

## Guardian gods 63

### Chapter 63

"But if that's the case, then the animals and creatures with talent should expend a significant amount of physical and mental energy to utilize their talent without mana. If not, then I should have an easy time overcoming the fire lion after its breath attack," Ikem pondered for a while before another thought occurred to him.

"Maybe I took a different approach with those creatures the moment I started interacting more with mana rather than my talent. Ikem remembered how, when he used his ability, the mana left in his body would swoop in to replenish the spent physical strength and mental energy. However, his father suggested that instead of letting the mana passively interact within him, he should take control of it, leading him to his current stage."

"If talent is like a muscle, then the more you use it, the stronger it gets. If I had just let the mana be and continued using my talents, by now, I would have no need for a medium to use my abilities. Simply by stretching my hands, I could manipulate the plants around me. As for recovery, it follows the understanding that a muscle grows stronger the more you use it, and the same goes for mana; the more that is spent, the more I should have after recovering."

"Have we been going the wrong route all this time?" Ikem thought to himself as he looked at the journal, closing his eyes. Ikem's attention turned to the core in his body, instinctively feeling that there would be a significant transformation when he reached the next stage after this core stage.

Ikem felt that after the core stage, he should be able to make plants appear out of thin air around him and have no need to be limited to controlling only plants in his immediate vicinity. That means, in the fourth stage, he should be able to create an environment favorable to him, no matter where.

Thinking about that, Ikem opened his eyes before rubbing his chin. "It seems there is an advantage in both paths. However, some animals and creatures don't all have talents, but they bear an elemental affinity, from my observation. So talent may be something I don't quite understand yet."

Shifting his attention back to the kids, Ikem apologized for his behavior as he continued his explanation of why the curse was beneficial. "From my observation of primates with elemental affinities, I tried using the same approach I used to get started with mana. However, it proved difficult, as the individuals themselves find it challenging to sense the elements they are accustomed to."

"Sensing the elements is what I call the first stage for mortals. Then comes the next stage, something like convincing and attracting the supposed element. There's something else challenging for mortals in this stage, as elements are well blended with each other. They have to differentiate and pick out their own element before attracting it to them."

"The third stage for mortals is the first stage for me as a demigod, which my father called the mana adaptation stage. We'll delve deeper into that later, but from my explanation, you can already think of the few benefits of the curse."

Zephyr raised his hands excitedly as he gestured to the invisible air around him. "We get to skip the first two stages and begin with the third stage. Also, we get to be extra sensitive to the elements attributed to us."

"Exactly. You have noticed the change yesterday when you became sensitive to the elements around you, which is something most mortals have to reach the fourth stage to be able to do. The curse grants a physique similar to the demigods. We have to start a few exercises to see if there are any more changes."

"For your first exclusive lesson, as your siblings will be joining in the next, I want to focus back on yourself. Take a deep breath and assume any position you find comfortable. When you have done that, focus on the colorful dots of lights surrounding you."

Ikem watched as his kids gathered their first mana while he spoke. "Once you have focused on these colorful lights, find the one you are easily attracted to and attract them to you. This should be easy for you guys."

It took only the time it took to take a breath for Ikem to feel the mana stirring around him as it gathered towards his kids. "Good, now you just do nothing. Focus on absorbing and attracting the mana element to you. Just feel the changes taking place as the element gets into different parts of your body."

Ikem saw smiles creeping onto his children's faces as he also smiled, knowing that the first step had been taken. Now, he could focus on his other kids. Over the next few days, Ikem guided his children through the basics of manipulating mana. The siblings practiced channeling their elemental attributes, experimenting with the newfound power coursing through their veins. Each had a unique connection to the elements, and their abilities began to manifest in distinct ways.

Years went by with Ikem training all his kids. It took about three years before the four advanced to the second stage, while their siblings were still in the first stage. Ikem noticed that man worked differently from his kids, even after they gained their cursed physique. They still couldn't create simple constructs, but they could conjure the elements to manifest out in thin air.

When Ikem asked how they were able to do that, they could only briefly explain that the elements didn't respond when they willed for a construct. Instead, the elements moved in a certain pattern in their bodies before coming out as what they imagined. An example would be when Ikem asked for ember to construct a sword; instead of a sword construct, what appeared was a whole flaming sword. It took a lot of mana to maintain and lacked flexibility.

Apart from that, when the kids reached a good enough stage, Ikem had them start reconstructing the whole settlement. It didn't take long before a small village was built. After the village was constructed, it was then divided into four clans, each led and populated by the cursed ones. His other kids focused more on populating their race to increase diversity.

One interesting aspect of the cursed clans was how they carefully bred among themselves. Now, it wasn't unusual to see an apelings with an elemental affinity for ice, and the same applied to other elements like iron, magma, and even strangely, poison.

Simultaneously, the clans introduced something called spells, where a certain pattern in the body could be traced to conjure flames, even for the attributeless and people with opposing elemental traits.

Ikem and his kids found a way to take advantage of their inability to construct and learn about the different patterns traced by the elements in their bodies. They were able to create various spells by actively changing the patterns themselves. There was a lot of surprise and excitement when one of the attributeless apelings, for some reason, tried to create a fireball by following the known pattern and succeeded.

The whole settlement was changing by the day as trees were cut down, and the population grew. Soon, there were barely any traces of primates left, as the apelings became the main race of the settlement. It wasn't that anything happened to the primates, but the environment wasn't suitable for them, or they were dying off, and the ones that remained moved.

The four wives of Ikem stayed with him because of the attraction they still had for him and their kids. The apelings had a unique sense of architecture, and their buildings were designed to bring out the full advantage of their race. There were plants everywhere for them to grab and swing away or poles specially built for apelings who preferred swinging from pole to pole.

At the top of a mountain, a palace built with wood stood. Deep inside the palace sat an 8-foot giant resembling a humanoid gorilla, with his hand on his chin, wearing a thoughtful expression. Plant roots could be seen growing from under his feet, connecting to a huge plant with wide leaves, causing a gust of wind each time they blew as they fanned the giant.

This was Ikem, whose appearance had changed a lot over the years. Under him lay the leather skin of a lion, showing traces of fire elementals flowing in it, but it didn't bother Ikem as he enjoyed the warmth the giant's leather skin brought him.

Suddenly, the relaxation Ikem showed vanished as an expression of horror came over his face. He stood up from the seat with trembling legs, struggling to take a step forward. Pushing on, he reached his palace door, weakly managing to open it. Ikem fell to the ground as he crawled with fear on his face, sweat raining down from his body.