

130 – Spirit Infusion

Our reality-defying carriage had come to a halt and we were standing a way’s away from the Greenroad leading to the capital. Armen had agreed to be my test subject for the Infuse Spirit experiment.

In my left hand I held a small knife that I normally carried in my pack as part of my toolkit. It was only about as long as my hand and probably a bit on the dull side, but that didn’t matter.

“**I am ready,**” Armen told me.

Emily, Elye, Saoirse, and Ludwig watched from a few metres away.

I put my right hand on Armen, then invoked the ability in my mind, foregoing the verbal incantation. A small portion of his soul flowed through me like a warm wind, before reaching my left hand where it took a hold in the knife.

Its metal-grey blade began to glow with a warm golden light.

“That was surprisingly easy,” I muttered.

Ludwig came over, perhaps wanting a closer look.

“Preem!” he said excitedly. “I reckon I get how it works now.”

“**It seems similar to Elemental Enchantment,**” Armen remarked.

I remembered the name of the ability from the list of Emily’s Spellhand skills. I guessed that it allowed her to put imbue an item with her Affinity.

“I’m confused as to why it chose your holy attribute though,” Ludwig said. “I would’ve assumed it would pick your most innate element tied to your being, such as the incorporeal nature of a Wraith.”

Armen didn’t reply, nor did I. I still felt bad about deceiving Ludwig about his true nature, but from everything I’d read, a True Undead was a forbidden creation, not to mention mostly the subject of fairytales and fringe theories.

“I wonder how long it lasts?” I said, while moving the knife around, watching how the golden energy stuck firmly to its blade.

“You know, there is a little-known way to utilise Elemental Enchantment, where instead of applying it to an object you apply it to a person. For example, an Air Affinity Spellhand would be able to use it to breathe underwater, while a Fire Affinity would be able to use it to become immune to heat.”

“You want me to try and imbue Armen’s power into myself?”

“That sounds dangerous.”

“It’s all in the name of discovery!” Ludwig said eagerly, while doing nothing to dispel Armen’s legitimate worries.

“How do you feel?” I asked him. “Can you feel that a portion of your soul was taken?”

“Only briefly,” he replied. **“It seems to be steadily returning to me. At first it felt as though a jolt of static rushed through my head.”**

Ludwig nodded. “If that’s the case, then it is only a temporary enhancement, meaning it should be usable without any harm coming to the source nor the item or person their soul is imbued into.”

The glow of the knife was dwindling slowly, and I figured it might be a minute or two before its borrowed potency faded entirely.

I took a deep breath. “I’ll give it a try.”

“Don’t overdo it, of course,” the Incarnate told me.

“I won’t.”

Ludwig took a few steps back and I put my hand on Armen again, then said, “Infuse Spirit,” while taking some of that warm energy he possessed and pulling it to the centre of my body, before ‘releasing’ it.

Immediately a warm feeling filled my body and I couldn’t help but let out a contented sigh. What’s more, I recognised the feeling.

“I think I pulled his healing power into my body, because it’s a similar sensation as when he has healed me in the past, except it feels as though its radiating out from within.”

“I am able to heal myself in a similar way,” he said.

Ludwig seemed to consider this for a moment, before saying, “You should be able to specify what exactly you want to infuse. Like, say you wish to put his healing powers into a blade to make some kind of strange scalpel, you’d probably want to focus on what exactly it is you are pulling from him.

I gave this exact thing a try and when I put my hand on him, I tried to get a feeling for what part of his soul I was gathering into my own body. It was hard to distinguish, but I went with what felt the most like the healing effect, before pulling it through my body and feeding it into the knife.

Once again it began to glow.

“I think I did it,” I said.

Without questioning whether I was right or not, Ludwig took the glowing knife out of my hand and ran it across his left palm. A cut formed and was immediately closed back up and he didn't even wince in pain.

“That's a very strange feeling,” he said, before handing it back.

I didn't feel like trying it out, but it was good to know that I could basically utilise Armen's spirit to help heal people.

“There's something else you should test,” Ludwig told me.

“What's that?” I asked hesitantly, given the rare enthusiasm he was displaying towards the experimentation.

“Using the spirit of a possessed item,” he answered with a grin.

My mind immediately went to the Music Box, but I knew it was foolish to try and mess with Lyssalynne's potent voice without having proper precautions in place. Instead I pulled out the Scenting Whistle.

“This has the unique sense of smell of a Scenting Tongue,” I told him and he nodded thoughtfully.

“Try to infuse yourself with its power.”

I grimaced a bit, knowing how the information overload would put a strain on my mind, but after a few moments, I felt prepared enough to try.

While holding the whistle in my right palm, I did the exact same thing as when I'd infused Armen's spirit, except the soul I was utilising was much different. It was clearly just a fragment of the original Scenting Tongue's spirit, with the rest either destroyed or tossed to the in-between during the ritual that bound it to the tool.

I took a portion of this soul and pulled it through my palm and up my arm, then along my veins and to my heart, the core of my body. Unlike when I'd infused myself with Armen's healing powers, this was an entirely-different sensation.

My nostrils began to itch and, after my first inhalation of air, I could smell Ludwig's breath, his clothes that hadn't been washed in a long while, the oils of his beard, and so much more. I could smell Armen's body, which was like ash and dried leaves mixed with dirt. Even though they were a bit away, I could smell Emily and Elye, the former carried a floral scent I'd not noticed before but which was now incredibly potent, while the Elfin smelled like grass, dirt, bark, wood, beeswax, and sweat.

I immediately covered my nose. My eyes didn't see the ribbons of colour in the air, but my nose could pick them all out. Even though I tried to stem the flow of air into my nostrils, I could still smell

the musk of a passing deer, and the dung it had left behind, as well as the mixed stench of urine and musk, with heavy notes of ammonia of some other critter or family of critters.

“Make it stop,” I said, my head beginning to spin at the many sensations that assaulted me.

“You okay, sprite?” Ludwig asked, but all I could focus on was the stench of his breath and the cavities that hid behind his veneers.

“It’s too much,” I said, even my own breath filling my nostrils with its smell.

Armen put his hand on my head and I felt a warm energy blossom out from the palm of his gauntlet and into my scalp. It didn’t make the incredible sense of smell go away, but it helped soothe my mind.

For the next few minutes, I tried to just calm down and plug my nostrils, but to no avail. Then, blissfully, the sensation ended.

I took a deep breath through my nose and was happy to find that all was back to how it’d been before.

“I’m never doing that again,” I told Ludwig.

“Now I kind of want to try it,” he said.

I cast him a glare as to say ‘are you serious?’, but when he seemed to not back down, I grasped the whistle and placed my left hand on the middle of his chest.

He grinned. “Hit me with it.”

Like before, I dragged a portion of the soul in the whistle through my body, but instead of depositing it in my core, I fed it through my left arm and out the palm and into Ludwig’s body.

His grin quickly faded. Then his eyes widened and he covered his nose.

“Fucking hell!” he cursed. “Ugh, my breath stinks!”

“Not so funny right?”

“Your breath stinks too!”

“For the record, I am not interested in trying this.”

Emily who was watching us began laughing until I turned to face her, my hand holding the whistle outstretched towards her.

She quickly shook her head.

“Enough playing around,” Saoirse then said and we all began to move back to the carriage, even though Ludwig was still under the effects of the infusion.

“Why doesn’t she smell of anything,” he asked, but I ignored the question, knowing there was no way I could bullshit my way around it.