

Essence of Time - The Forgotten Journey

Von Deamond

Kapitel 1:

Chapter 1

Midgard, a world in which all life comes together and chaos and war reigns the lands. Gods reside in Heaven, Demons and Devils in the Underworld and the struggle for dominance amongst each other drives the countries into a disastrous fight of faith and traditions. Only few places are left in which the question of faith and origin is still unimportant to the people, in which a person's behaviors are still more important than the fellowship of Gods or Demons.

One of these places is the small village Ardon. Long forgotten by the giant cities and erased from all maps, refugees and seekers for peace find a place to live without fear in Ardon. So does a young man whose destiny will change the entire world...

"Hey Allen! Wake up!! You're going to be too late again!" A shrill female voice dashed through the wooden door, interrupting the peaceful silence of the dark room. Small rays of light broke through little holes in the door, falling on the dusted ground of the small little house. On the right side, a small fireplace with pots and old beans in them gave the room a smoky smell. On the other side, a cupboard and a bed stood seemingly random in the room, wasting a lot of space in the anyhow small room. A young man with middle-long hazel-brown hair turned around in the bed, scratching his chest with a hand, before slowly opening his emerald green eyes.

"Five... five more minutes..." He snored into the warm air before turning around again and yawning into his pillow.

"Oh no, young man!! You will wake up NOW! I can't handle the fields on my own and after all that is YOUR job, Allen!!" The door crashed open and an older woman in the forties entered the room. Her brown dress and the beige apron gave her the look of a peasant wife. The long blond hair hang around her shoulders, covered with a red headscarf. Small little horns on the top of her forehead and the slightly brown skin showed that she was in fact a half-ogre. "Will you move your lazy butt already!?" She shouted and drew away the blanket. Allen, he was about 20 years old, rolled himself together to a ball and continued snoring. He had a small goatee and had slept in his every-day-cloths... grey trousers, with blue belts, an orange shirt and the green headband he used to wear laid on the ground next to the bed. "Allen!"

"Come on, Gwen... what time is it... 7 am? 8am? The fields can wait a lil' longer..." He turned around with sleep-dazed eyes only to meet the frustrated and furious face of Gwen.

"No, they can NOT wait! It is 11 am already, you lazy little... I told Chris you were not good enough to take that job, but he believed in you! Now don't let him down that easily!" Both hands on her hips she eyed the young human boy while making the mattress wave up and down with her foot.

"I don't know what you want from me anyway... I make my living with hunting and selling the meat... why should I work on a farm all of a sudden!?" Allen slowly got up from his bed, reaching for his headband and fixing it around his forehead. His brown hair framed his face perfectly while on the back of his head the hair stood out wildly. With another protesting yawn, he stood up and followed Gwen outside.

"Ardon can't live from meet alone, boy! We need crops as well and right now we need help on the fields! Without anything to exchange, we can't buy your meet anymore anyway, so be grateful you can help to keep the farm running!" Gwen looked over her shoulder and had to giggle at the frustrated sight of the young man. "Don't worry. In a few days the work will be done and you can return to your usual way of life... just help us out a little okay?" She smiled softly and patted Allen's shoulder. "We all must help each other out if we want to survive. You are a refugee as well, you should know how important it is to look after each other!"

"Yeah, yeah..." Allen snarled. She was right... when he came here ten years ago, he was so lost that he had died if the village elder hadn't taken care of him... since then the 'old man' how Allen used to call him, taught him all kinds of fighting-techniques, but especially in summoning... weird enough, he thought. Summoning usually was a technique that only elves and arcane beings were able to master... how came he had the ability to summon? Allen shook off the thought and followed Gwen to the fields. Her husband, a giant blue-skinned ogre with horns on his forehead and green hair waved eagerly as he spotted his wife and Allen.

"Hey! There you are, Allen! Slept well?" He smiled and showed off his toothless mouth. Allen only nodded, still sleepy, and picked up a towel from the ground.

"So Chris... what is it?" Allen yawned again and looked at the farmer in front of him. The only things he wore were brown trousers and a straw-head to cover himself from the heat.

"I just want you to give water to the crops, that's all. I will do the heavy work!" Chris took the towel from Allen and patted his shoulder. "I don't want you to overdo it, right?" He chuckled and continued working. Gwen smiled love filled and shot an evil glare towards Allen that screamed 'dare disappointing him and you are dead!'

Allen shook his head and took the buckets next to him. Time to get some water...

After returning a few times from the well and carrying the water to the crops, he was

beaten... Allen looked at his hands and sighed heavily... his stamina sucked... and the heat of the sun did an additional job to exhaust him.

"Uhm... Chris?" Allen asked carefully to not attract Gwen's attention. "I..." He started.

"Oh yeah, I see! Wait a sec!" Chris smiled and ran towards him. Allen had the feeling as if the earth was shaking under the heavy steps of the ogre... Suddenly the world around him was all black.

"Huh? What..." Allen reached with his hand for his head only to touch a weird... wet material... it also smelled a little sweaty... "URG! CHRIS!" Allen shouted and ripped the straw-hat off of his head. "I don't need a hat, I need a break!" He said while holding the smelly hat as far away from himself as possible.

"Oh, sorry... I thought you needed some cover from the heat..." The ogre said, a little disappointed and looked down on the young man. "You know, you are a really nice person, Allen... I want you to enjoy the work here..." He said, sniffing.

"Oh... I... I do!" Allen waved with his hands in front of his chest in apology. "It's just..." He tried to think of something nice to say... Chris always treated him more like a son than just a hunter like most others did so he really didn't want to hurt his feelings. "I... am used to hunt, so my legs are much stronger than my arms! Don't you have a job for me in which I can use my speed better than my none-existent power?" He grinned and was pleased to see a smile returning on the older man's face.

"Hm, not really..." Chris thought a little and scratched his chin while thinking.

"Allen, there you are." A smoky voice reached their ears and Allen turned around by the sound of the familiar voice.

"Hey, old man!" Allen grinned and threw aside the waterbuckets.

"Elder Crane." Chris grinned and bowed in respect before looking back at Allen again.

"I would like to train your summoning with you a little, Allen. Are you up for it?" The elder smiled weakly, making the creases on his face seemingly even deeper. "It is important for you to keep up your training!" A demanding tone appeared in his voice...

"Yeah, yeah, I know... but I gotta help Chris and Gwen on the fields!" Allen said panicking... he preferred carrying waterbuckets over a lecture about the 8 Great Spirits by far! Those sessions were always so boring... and yet he did not have the chance to form pacts with any spirits so this so called 'training' was theory only and Allen was more the practical kind of person.

"Oh, if Elder Crane wants to train with you, you are dismissed of course!" Chris smiled, deep in the belief he had done the young man a favor...

"Oh... well then..." Allen closed his eyes and hissed 'DAMN!' mentally before turning

to Crane again. "Guess I'm done here then..." With a sigh he followed the old man to his hut.

"Now tell me who the 8 Great Spirits are right now..." Crane had his nose hidden in a book while testing Allen's knowledge about the 8 Great Spirits.

"Hmm... I know Darkness is Luna and Light is Sol... Aquarius is water and Windy Air!" The young man scratched his beard while thinking. Who was the wood-spirit again? Was it Ambard or Azarth? No... that was Earth and Metal... "Flamera was Fire and Ambard is Earth, Azarath is Metal and Wood was... uhm..." Allen tried thinking harder and harder... he had the feeling his ears were growing hotter and hotter while thinking...

"Woods is Weyards, Allen... you have to know such things if you want to form pacts with spirits!" Crane sighed deeply and laid his book aside.

"But that's exactly it: I don't want to form pacts with spirits! I'm human, I'm not supposed to be a summoner! Humans do things like hunting and using swords... Why do you want me to become a summoner so badly!?" Frustrated Allen slapped his hand on the table and leaned back in his chair. "It was fun to learn about this stuff when I was younger, but now I'm a hunter, and a pretty good one! I don't want to become a summoner anymore!"

Crane closed his eyes thinking for a few seconds. He touched the book he was holding before and leaned forward towards his student. How was he supposed to explain all of this? Was the boy even old enough? He needed to know the truth... and the earlier he knew about it, the less risk there was for failure...

"Allen... do you know what your name stands for?" he opened his eyes again and grabbed the young human's hand.

"Allen? Uhm, nope, no clue." Allen blushed, not knowing what this was all about so suddenly... but he felt very uncomfortable with it...

"Not Allen! Your name! Van Tirith!" Crane snapped, frustrated... the boy could be so dumb sometimes...

"I have no clue. I just know it was the name of my Mother and she wanted me to keep it." Allen took away his hand and hid it behind his back to prevent Crane of grabbing it again.

"The van Tirith-Clan is a clan of summoners elected by the very first spirits of Midgard to save our world in the case of a new war between Asgard and Utgard!" Crane's face had an unexpected and unusual hard expression on it. "The Mana of our world is running shorter every day, and the faithful of the Gods abandon the Great Spirits as well as the followers of the demons! There is no one left but you to help this withering world!"

"Crane, no, I..."

"Whoever managed to seal away the Great Spirits also hunts your clan to obliterate your bloodline! They want to prevent the return of Mana on our world for a reason we don't know, but... You have to learn these things for the sake of Midgard!" The elder stood up now, moving towards his book-case.

"Crane, that... is not funny! You know, I used to like jokes but this really goes too far!" Allen tried to make an amused face-expression... but deep within something seemed to move inside him. It was not his breakfast, but something deep within... it felt so true...

"I wish I was joking, Allen..." A smile appeared on the old man's face. "Look at yourself... you are the hope of our world? We better sell our souls to the demons right away..." He chuckled and leaned on the bookshelf. "Your parents were escaping to our village to survive the assaults of whoever was hunting them, but they knew someone followed them wherever they went. They left you in this village and traveled on. I had to promise them that I was going to teach you the art of summoning."

Allen stood up without a word. His mood was lightened by the joke of the elder, but it hurt so deep within... "I... I can't..."

"It is too early for you to set up a journey to change the world. This weight is too much for you yet, you are not mature enough to take this quest." Crane smiled at the youngster, satisfied. "But I am glad that you seemingly accepted this now. You are free for the rest of the day. Go hunting or whatever you feel like doing... but be aware: The disappearing of the Spirits is no longer a secret to neither of the worlds, so you are in constant danger... you must stay close around Ardon. Promise me, Allen" Crane threw a set of daggers towards Allen who caught them with ease. "I think you need a little cheer-up now, so... these are for you!" With a wave of his hand, Crane opened the door and left the hut, followed by a now eagerly grinning Allen.

Back in his own hut, Allen laid the daggers aside and walked over to a broken mirror on the wall... If he thought about it... everything in his house was broken... the windows, the door –since this morning- and even the roof was flicked together every few inches...

The mirror showed the face of a young man with hazel hair and emerald green eyes... but... this man didn't look like a hero at all. This man looked like the typical stereotype average hunter... Ha was a typical stereotype average hunter!

"How am I supposed to change the world...?! This must be a nightmare... this can't be true..." Allen leaned forward with his head against the wall. "I better go hunting a little..." He grabbed for the new daggers and left his house in a rush.

It was rather cold in the woods today. But maybe it was only Allen's mood? The hunter sat on the top of a tree, waiting for prey while playing around with his dagger. He thought about everything the old man had said... This seemed so unreal. It sounded

like one of these hero-stories little kids used to tell each other if they were bored...

But maybe these kinds of stories were based of things that really happened? How is a hero born? A hero won't just stand up and be a hero from the very beginning... it needs time and change to become a hero!

Allen closed his eyes. He felt something changing deep inside him. It was like the innocent lazy young boy changed into something more mature. Someone who was able to take the weight of a huger quest than being a mere hunter.

"I'm ready..."