what I decide. Before giving you my answer, I need some time to think."

Lith walked out of the room, leaving Quylla alone with her thoughts. For the first time in her life, magic had no answers to offer her, only more questions.

'That went well.' Solus thought, trying to cheer Lith up.

'Not really. First, she treated me as if I was one of her patients, then as a freak of nature, and lastly, she was scared. The worst thing is that I think that Kamila will go straight to the third step. Maybe I should just break up with her.' Lith replied, ignoring the sting that such words caused to his heart.

'That would be wrong for both of you, but especially for you. It would mean that you can't have a relationship with anyone but Phloria, or well, me, if I ever get a body.' It took Solus sheer willpower to say that without stuttering.

Contrary to her expectations, instead of taking it as a joke, Lith nodded. Kamila and Jirni were out working, so he informed Phloria of the most recent developments before starting to study and organize everything he knew about Runesmithing.

"I'm sorry it came to this." Phloria said. "I really hoped you would tell her of your free will instead of being forced to. Don't worry, I'm sure everything will be alright."

Yet her words lacked conviction. Lith didn't reply and kept staring outside the window of her room while using Accumulation. Even the silences between them were never awkward, they could both tell what the other was thinking just by looking at their face.

"By the way, since when do you have horns, tail, and all that stuff?" Phloria asked.

Lith told her the little he knew about world tribulations, about how it started in Kandria and how he lacked the ability to control the transformation in such circumstances.

He even assumed his hybrid form to show her the differences between his normal and tribulation state.

"Wait! Turn around." She said.

"What's the matter?"

"Your eyes are not yellow anymore and there's a blue one opened on your forehead."

"Yeah, it opened while we were in Kulah's underground facility, but it does nothing, just like the others." Lith shared with her the details about his sudden ability to understand the Golems' language and the messages he had received.

Thanks to Solus's talk with Mogar, now Lith knew that somehow even his understanding of the Odi language was related to his tribulation, just like the eyes and the hands erupting from the shadows whenever he was very upset.

The eyes were Mogar's consciousness while the hands were the manifestation of the dead spirits around him. It wasn't only his life force to be damaged, but his souls as well, making it a natural receptacle for necromantic energies.

"I don't think it's so simple." Phloria said.

"And why is that?" Lith had already reverted for a while in his human form.

"Because your left eye is still black and your right eye is still red. That has never happened before. Your hybrid eyes have always been yellow and the human eyes brown."

Lith conjured a mirror made of ice, discovering that Phloria was right. A simple thought and everything went back to normal.

"Well, that's new. At least I can change them at will." Lith switched them several times from red to black and then to blue, testing the limits and the speed of his control.

"The question is what can they do?" She asked.

"Just what I fucking needed right now! Another goddamn change I've no control over!" Lith stood up abruptly looking for something to destroy to vent his rage until he remembered that he was in Phloria's room, not his own.

"I know that there's nothing I can do or say that can make you feel better, but please, remember that if you ever need someone to talk with, you can always count on me." Phloria held his hands until the rage and frustration that made them tremble faded.

She didn't try and reassure him about how Quylla would react, nor attempted to ease his worries with empty words. Phloria just hugged him, holding Lith tight to let him know the only certainty that she could offer to him.

That he wasn't alone.

No matter the details of his physical appearance in any of his forms. To her, Lith was an irreplaceable person.

After witnessing all the pain and anger he bottled up that only his hybrid form could express, after seeing him put his life on the line for her over and over against the Odi, she wasn't scared of him one bit, she only loved him more.

The two of them might not even belong to the same race, they weren't together anymore, yet Lith was always there for her, no matter the cost. And not because he wanted her money or lusted after her body, he simply cared for her.

Phloria was only 21 years old, yet she already knew how rare finding such a person was, how precious such a blessing was.

Lith returned her embrace, wondering once again if he hadn't made a horrible mistake not fighting for her back when Phloria had proposed to break up. Oddly, for the first time in years, she asked herself the same question.

'Maybe Lith was the right person, but back then I was too young to really understand the implications of his secret and he was too afraid to open up to anyone. We met in the wrong moment of our lives.' She thought.

"Thank you, Phloria. Now I'm sorry, but I feel very tired."

Back in his room, Lith used Accumulation non-stop to assess the condition of his body.

'Did you notice that every time you use a lot of mana or receive serious injuries the process of accumulating the impurities in your body speeds up?' Solus pointed out, trying to take Lith's mind off his predicament.

It was hard to decide what was worse between the risk of losing one of his few life long friends and being dumped by his girlfriend not because of something he did, but just for who he was.

'Yeah. I think that it depends on the massive mana flow coupled with the complete body reconstruction I have endured. It happened almost the same way after Balkor's attack' Lith replied.

'I'm nearing the breakthrough, but I can't risk it happening while I'm at the Ernas manor nor in front of Kamila. That would mean opening up not because I want to, but because I have to once again.'

Lith's life force appeared to have returned to its peak condition, but he decided to follow Quylla's advice and take another day of rest, just to be sure. A failed breakthrough meant death or becoming an Abomination.

Chapter 735 Prodigal Daughter Part 1

To make matters worse, each breakthrough was harder than the previous ones and since it was the first body refinement Lith would experience with a blue core, he couldn't take any chance, not with his life force already cracked.

'I was thinking about Yondra's words, she actually left us a big clue about Runesmithing that we have overlooked so far.' Lith thought.

'She used our Skinwalker armor as an example, saying that after the Bonding process, the Orichalcum's mana flow becomes too vigorous to be Forgemastered. Which means that runes have to be applied before Bonding the material with mana crystals.'

Lith took the sword and the booklet he had acquired from Huryole out of his pocket dimension.

'While we wait for Orion to fulfill his part of our bargain, we can start experimenting on the swords. We have two blueprints, after all, and we can even try out the patterns in the book.'

'Well, yeah, but those are all old-ass runes. I mean, the Odi's Adamant sword is much better than the teaching prop we found, but its runes are even older. The materials needed for the experiments are cheap, but I'm afraid we might just waste our time and learn outdated methods.' Solus replied.

'True, but we can try and experiment with the new runes we know and see how different the outcome is. Orion isn't wrong when he says that it's unlikely for anyone to accept us as a disciple.

'I doubt that the Hydra will take us in with no strings attached, so the more we know before we meet her, the more knowledge we can squeeze from her even just by a few hints.'

Lith spent the rest of the time until lunch in the Ernas library, consulting tomes about Wardens. Arrays were the only form of magic that used runes and by comparing old and new arrays, Lith could expand the number of runes from the booklet that he was able to convert into modern magic.

Jirni and Kamila returned to dine with the family, but since they were following a delicate case, they left soon after, leaving Lith alone with his worries. He would have loved to sneak out and go back to his tower, but each time he watched at his impurities nearing to his core, he was reminded of how little time he had left for a complete recovery.

There wasn't much he could do without magic and on top of that, Quylla had also forbidden all kinds of physical exercise to him.

"This is going to be the longest day of my life." He groaned.

'That's not true! You can spend your time with Phoria and Quylla, or you could call Friya. I mean, how long has it been since the four of you have done something together?' Solus objected.

"Good gods, Lith, you look wonderful." Friya said. "When Quylla told me that you were on the brink of death, I returned home as fast as I could, but you look damn dandy."

Lith had already regained the lost weight, but his body had rebuilt itself better than before, with the result of him being less lean and more muscular than before. He suspected that Quylla was right and that his two life forces somehow communicated.

His muscles weren't much thicker than before, but way denser, like they were in his hybrid form to not get hindered by the scales.

"Friya, it's so good to see you. Not only because you're even hotter than I remembered you to be, but also because I'm bored as heck!"

"Are you coming on to me?" She chuckled. "Because the compliment sounded a little too honest for our usual role play. Has something bad happened between you and Kamila?"

"Yes, it did. Because of my wounds, we can only hug and hold hands despite the fact we haven't see each other for almost a month. Sorry if I made you uncomfortable." Lith preferred not hugging her this time, limiting their greeting to a handshake.

He already had enough headaches with Kamila.

"Well, let's go get my sisters. The four of us have a lot of catching up to do."

Free country of Lamarth. Beyond the eastern borders of the Gorgon Empire.

"I never dared to dream that this day would come true!" Bytra, the Raiju-goblin hybrid Abomination said.

Now that she had moved in the Master's Headquarters and had been bestowed the Rank of Master Forgemaster, she had spent the last month practicing the skills that back in the day had earned her the title of Ruler of the Flames.

It was the greatest honor that an Awakened Forgemaster could receive and there could only be one per generation. Yet since now Bytra was an immortal Eldritch Abomination, she would have all the time she needed to reach perfection.

There were so many things she had forgotten and even more still clouded in her memory. Even after consuming her original self, her hybrid body and mind had yet to stabilize completely.

Still, even though the Master had no clue about runes or how to smelt very powerful metals, there was very little that their network of human and Abomination connections couldn't provide Bytra.

After countless explosions and having wasted almost a ton of precious black iron, Bytra had finally completed her first Orichalcum weapon.

"That makes the two of us." Xenagrosh didn't share one bit of Bytra's enthusiasm and neither did her voice. Xenagrosh had spent the past month only eating and training in using Origin Flames under Bytra's insistence.

According to their resident Forgemaster, Origin Flames could be used to refine any kind of material in its purest form, granting to enchanted items made out of such materials astounding properties.

The Master and Xenagrosh had kept this knowledge for themselves and had prohibited Bytra from sharing it with anyone else. Even to the eldest Abominations such secret was either unknown or well kept.

The Master had ordered Xenagrosh to help her newfound "sister" to the best of her abilities since soon things would take a turn for the worse.

The Eldritchs who didn't take part in the monster hybridization project were envious of those like Xenagrosh who had reached the next level while they were still stuck in their old form and all the other plans of the Master had yet to bear any fruit.

Also, they were scared of the clones that had defeated their originals and were now hidden in plain sight, maybe plotting to feed on their weaker kin. The Master was aware that only power could keep such a rough bunch in line and powerful artifacts would help them reaffirm their authority.

Xenagrosh had always used Origin Flames only as a means of attack against those dumb or slow enough to stand in her way. They were just flames, after all, hence easy to dodge compared to a spell that she could freely move around at will.

Bytra had taught her that just like spells, Origin Flames could be controlled, in order to not have them destroy so much as purify. The problem was that Xenagrosh had no idea how to do it and Bytra had only vague explanations to offer Xenagrosh based on her memories.

Xenagrosh had destroyed a mountain worth of ores before understanding what she was supposed to do and had almost died in the process. Using too many Origin Flames in a short amount of time had weakened her life force to the point of almost breaking it.

Chapter 736 Prodigal Daughter Part 2

Xenagrosh had been horrified discovering that performing just one more breath would have crippled her troll half, forcing her back to be just an Eldritch Abomination in a matter of a few decades.

The Master had used all of their skills to save her and forbidden her to use them in such a mindless way. Once she had recovered, Xenagrosh had then being forced to learn tier five light magic to keep her own life force in check.

After that, she had spent all of her time as Bytra's furnace, gaining the Raiju's eternal gratitude and the mockery of her peers. For a several centuries-old being feeling ignorant first, falling ill, and finally being a laughingstock was far from a pleasant experience.

"Is it good?" Xenagrosh asked.

"You tell me." Bytra handed her what looked like a set of dragon claws. "I made it so that you can use it in both your human and dragon form. They will grow in size with you."

The silvery glove had six purple magic crystals embedded on its surface, one for each finger and one in the middle of its backhand. It shone so brightly that Xenagrosh could hardly believe it wasn't made out of pure Adamant.

As soon as she imprinted it with her mana, she could feel its several enchantments pulsing at her fingertips.

"Father of Dragons! This thing is better than my prized Adamant blade." Xenagrosh said.

"That's the best compliment I could hope for." Bytra giggled like a little girl. "Where did you find it?"

"I bought it from a Forgemaster for the price of a small kingdom 800 years ago."

"Well, then it's normal." Bytra said, turning gloom. "Back then runes were highly inefficient and if the Adamant hadn't been purified, it's likely to be crap."

Xenagrosh wasn't stingy, but hearing her most powerful weapon, with which she had slain countless Awakened ones being called a piece of crap hurt her wallet deeply.

"I have a question. Even though I've recovered most of my abilities, I still can't use Invigoration, Accumulation, and not even Life Vision. Is there something wrong with me?" Bytra asked.

"No, I'm in your same boat and I've got no idea how to fix this." Xenagrosh sighed. "How long before you can work on good stuff like Adamant and Davross?"

"Depends. How long before you can purify them instead of just melting them or even worse vaporize them?" Bytra replied.

"Oh, fuck me sideways! Again with this crap? Seriously, sister, we need a break."

"But the Master said..." Bytra wasn't really interested in following orders, but after longing her Forge for centuries, she would use any excuse to practice her art.

"The Master can go fuck themselves for all I care. You keep crafting weapons for us hybrids, we must nip the rebellion in the bud. I'll search for a solution to our common problem." Xenagrosh was tired of studying and learning about her new abilities.

The problem of having evolved was that she knew nothing about her new self, making her feel like a child again. With it, fear had returned. Back when Xenagrosh was just a Wyrmling, she had given up on her dragon half to avoid the hassle it implied.

Then, when she had later tried to achieve a purple core, she had failed miserably and had become an Abomination. Xenagrosh was afraid because the past she had run away from for centuries was finally catching up with her.

'I'm a fucking dragon again and I've to study again. This doesn't bode well. What if I fail? I've always failed in everything I did. The Master considers us Eldritchs to be the top of the evolutionary scale, but to me, we're just the kings of losers.

'We've lost our bodies, our Awakened powers, and even Mogar has turned its back to us. I hoped to never have to do this again, but if there's something that I've learned after spending decades with the Master, is that there's nothing wrong with asking for help.'

Xenagrosh flew for hundreds of kilometers until she found a small island in the middle of the ocean. Then, she cast all of her best arrays to prevent anyone from following her signal or pinpointing her position.

Only then did she take her communication amulet out of her omni pocket. What Lith called 'pocket dimension' was referred to by other creatures as an omni pocket.

Unlike common dimensional items, once someone had imprinted an omni pocket, they could access their storage dimension even though they didn't carry it on them. It made their owner unpredictable and usually only ancient, powerful beings like Xenagrosh had one.

They were so rare that even Xenagrosh had not found nor bought her own. It was her coming of age gift, the only thing she had left from her past together with her amulet. Her eyes became watery when she saw that only a handful of communication runes were left.

Her mother's had disappeared first, then her friends, and even some of her siblings. She hadn't used her human amulet for centuries, too many memories were linked to it.

She activated the first rune she had ever imprinted it with, which belonged to the one who had gifted the amulet to her, along with her omni pocket.

"Hi, Dad. It's me, Zoreth. How are you?"

"Sugar plum, you're alive! You've no idea how many times I've attempted to call you over the years." Leegaain said. He hadn't heard from Zoreth in a long, long time. She was one of his firstborn and Leegaain considered her to be one of the biggest failures of his life.

She had rejected his legacy first and then his teachings, walking a path of self-destruction before breaking her mother's heart.

Commander Berion's Office, City of Belius.

"I've already listened to the reports of all the survivors of Kulah, at least to those which make any sense, except for yours, the Ernas's, and Ranger Verhen's." Commander Berion said, drumming his fingers over his desk.

He was a man in his early thirties, standing 1.8 (5'11") meters tall with pitch-black hair and eyes. His pale blue uniform could barely contain his muscular body, giving to each of his movements an impression of strength.

In front of him sat Morok Eari, the Ranger ranked first among the veterans and ready to get honorably discharged to return to civilian life.

"You are the one who fought by Verhen's side the most and you're the only one who didn't get himself captured or killed. Hence your report is of the utmost importance for both evaluating Ranger Verhen's worth and the danger that Kulah posed to the Kingdom."

Morok told Berion his side of the story. Omitting parts like his nature as a Tyrant Emperor Beast, Lith's secrets, and Quylla getting the drop on him by kicking him in the nuts, of course.

"My final conclusions are as follows: all the Odi ruins should be classified as danger zones. We got this close to having those madmen infiltrate our country and I doubt that anyone would have noticed until it was too late.

"As for Ranger Verhen, the earlier reports about him greatly underestimate his talents. I've seen him destroying Golems stronger than anything I've ever faced before as if he was squatting flies.

"Don't get me wrong, he bleeds just like you and me, plus a well-planned ambush can put him in a corner. Yet give him one bit of advantage and he'll turn it into a kilometer. Also, at the cost of sounding repetitive, Golems!"

Chapter 737 Menadions Story Part 1

"Those things are the apex of enchanted automated weaponry, with no weak points nor vitals that one might exploit. Usually it takes a squad of well-trained people to take one down and Kulah was all made of metal, making it impossible to employ the standard anti-construct strategies.

"Consider that even though I destroyed as many Golems as he did..." Morok allowed himself some poetic license to keep their secrets safe. "... I still had my weapons, whereas he lost his blade at the beginning of the mission.

"That's the bit of good news. The bad news is that I don't think that you will be able to keep him in the military. He's too good for you. I've seen his Forgemastered creations at work and they are masterpieces."

"I believe that Captain and Mage Ernas wouldn't be alive without the enchanted armor that he gave them and his glove weapon is simply amazing. The Professors bickered like children to recruit him, so I doubt that the measly pay of an officer can be of any interest to him." Morok said.

"We're aware of his talents as a Forgemaster, but normally soldiers exchange their merits for enchanted weapons. The army is the only organization that can provide high level equipment to its members based on their performance." Berion said.

"Well, there's nothing 'normal' about people like him or me." Morok shook his head.

"Your items have no allure for him. Even Royal Forgemasters admire his pieces. Money is pointless since he can just sell a couple of his prototypes and make more in one hour than you pay him in a year.

"Remember my words, if you don't feed the bird, then don't cry when it spreads its wings and leaves the nest. One last thing, I highly recommend Quylla Ernas for whatever position she applies to.

"She has opened Kulah's door, killed more Golems than anyone else, besides Lith of course, and if she didn't deactivate the Reactor, we wouldn't be having this conversation."

"Do you really hold her in such high regard?" Berion asked. It was uncharacteristic of Ranger Eari to think about the best interest of the Kingdom rather than his own. It was one of the reasons why they weren't fighting to keep him in their ranks.

He created almost as many problems as he resolved.

"I sure do. She's a small but fiery woman. I think I'm in love." He said before leaving the Commander's office, who quickly alerted Lady Ernas of the calamity that could reach her home at any moment.

Ernas Mansion

While hearing the story of their adventure in Kulah, Friya didn't miss how things seemed to be kind of awkward between Lith and Quylla, whereas Phloria seemed to be a little too relaxed for someone who had just experienced the first major failure of her career.

All the Professors and some of their Assistants had died under her command. Odi or not, the six great academies were bound to not let it slide, with the risk of Phloria being punished or even demoted.

Even at the end of the story, after they told her how they had combined their strength to wipe the Odi off the face of Mogar, Quylla seemed to be more embarrassed than relieved to have survived such dramatic events.

Quylla had never lied to Friya before, so keeping Lith's secret was already a burden to her. Plus, she had yet to make up her mind about their relationship. Being together in the same room forced her to confront her conflicting feelings, making her only wish to be out of there as soon as possible.

"I'm sorry, but I've to say this. Quylla, why are you squirming on your seat like that? Did you make another pass on Lith and he rejected you or did you catch them making out?" Friya said while pointing at Lith and Phloria.

"What? No! Why do you think I am the one who got rejected? Couldn't it be the other way around?" Quylla became beet red from embarrassment, while Lith and Phloria just chuckled at the idea.

"Because you haven't looked so nervous since you had the hots for him, while Lith seems to be worried about you. So I thought that maybe, after spending so much time together in a life or death situation, something spicy might have happened."

Quylla's reaction was interesting, but since the other two didn't show a shred of guilt, especially Phloria, Friya understood that her guesses were way off the mark. Since no one seemed to be willing to talk about the elephant in the room, she decided to not pry further.

"So, what are you going to do now? I suppose that you two will ask for a leave, while you, Quylla, will apply for some time off."

"Yes, I hope so." Lith replied. "I have plans with Kamila to make up for the lost time and talk about some important matters. Also, I have a lot of studying to do." Lith couldn't wait to start practicing Runesmithing and continue his translation of the Body Swapping book.

Joining the army was finally paying off. He had found both a way to increase the prowess of his creations and maybe the clues for a definitive solution to his reincarnation process.

From the little he had managed to understand, body-swapping was as hard as achieving Lichhood, but the process had been standardized, making things much less risky compared to undeath.

The key differences were that Lith had to build the apparatus and find a replacement body.

Its biggest downside was that he would lose his mana core, his body, and even his muscle memory. Yet since he would retain all of his artifacts and knowledge, plus having an Awakened human a very long life, he wouldn't be forced to repeat the process often.

'Who knows, maybe I'll find a way to transplant the rest as well. After all, the Odi weren't Awakened and I can rely on modern magic, not their ancient crap. If I can get my hands on real Runesmithing, the sky's the limit.' He thought.

"I honestly don't know what will happen to my career." Phloria sighed. "So I think I'll use this time to get serious about Forgemastering and maybe start learning a bit of Warden magic. I don't want to ever feel so helpless just because of one goddamn array."

"And I'm going to study Battle Mage spells first and then work on War Mage. I'm tired of being completely useless in combat." Quylla said.

"Boring!" Friya replied. "All you can think about is studying. It feels like we're back at the academy. I'm currently unemployed, so if the three of you have nothing better to do, then we could do something together."

She had expected for her proposal to be enthusiastically accepted, yet its reception was lukewarm at best. Lith had a lot on his plate between Kamila, Selia, and Faluel the Hydra.

Quylla didn't feel like spending more time with Lith until she had sorted out her feelings whereas Phloria really needed a break. She had never believed the rumors about Lith being bad luck, but she really wanted some peace and quiet.

"Okay, fine, oh grumpy ones! Let's ruin our reunion by moping around and holing ourselves up in our respective labs. After all, we just have to wait another four years for the stars to align again and have some spare time together."

Lith remembered Yondra's dying words about her regrets for always having put her work first, leaving her no time to truly appreciate everything she had.

Chapter 738 Menadions Story Part 2

To make matters worse, he had returned the Professors' bodies to the army, but he still had to deliver Yondra's final message to her family.

'Solus, do you want in or do you prefer that I leave you in Lutia? I'm sure you'd like to spend some time in your body with Tista and Nyka.' Lith thought.

'Until you have a proper weapon again, I'm not going anywhere.' Solus replied. 'Just have her pick something easy.'

"I can agree with your idea with the following conditions. First, we make camp somewhere near a Gate, so if bad luck follows our tail we can always ask for reinforcements.

"Second, let's do something fun rather than dangerous. Third, and I mean no offense, but I'm not single. I'd really like to spend some time with my girlfriend, especially after risking my life on a daily basis for a month. So nothing too long."

"Oh, my! You groomed mister 'mean eyes' into a true gentleman, dear sister." Friya chuckled. "I'll accept all of your conditions and raise your ante. You can have Kamila join us for dinner once she is done with work.

"With a Gate, it will take her a step to reach us and a Warp for us to bring her to our restaurant. Yet, four women and one man seems a bit inappropriate. What if we invite the other Ranger as well? Judging by your stories, he seems like a funny guy...."

"Absolutely not!" The three veterans from Kulah replied in unison.

"He's obnoxious, even by my standards." Lith said.

"He's damn rude." Phloria said. "It took him a week to believe that I'm a woman."

"Plus, he hits on everything that breathes. Ranger Eari made so many passes at me that if I hear his voice one more time I might snap. I don't even dare imagine how he would react if he sees you." Quylla said with a bit of envy.

She was pretty, but Friya's hourglass figure was a stunner.

Phloria agreed as well. Because of her relentless rise among the army's ranks and her sisters' full-time jobs, she hadn't seen them for more than an hour at lunch for years. Also, she could feel Quylla's eyes staring at her from time to time.

Lith's secret wasn't a heavy burden but it wasn't small either.

'It was much easier for me to accept his nature. Back then, we were still together and I think I was in love with him like a teenage girl can be. After seeing so many people die during Nalear's attack, after losing Yurial, I would have accepted Lith even if he was a five-headed dragon.

'As long as he was fine and by my side, nothing else mattered.'

At that point, Quylla was forced to agree. She really wanted to spend some time with Friya, and Phloria was the only one that could help her unravel the tangle of thoughts in her head.

Friya then started to tell them about how she had spent the last few months. As she had told Lith the last time they had met, she had completely changed her guild's hierarchy.

She had kicked out all the mages from the great academies in favor of those from smaller academies after obtaining the right to teach her own specializations to the most talented members of the Crystal Shield guild from the Mage Association.

It had made things quite competitive, but now there was more motivation than envy, and everyone now worshipped her like a goddess. Since most of her lessons would find practical application during their work, usually talent and survival rate went hand in hand.

"This way those with little talent quit after having a taste of their own limits, while those who stick with me are either really talented or motivated. I was able to apply for harder jobs and successfully complete them.

"Now that I have people who I can actually trust, I'm finally starting to make some real money!" She dropped a bag full of gold onto the table, gloating.

It was more than a Captain or even a Professor would make in a year. Lith would have liked to point out to her how such a sum was less than what he could make by selling a single Orichalcum Skinwalker armor, but preferred not to ruin her moment.

After all, he wouldn't make many of them since he liked to keep his advantage. After chatting a bit more, Lith gave Friya her own Skinwalker armor before returning to the library.

After talking with Solus about his plans for the future, he had decided to take a look at her past. Orion could really teach a thing or two to most libraries in the Kingdom. Not only were the tomes in the Ernas's library divided based on their topic and arranged in alphabetical order, but also each section was linked to a holographic pad.

By inputting specific keywords, each pad would notify its user what tomes they had to consult. First, Lith tried to input the name "Menadion", but without much luck. After all, for such a research method to work, the pad would have been able to contain a digital copy of all the tomes, which was still beyond the capabilities of magic.

Then, he tried with "Ruler of the Flames", getting several hits. In all the other libraries he had access to, he had to explain why he was researching such a specific topic which proved to be quite a difficult feat to Lith since he had no idea who Menadion was.

Saying: "It's for a friend" would only get him a sneer and more questions than he was willing to answer. After checking that the system had no internal memory and that there was no surveillance system in the library, Lith put all the tomes inside Soluspedia.

He and Solus could immediately search for any information related to her master, discovering an appalling lack of details. The title's meaning seemed to be obscure since many Forgemasters had used it in the past, but never bothered to explain its origin.

As for Menadion, it turned out that Solus's memories were correct. It was the name of a woman, one of the best Forgemasters of her era who had lived almost 700 years before and was considered to be one of Lochra Silverwing's closest friends.

According to Orion's books, Menadion had left behind several powerful artifacts which together formed a set. The picture of the Eyes of Menadion reminded Lith of Scarlett's pince-nez, making him curse when the book just described it as a "peerless treasure".

There were also depicted a helm as the Ears of Menadion, a set of gloves as the Hands of Menadion, a mask as the Mouth of Menadion, and a hammer as the Fury of Menadion.

Little was known about her personal life, aside from the fact that she had been born in the Griffon Kingdom and that even though she had raised many apprentices, none of them seemed to have inherited her talent nor her title.

There was no mention of her having a tower or working on forbidden magic. Menadion seemed to have lived in Silverwing's shadow for most of her life. Her friend's achievements were so great that the few historians who mentioned her did it only because the two ancient mages were really close.

Chapter 739 Menadions Legacy Part 1

The only other bit of relevant information he found was about Menadion's sudden disappearance right after sharing with the magical community the set of artifacts bearing her name.

The historians also reported that it had been her, together with Silverwing, to build and project the foundations of all the great academies. Also, even if it was Silverwing's legacy that had allowed magic to develop into the disciplines now called specializations, Menadion was universally recognized as the inventor of Forgemastering.

'Poor woman.' Lith thought. 'She was the Salieri to Silverwing's Mozart. The fact that she was basically a recluse and left no legacy behind doesn't help either. Does her story ring any bells, Solus?'

'Sadly, no.' She sighed. 'I can't believe that there are so many stories, between truth and fiction about Silverwing and so little about master Menadion. It's unfair! She's the mother of Forgemastering, after all.'

'It's not like other mages got it any better. Aside from Silverwing, do we know the name of the mage who created modern healing magic? Or any other specialization? No, all Professors always quote Silverwing's writings.' Lith replied.

Solus had to admit that he was right, yet it didn't make her feel any better.

At least until Lith walked to Orion's study and asked him about Menadion.

"How do you know that name?" Orion was quite curious. Aside from powerful crafters, very few bothered to remember the name of the First Royal Forgemaster, the Ruler of the Flames who first had tamed all metals with her blazing Fury.

"I'll be honest with you." Lith said, opening his speech with a blatant lie that made Solus laugh her ass off. "I was snooping around your library, hoping to find something about runes, when I discovered her existence.

"It pisses me off that nothing is recorded about her, so I wanted to ask you, a fellow Forgemaster, if there ♦♦s any tome I can consult about her life."

"There's no such thing as an official biography about Ripha Menadion. Most of her works are still a state secret, but if you content yourself with some lore, I can share with you all the information available to the public."

Lith nodded for Orion to continue and Orion offered him a seat.

"According to what I know, she was born in Derios. Back then the city was just a small-time village, but due to her choice to build two academies near her hometown, it soon grew until it became the capital of the entire region.

"She was rumored to possess an amazing mage tower, that she was capable of rearranging as she saw fit. Menadion could turn a bedroom into a kitchen or a broom closet into a perfectly equipped Forgemastering lab with just a snap of her fingers.

"Some even say that her tower was alive, capable of independent thought and movement."

"Does that mean that she dabbled in forbidden magic?" Lith asked, almost causing Orion to fly into an outrage.

"That's a perversion of magic! No Forgemaster would ever dare to do something like that. Master Menadion was also one of the founding Spellbreakers, she took down countless scums who dared to mess with her legacy.

"What I meant to say, is just that it was akin to a living being, like an academy. Every single of its stones was enchanted, its master could reshape it at will, and it was able to self-repair.

"It was only thanks to her tower that Menadion managed to craft such wonders. After her death, countless mages, human, undead, and even beasts scoured the entire Kingdom looking for her tower, but to no avail.

"The legend says that Menadion's disappearance was due to a demon, who stole her Fury. Without it, Menadion was akin to crippled, so she searched for it for the rest of her life."

"A demon?" Lith sneered. Aside from himself, he had yet to see anything that even looked like one.

"Yeah." Orion sneered as well. He believed in demons just like he believed in free meals. "It was probably a rival mage who managed to seduce her first and then betrayed her trust to steal her secrets.

"That or one of her disciples. You know what they say. Keep your friends close..."

"And your enemies closer." Lith nodded.

'Is there any chance that you are the demon, Solus? Maybe you stole her tower and she fused you with it as a punishment.' Lith thought.

'What? No! I could never do something like that, at least based on who I am now and the little I remember.' She replied, even though she couldn't think of any other reason why a kind person as her master could have doomed her to an eternity of misery.

"Is there a museum about her? Anything? I would like to pay her my respects." Lith said.

"There's none, Lith." Orion shook his head. "But know this. Every time you work in your Forge, you already bestow upon her the greatest honor she might have ever wished for.

"Every enchanted item you craft, you shape it from her teachings. Know then, that every time you create even the most insignificant trinket, you're following the footsteps of the First Forgemaster.

"The second greatest honor Menadion could ever ask, is for you to take a disciple. Only those who have learned her lessons and in turn teach them, making it so that a unique innovation can become a foundation for all, can say that they have truly inherited her spirit.

"I will not lie to you, there are ancient bloodlines and Emperor Beasts who have their own legacy, but none of them is superior to Menadion's.

"Despite the fact that they might live longer than we do, their numbers are too few, whereas Royal Forgemasters share and improve her teachings every single day as they have done since she gifted us her knowledge.

"If you really consider yourself a Forgemaster, you should think about leaving a legacy that amounts to more than mountains of corpses and broken buildings. Your feats might one day take one page in history books, whereas your teachings might fill books and most importantly, shape lives."

"Thank you, Orion. After meeting you and Yondra, I'm considering the idea of becoming a Royal Forgemaster." Lith said with a smile. Orion's words were almost the same Lith had told Morok.

On top of that, whatever the Hydra might teach him, it would be the legacy of a single bloodline and the same would stand for all Awakened. A master could teach their disciples, but could the work of a single person, no matter how gifted, compare with the constant work of thousands?

Especially since people like Manohar and Balkor existed. A single non Awakened could make Runesmithing improve by leaps and bounds, allowing people like Vastor or Marth to find even more applications.

Awakened ones, instead, were limited by their small numbers and were unlikely to share their knowledge.

'At least in theory.' Lith thought. 'Who knows if Awakened had their own Silverwing or if this so-called Council provides to its members a base amount of knowledge. I'm really looking forward to meeting Faluel the Hydra.

'She will help me determine the next course of action after I quit the army. Or maybe she will just try to eat me alive.'

Lith and Orion went to dinner together, still talking about any trivia Orion could remember about Menadion. Lith was likely to have already got her tower, Menadion's Fury, the prized Forgemastering hammer, would have been a fine addition to his collection.

Chapter 740 Menadions Legacy Part 2

City of Ocra, Griffon Kingdom

The news of the fall of Kulah had shed an even more disturbing light around the rogue Awakened Lith Verhen, Raagu Drierian, the human representative in the Council of the Awakened decided that their meeting was long overdue.

"First this Verhen has killed Treius, causing the downfall of master Glamus as well. Then he got caught in the scheme laid by those six runts in Zantia, causing the death of six disciples and two more elders.

"Usually it takes an all-out war to kill so many Awakened in such a short time. To make things even worse, rumors are spreading that he has managed to apply the Skinwalker spell to Orichalcum on his own.

"It would be a simple feat if he had a master, but according to our background check, he has none. We can't afford to let such a powerful individual remain a rogue anymore, he must be brought into our ranks."

Raagu failed to mention that Lady Tyris had already met Lith in person twice, something that most Awakened failed to accomplish during their whole life, Raagu included.

"What are your orders, master Raagu?" Athung Soranot asked. She had once been one of Raagu's apprentices, now a free Awakened and one of the candidates to inherit her legacy.

"Go to Lutia, wait for Lith, and bring him here on friendly terms. I've no desire to discover how far his power goes nor to alert the Queen's corps. We have nothing to gain from kidnapping him. Best case scenario, we make an enemy out of him."

"What about the worst-case scenario?" Athung tilted her head, she had rarely seen her former master so nervous.

'Lady Tyris comes here and slaughters us all.' Raagu thought.

"Believe me, you don't want to know." Was what she actually said.

Ernas Mansion, after dinner

Lith was sitting on his bed, working together with Solus to translate the words of power engraved on Huryole's sword into modern runes. Enough pieces of paper to fill a book were floating in mid-air along with several blots of ink that he used to either take notes or make corrections.

From the following day, Lith would finally be able to use his own magic instead of relying on Solus's, which meant he would be free to go back to Lutia and make experiments in their tower.

Also, he had to plan his visit to Protector and Selia, something that now was of the utmost importance. With the body-swapping book in his possession, Lith could finally plan ahead.

The future wasn't so scary anymore, especially since if he managed to conquer the Odi's technology, he would solve his reincarnation problem. If he hadn't joined the army, he would have never got access to the Royal Library, nor to all the confidential information about the undead.

His original plan was to turn himself into an undead, which he had discarded due to their many limitations in movement or use of magic, or to bind his soul to an item, yet cursed objects had proved it to be an even more desperate plan than becoming an undead, or to achieve immortality.

Body-swapping wasn't really immortality, but it was still the next best thing. Even if he had to rebuild his body and mana core from scratch, what could a few dozen years mean to someone who would live centuries?

"Lith, don't you think there's something wrong with me?" Kamila asked, forcing him to arrange the papers in a folder with a flick of his wrist before storing them inside Soluspedia.

"What do you... Great Mother almighty!" Very few things made Lith religious and that was one of them.

Kamila was standing in front of him, wearing only black lace lingerie and a worried expression.

"Wow, I wasn't expecting so much enthusiasm. It's not the first time you've seen me without clothes after all." She giggled while noticing the sudden rush of blood to his heads.

"May I remind you I spent a whole month fighting against unspeakable horrors, risking my life every single day while surrounded only by old coots and stinky soldiers? I'm not used to such beauty anymore. You should have given me some warning."

Kamila would have loved to keep flirting, but her worries couldn't wait.

"I've been pale for weeks, yet in the last two days, not only am I back to my regular complexion, but I'm also gaining weight. Haven't you noticed?"

Lith had a hard time, and not only at not noticing her smooth skin and soft curves.

"That's because since I've returned your mood has improved and you eat more." He replied.

"Yes, but this fast? I'm already amazed by how quickly you recovered, but I've never had a shred of your inhuman constitution. How do you think it's possible that the only places I gained weight are here and here?"

She said while touching her bosom first and her buttocks later, giving Lith a monstrous headache. The answer was a bit of Invigoration and light magic from Solus's side that had enhanced Kamila's metabolism.

Solus's intention had been to simply help Kamila to assimilate the nutrients and quickly relieve her body from all the stress it had sustained. Since Kamila was still young and very fit thanks to Jirni's training, the results had far exceeded even Lith's expectations.

"That might be my fault." He admitted. "Do you remember those disgusting tonics we both had to drink?"

Kamila nodded.

"I think they might have turned our famished bodies into this." He took off the upper part of the Skinwalker armor, showing his upgraded body to her for the first time.

"Well, I'm not going to complain, as long as you swear to me that this isn't any form of body modification. I'm your girlfriend, not your toy, correct?" Kamila's voice was soft, but her question held a lot of implications.

She knew about Body Sculpting and seeing her physique change so fast had made her fear that Lith might have gone overboard. Seeing his honest surprise had greatly reassured her, but she still wanted to hear it from his mouth.

"I did nothing to your body, nor would I administer you any potion without your consent. I'm shocked as you are. This actually adds insult to injury, making what I'm about to say even more painful." Lith sighed.

"What's wrong baby? After all this talk about my body, I thought you would be happier to check out how much stamina I've recovered." She sat on Lith's lap, rubbing her body against him while kissing him with growing passion.

"Quylla thinks that I should rest today as well, to let my life force stabilize." He moaned with a mix of pleasure from Kamila's movements and pain from the words coming from his own mouth.

"Seriously? After worrying about you for an entire month, after two whole days of holding myself back for this moment, do we really have to postpone again?" She nibbled at his earlobe before kissing her way down Lith's neckline

"Yes. Unless you want to risk taking a few years off my lifespan." He pushed her away before his mind went completely blank.

"Is it really so dangerous?" Kamila stopped abruptly, becoming as stiff as he was, afraid to hurt him.

"Sadly, yes. The silver lining is that once the sun rises, I should be good to go."