

Essence of Time - The Forgotten Journey

Von Deamond

Kapitel 5:

Chapter 5

The journey to Nihil had been a really hard one for Zeyir... Not only that the Slikwalker – a giant lizard with long, spiderlike legs- was a rather uncomfortable though fast way of traveling, but Morgana kept annoying him with all kinds of ambiguous questions about his past and origins, eagerly trying to let him tell Allen about his royal origins... it had been really hard for him to find ways to get out of the situation all the time... and it was a looong journey... the ride had taken over 15 hours and even the lizard-rider had shot Zeyir sympathizing glares... Allen haven't even noticed the delicate situation he had been in... he was just surprised about how much a single woman could talk!

"Finally!!" Zeyir jumped off of the lizard even before the ramp has been fixed on the saddle on the lizard's back...

"Hey, Zeyir, sweet-heart! Wait! Awww... he looks so cute when he is all embarrassed!" Morgana nyorned and giggled playful. The other guests from the slikwalker rushed down the ramp to get away from Morgana as fast as possible. Allen followed the demoness down the ramp and went over to the lizard-rider to get their packages.

"So, now what are we supposed to do to go to the Temple of Light?" Allen looked around. There was no town out here! But the sign over the station said "Nihil-slikwalker-station"... There were only mountains. Very high mountains. It looked nearly impossible to climb them without wings! Margana walked over to him, taking her bag and pointing towards a giant stairway that lead right into the earth.

"Nihil is an underground-town... In this region it is winter right now, usually they have over 50°C on the surface-air, so they built the town under the surface to gain cool air from the surrounding rocks." Morgana smiled and looked over at Zeyir. "Shall we?"

Down in the town-center, Allen couldn't quite believe what he saw... The whole town was like one giant room... the houses were only mere doors on the walls, no special buildings. The roof was about 10 meters over their heads. Torches and small gleaming flowers lit the town. Even though they seemed to try to make the town look friendlier by decorating it with all kinds of plants, it looked like a prison to Allen... he was used

to open range, to fresh air, to natural light... but this town seemed so hectic, the air smelled old and used...

Morgana lead them slowly towards the Inn. Zeyir did not dare leaving Allen's side... he was afraid of being alone with that 'witch' how he used to call her...

In the Inn, Morgana was so 'nice' to pay for their rooms before leaving for the knight-guild. She wanted to talk with the guild-master about a permission to enter Yora.

Zeyir sat in the room, staring outside what was supposed to be a window, but it lead only to another crowded street... He held a small book in his hands that had been in their room. A small golden word was printed on its shelf, writing "Nihil-Guide" in a beautiful handwriting.

"What is that?" Allen leaned forward, looking at the book.

"A guide about Nihil..." The demon yawned and leaned back in his chair.

"...I can see that myself... I wanted to know if there is anything special!"

"The passage to Yora has been closed about 20 years back to prevent victims." Zeyir looked at Allen with anger-gleaming eyes. "The Temple of Light was said to be a domain of the Gods... many pilgrims died due to the heat out there. And whoever was not killed by the heat... was killed by the elf-tribe living in the desert... Seems as if this is going to be harder than we thought..." He sighed frustrated. "Maybe it wasn't such a good idea to come here first..."

"We can still take another route!" Allen sat down next to Zeyir. "You know, I owe you a lot... I really trust your feeling and if you think it is too dangerous..."

"No, it is alright... we will have to get to that temple anyway, and if it is winter here right now I don't want to know how it is going to be if we come here in summer!!" Zeyir looked down at the little book. "They don't give away any decent information about the dangers of Yora though... They want to make it look as if there is nothing worth to enter Yora anymore, so there is no need to help them with providing information about the desert itself..." Zeyir moved his claws through his hair in deep thought.

"So... then why don't we search for someone who knows?" Allen grinned and grabbed Zeyir's arm, dragging him outside.

The people outside were crowding the streets making the space in town appear even smaller. Allen looked around, searching for something that might provide them with information... He had always been good in talking with people even if he did not know them. He spotted a small flowershop on the side and walked towards it, Zeyir holding on his scarf to not lose him in the masses.

"Excuse me?" Allen opened the door slowly. It was a rather dark room, decorated with all kinds of flowers.

"We open the shop in about two hours. Please stay out till then..." An old man looked through a couple of blooms, before turning to his work again.

"Uhm, my apologies... I only wanted to ask some things..." Allen scratched the back of his head, stepping further in. "We want to travel to Yora and can't find anyone to help us providing information about its dangers..."

"You won't get there... you need an adventurer-passport and there are only very few to receive one... I doubt, boys like you will get one!" The old man said-with a warm friendly voice- before returning to his work. Zeyir already wanted to pack Allen's arm to lead him back outside as...

"Yeah, but we need to go there no matter with or without passport. We have a friend that knows the Guild-Master of Nihil, so we got good chances to get there..."

"..." The old man stood up, looking at Allen. "You are serious about that, huh? When I was younger, I was just as stubborn..." He chuckled before leading them in with a wink of his hand. Zeyir couldn't believe it! How did he do that!?

"Thank you!" Allen cheered before hopping in and sitting down on a chair at the side.

"I need to bring this into the room over there. I will be there for you in a few seconds!" The old man smiled and brought a few pots with earth into another room in the back of the shop.

"Allen, how did you know he was going to help us!?" Zeyir whispered, eyeing the door nervously.

"Did you see the flower-shop-sign? It was very old and the name of the shopkeeper was changed once. You can see it on the different conditions of the wood. But the name-sign is still rather old, so I guessed it must be a family-shop, given down from father to son or something... You said the path to Yora was closed twenty years ago... so maybe someone that lives here much longer already knows something about it! Besides, he had the symbol of light underneath the sign." Allen grinned satisfied. Zeyir just shook his head, unbelieving. He had underestimated Allen by far... For his age he was one smart cookie!

"So..." The old man entered the room again, smiling. "You two want to travel to Yora..." He sat next to Allen, smiling at the young adventurers. "I guess I can provide you with a lot of information... My grandfather used to take me with him when he traveled to the tribes of the desert..."

"We heard the elven tribes in the desert killed many travelers!" Zeyir interrupted curiously. He thought of them as the largest danger...

"That is correct... The desert-elves, how we use to call them, hate civilization... they have it very rough in Yora, even though they live with the blessing of the Lightspirit himself! When they were banned into the desert a very long time ago, they had to

learn to live in the heat with the dry soil and the rare water there. The pilgrims that wanted to travel to the Temple of Light to pray to the Gods started suggesting things to the town-council of Nihil things like building roads towards the temple through elven terrain or building wells... Well... twenty-five years ago the town-council gave in... They dared intruding the fragile balance of Yora, causing a disaster for the elves. One quarter of them were killed by the consequences... After this they declared their territory as officially forbidden for anyone beside their tribe-members. And they kept to their word. The city-guard was unable to protect the pilgrims and so the knight-guild decided to close the path to Yora. Since then, no one was allowed to enter the desert anymore." The old man sighed, sadness in his eyes. "But there are still some exceptions."

Allen looked at the old man, confused. "Exceptions?"

"Yes." The old man pointed at the door. "They don't respect the Gods. They are faithless. But who they worship is Sol himself, the Great Spirit of Light."

"Sol..." Zeyir closed his eyes, thinking for a second. "So if we travel under Sol's sign, they will let us through?"

"Who knows... but they will not just kill you off most likely!" He sighed. "Okay, is there anything else you want to know? Otherwise I got to get back to work!"

"Thank you very much for your aid! It is really appreciated!" With a grin, Allen bowed in respect and looked at Zeyir. "Do you have any questions left?"

"Nope!" Zeyir grinned and thanked the old man as well. They were much more informed now! At least they knew something about the upcoming dangers now, and about how they might save themselves if necessary...

They returned back to the Inn. Morgana was already waiting in the lobby, rather frustrated.

"Why didn't you tell me you were going out!?" She shrieked and hopped up from the couch. "You have no sense of respect towards elders!" Standing up, she threw two little passports towards Zeyir. "Here..."

"Those are..." Zeyir looked down on the pieces of paper in his hand. 'Adventurer Passport' was written on it with big black letters. Underneath there stood their names, Allen van Tirith and Zeyir Grozen.

"A little sign of my respect towards your handsomeness." She grinned and bit on her fingernails with her pointed teeth. Zeyir grew more and more red before offering Allen his passport.

"What do we owe you?" Zeyir replied flatly, hoping to receive a decent answer instead of more comments about his look or origin or whatever...

"Oh, that is for free. Let's say... this is my part of restoring this little world. It is so much fun teasing those poor Midgardians!" She laughed in a shrill tone and took Allen's hand. "I entrust you with Zeyir's safety! So bring him back alive, okay?" Grinning she looked at Zeyir.

"I'M NOT A KID!!" Zeyir barked before sitting down on the couch... he just didn't get this woman...

"Shall we leave town then, Zeyir?" Allen looked as if he couldn't stand the heavy atmosphere of this town any longer... "I hate it here to be honest..."

"I do too... Okay then. Let's pack our stuff and leave as soon as possible!" Zeyir smiled and Allen answered by simply running to his room, packing his bags.

"It was a good decision to travel to Yora first." Morgana sat next to Zeyir, leaning her head against his shoulder. "With the aid of Sol, your father won't be able to find you here. The rumors about your disappearing spread fast among Utgard and will soon reach Midgard. If Sol protects you with his aura, no demon will be able anymore to tell your true might." She smiled, eyeing her prince with amused eyes.

"This is why I decided to go to Yora first... it might be one of the most dangerous temples of Midgard regarding its location... but if the angels of Asgard AND my father is hunting us, we won't stand this very long..." Zeyir sighed, leaning back a little deeper into the soft fabric of the couch. "Now honestly... what can I do for you for your efforts? Please don't say—"

"Haha, no worries... I just want you to write me a little letter... in which you confirm that I was the one healing you back there in the woods!" She grinned evilly, and handed him over a feather and a piece of paper. "As soon as you are back on your throne this will be worth more to me than gold or favors!" She laughed at that one, glaring at Zeyir while he was writing the little note.

"..." Zeyir only shook his head but he couldn't hide a small grin on his face.

"You know, Zeyir... you are the kind of King Galdor was waiting for all the years..." She moved her fingers through his hair while talking. "You don't only see the problems of our world but the problems that influence all worlds alike. This is what makes you a great ruler in my eyes." She sighed and took the piece of paper from Zeyir as he finished it.

"So I guess you will stay here then?"

"You want me to stay, right? You don't like me..." She tried to act a little pained but the amusement was visible all over her face.

"Yupp." Zeyir grinned and stood up. "I got to get my packs now. If we leave town now, we can travel during night... that will make it easier for us." He smiled and helped Morgana up.

"Yes, that'd be best... I will stay here a little longer, so in the case of your safe return, please make sure to pay me a visit at the knight-guild okay?" She smiled, hugging the demon in good-bye.

"Promise, but now GET OFF OF ME!"