

LIGHTNING LORD AND THE SERPENT SPARK

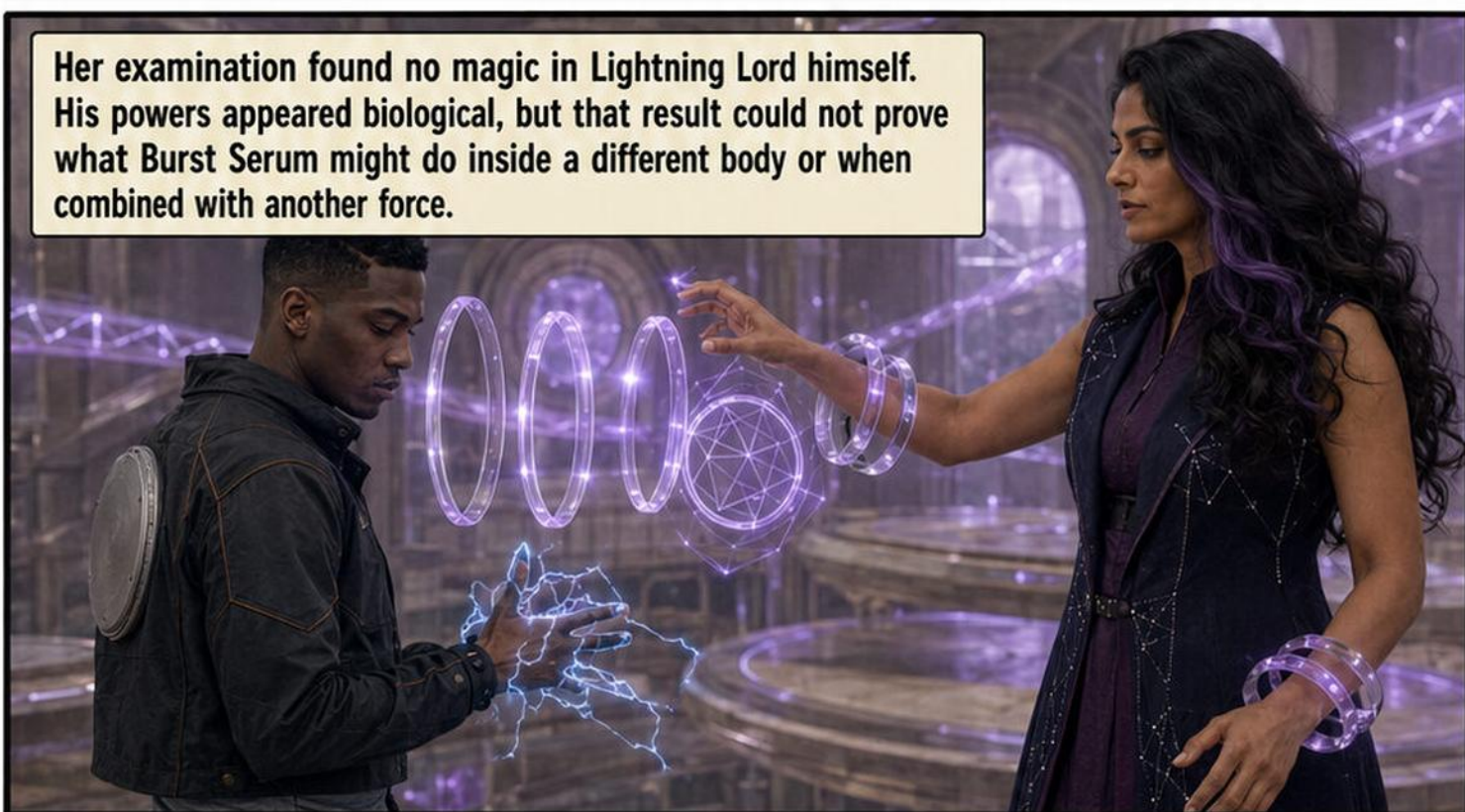


ISSUE #1

York York mixed old brick, new glass, elevated trains, and impossible magic. Inside Mage Manor, Lightning Lord asked Magic Mistress whether the Burst Serum that gave him control of electricity had also made him magical.



Her examination found no magic in Lightning Lord himself. His powers appeared biological, but that result could not prove what Burst Serum might do inside a different body or when combined with another force.



A clean sample could answer the larger question. PowerCore's Duke City headquarters was a fortress, so the heroes chose its smaller York York research center—and Magic Mistress folded space to take them there.



They arrived beside a research campus disguised as an old telecommunications complex. The ripped-out lock, crushed camera, silent alarms, and unconscious but breathing guards proved that a controlled robbery was already underway.



Below them, Bulk Brute's operatives wore harnesses that normally pumped green Viper into their bodies, temporarily increasing strength and speed while causing reptilian mutations. This time every rig had a second reservoir port.



The stolen blue ampoules contained Burst Serum. Lightning Lord understood the danger one second too late: the unknown rig had been engineered to inject Viper and Burst Serum together.



When the two chemicals met inside the powered regulator, a pressure wave tore through the laboratory. The operative survived at its center while Viper expanded his muscles and covered his body with overlapping green scales.



The second change was unprecedented: ancient gold symbols moved beneath his skin, and Magic Mistress could feel real magic radiating from him. Burst Serum had temporarily created or awakened a Magi Manis—a person capable of using magic.



Lightning Lord's own transformation remained purely electrokinetic, yet the same serum now behaved differently beside Viper. If this operative delivered the remaining ampoules to Bulk Brute, York York could face an army of enhanced sorcerers.



Magic Mistress bound him with silver spell-threads, but his forked tongue formed Serpent Tongue. Because that tradition reached back to humanity's earliest myths, its ancient magical roots overpowered her much newer binding spell.



The operative escaped with the case, sprinting on Viper-strengthened legs and casting golden coils behind him. His goal was simple: carry Burst Serum back to Bulk Brute before the temporary transformation ended.



Lightning Lord unfolded the metal disc from his back, levitated it electromagnetically, and carried both heroes into pursuit. Even at its thermal limit, the disc barely matched the fugitive's chemically accelerated speed.



Unable to outrun ancient magic, Lightning Lord studied the engineering sustaining it. Viper required continuous delivery, and the dual-injection rig needed a small lithium cell to power both pumps and the regulator.



He drained the rig instead of attacking the operative. The pumps stopped, the Viper dose ended, and the temporary interaction with Burst Serum lost the powered conditions that had made it possible.



The reptilian body, Serpent Tongue, and magical affinity all receded together. With no ancient spell left to resist her, Magic Mistress sealed the reverted operative inside geometric silver chains.



The capture saved York York from an immediate catastrophe, but the stolen case struck the road. Most ampoules shattered, and glowing blue serum flowed through rainwater toward a muddy drainage ditch.



Every surviving vial was cracked, empty, crushed, or contaminated. Lightning Lord had come to York York for a clean sample, and the only samples he knew how to reach were now useless in a gutter.



The mission had failed in one narrow sense, but the evidence was larger than the lost sample. Burst Serum could interact with magic, Viper changed its effect, and Bulk Brute's organization had built specialized machinery to exploit that fact.



The dual reservoirs, synchronized pumps, and central regulator proved this was not an improvised robbery. Someone had planned, engineered, and perhaps tested a way to combine two dangerous chemicals—and Bulk Brute would almost certainly try again.



Lightning Lord had searched for one answer about Duke City's past. Instead he found a threat connecting that past to York York, and a mystery that neither electrical science nor magical scholarship could solve alone.



Lightning Lord and Magic Mistress became partners until they could learn what Burst Serum truly was and stop Bulk Brute from weaponizing it. The thunder above them promised that the Serpent Spark was only the beginning.

