

Essence of Time - The Forgotten Journey

Von Deamond

Kapitel 15:

Chapter 15

Somewhere in the side streets of a river-town behind Mirror-Mountains...

"Okay, I booked us two rooms!" A young woman with raven black hair ran up to her companion. "No worries, we will find your friend." She grinned and handed over the key to their room to her friend.

"Thanks for your help, Raven. It is greatly appreciated. I will return the favor to you one day for sure." The other woman smiled gently. She wore a giant white witch-hood with rose-patterns on it. Her long silver-white hair swung freely around her back.

Raven smiled and whirled her long bangs around her finger. "You are always so polite... Honestly, sometimes I really think you are coming from a different world..." She laughed and entered their room.

"My apologizes..." The witch sighed sadly and followed her inside.

"I need to get these stupid wet clothes off already..." The young girl mumbled while throwing her wet shirt on the bed. The black top she was wearing underneath was wet as well, but she didn't mind it... Her short pants dried fast too, so the shirt was the only problem she had... She took a sip from her water-bottle before throwing it towards her friend. "You can have some too."

"Thanks but... why are you helping me anyway, Raven?! You know me since four days only yet you travel along with me... This is... so kind..." The white hair of the woman sitting on the bed, hang loosely down and even reached the ground. Her pale hands were folded on her lap while she watched the tough girl polishing her daggers.

"Don't take it personal but... you look so... fragile... as if you are going to break whenever someone dared touching you!" Raven chuckled. "And I'm a traveling mercenary! I don't have any jobs right now anyway, so I can travel along with you."

"I understand..." The witch lowered her head... She really was fragile compared to Raven... "But if that's so then I want you to work for me. I want to pay you for your kindness."

"Hehe, you are kidding, right? I do this at my own free will!"

"Yes, but... I want to do this. If people do something good they should be rewarded... most people think the other way around... that only people that do bad things are getting punished, but I think that is wrong..."

"You sound like a priest, you know that?" Raven grinned and sat down on a small chair in the corner of their room. "That's a nice way of thinking... but that's just not realistic... Punishment is what keeps people from doing bad things like stealing and such... The government can't effort paying for everyone that does good things!" She shook her head. "Especially not in times like this..."

"The government may not do such things but the Gods can." It was a mere whisper that reached Raven's ears.

"Well, if it means so much to you..." The young girl rubbed the back of her head, embarrassed. "Guess we have a deal then."

"Thank you, Raven..." The young woman smiled and took off her hood, lying it aside.

"No problem. My pleasure, Narwa."

Zeyir yawned in his pillow as Allen ripped open the curtains and sunlight shone right into their room. The clouds from the previous night were gone already and The soft mist on the streets promised a wonderful day.

"Callo is already gone and buys fresh supplies." Allen stated while returning to his bed, lying down again. "But as long as he is still gone, guess we can take another nap..."

"You are best!" Zeyir chuckled from his under his blanket.

As Callo returned from the market, he found his companions still lying in their beds, sleeping sheepishly.

"Steel, would you check if the river outside is close enough to the Inn?" He spoke with a calm voice. The small spirit looked at him confused but flew towards the window, looking outside.

"The Inn is build right on the riverside..." He was confused, but as he saw Callo pulling Zeyir's bed towards the window he just hopped out of the way.

"Lemme alooone... only five moar minuds, Will..." Zeyir seemed to be half asleep... All the better for Will... err, Callo. The elder opened the giant window and grabbed the blanked the demon was rolled into.

"Say the fishes good morning from me!" Callo braked as he lifted the blanket with Zeyir rolled into it out of the window with the help of Shade.

"Fish...?" A crackling voice came from inside the blanket-roll before... "UAAAAAH!"

Splash

"Shade, please take care that he is not drowning, alright?" The elf stated flatly before turning towards the human...

"I'm awake!" Allen shouted while jumping out of his bed, dressing in a haste to not become Callo's next victim.

After a long and delicious breakfast, they brought their bags to the reception to check out...

"Sorry, I got a question..." Zeyir looked at the Inn-keeper with a curious glance. Callo and Allen turned around, not certain what exactly he was talking about. "Is there another way to the Dark Chapel than the Grickroad?"

"Zeyir, that's the shortest way!" Allen looked at him confused.

"Yeah but... Is there a different way?" He ignored the questioning faces of his companions.

"... The Grickroad is the safest path to the Dark Chapel... but there exists a second path through the Alnutra-Forest. There are more monsters but the length is the same... I'd go through Grickroad though! The monsters in the forest are really tough!" The Inn-keeper looked at the younger men worried, but Zeyir only stared into blank space, lost in thought...

"Alright, thanks! We will take Grickroad!" Callo replied flatly and dragged his demon companion outside. "What has gotten into you!? Of course we will take the road! Why should we travel through a dangerous forest if we can have the secure route!? This is no game, Zeyir!" He hissed in a dangerous tone.

"I know, I know!!" The demon barked back, visibly annoyed.

"Cut it out, you two..." Allen sighed and stepped between the two. "But Callo is right... Grickroad is probably the safest route we have taken during this whole journey! Why don't you want to travel on it!?"

"Exactly because it is the most obvious way to travel!" Zeyir looked at the summoner with worry in his eyes. "Haven't you seen the shootingstar a week ago? It came down somewhere in this region so maybe they expect us to travel to Luna's chapel..."

"Does that mean ALL Gods are our enemies?" Callo sighed and shook his head.

"Maybe... I don't want to declare them all to enemies, but right now it seems as if the Gods are intending to kill Allen. That'd be the end of Midgard." Zeyir leaned back a little while looking up at the morning-sky.

"What makes me wonder the whole time already though is..." The elf paused. Zeyir glared at his eyes which had already formed to little slits, piercing through him like daggers... "What exactly makes you want to help Midgard? It is obvious that you don't really care about Midgardians' lives."

"..." Zeyir closed his eyes, thinking about this question deep within him... Callo was right... He never really cared about life in Midgard... for him it had always been just as distant as Asgard... "I... want to protect Utgard..." He replied finally.

"Hm?" Allen looked at his friend in confusion. "But... shouldn't you be in Utgard then? This won't change anything at Utgard... we are only regenerating Midgard's Mana with the help of the Spirits."

"That is right." Callo drew out a dagger, even though he didn't really know why... He liked Zeyir, and even if he didn't like the answer he wasn't going to hurt him... but the comfort of steel in his hands gave him self-confidence in any kind of situation...

"Asgard, Utgard and Midgard belong together. If one world dies, disease will come above the others as well... If Midgard dies, war will break out again! I don't want to see war in my country!" Zeyir protested. "These are my reasons. I don't really care if Midgard regenerates it's Mana or not... but the key to help my world lies within the destiny of Midgard! This is why I will do my best to help you saving your world! That way, I can save my own..."

"Guess that is enough reason then..." Callo smiled and put away his knife. Allen grinned too. "I hate to admit it... but guess then the forest really is the better route..." The elf sighed deeply... "So much about easy travel to Luna..."

"Haha, you don't want to tell me you are going to give up this easily!" Allen laughed and patted the elder.

Alnutra-Forest... A region said to be one of the paths guiding down to Utgard... Dark creatures are living in the once peaceful woods- silent, fast, hungry...

Zeyir went up ahead of the others. His senses felt better again... They had been rather numb since their trip to Yora, but back surrounded by dark Mana he just felt like his old self again.

"If I'm not mistaken, there are 3 Otherworld-Gates in this forest. My teacher once told me about them... Now I know why I knew that name! Haha, Alnurta, yeah, that's it!" He grinned like a honey-bear while looking at the worried human and elf... "Stop making such long faces! Honestly, you should learn to cheer up a little sometimes..."

Zeyir shook his head amused and listened to his surroundings again. It was nearly evening by now and about time to set a camp... but as long as the woods were as thick as they were right now, it was too dangerous to set up camp...

The trees in this forest had black leafs, but the stumps were white and seemed to shine a little in the darkness... it gave the whole forest a sense of myths and magic...

"Huh?!" Zeyir stopped all of a sudden.

"What's wrong!?" Callo drew out his rapiers, ready to pierce down whatever the demon had spotted.

"I can... hear someone calling... it is... a girl..." Zeyir tried his best to figure out where the sound was coming from... "That way!" He shouted all of a sudden, running towards he was certain the voice had come from.

After a few minutes of running, Allen and Callo could hear the voice as well.

"Narwa!? Where are you!? Narwa!"

It was a female voice, Zeyir had been right. As the group ran past a couple of trees, they suddenly spotted a young woman standing in an opening.

"Narwa!" She kept shouting. She held a long sword in her hand, a floret, and from the way she held it, Callo knew right away that she had to be an experienced fighter...

"Hey! Watch out, you are going to attract all monsters in the surrounding twenty miles!" Allen ran up to the human girl. She was just about Allen's age... maybe one or two years younger...

"I don't care!" She barked at the summoner. Her raven hair waved around her face, framing it perfectly while her deep brown eyes gleamed in the light of the trees. She wore a black shirt with auburn belts and short grey trousers. Her leathergloves had metallic ornaments attached on them, and a long white muffler. Allen blushed a little but managed to catch his senses again.

"Maybe we can help you? Are you looking for a friend?"

"Y..yeah..." She looked down on the ground ashamed and worried... "I went hunting while she set up camp... when I came back, she was gone but there were traces of wild animals everywhere! I swore to protect her! GRA!" She moved her fingers through her hair in frustration while looking at Callo and Zeyir. "Hey you!" She pointed at Zeyir.

"Huh?" The demon stepped back a little as the girl suddenly ran up to him with an angry expression on her face. "You are a demon, right? Great! Can't you find her for me? Use your senses or something!"

"Hey! I'm not your servant or something! Stop ordering me around!"

Suddenly... the girls faceexpression changed... her angry frame turned into a weak, sad expression... the strong eyes from before filled with tears.

"Please... It'd mean so much to me if you could find her for me! I'm just a weak human and you are a superior demon... I can't handle this on my own..." Her puppy-eyes were genius...Zeyir couldn't resist a single second...

"A...alright, alright!" Zeyir shook his head to get rid of the intense glare. As he opened his eyes again, the puppy-glare had turned into a mean grin already... Damn, she was good... He tried to concentrate the best he could effort on all Mana, moving in the forest...

"Oh, by the way... I'm Raven!" The girl introduced herself to Allen while keeping an eye on the demon.

"Allen." The summoner replied grinning.

"I... can feel someone... using Light-Mana... It is changing the flow of dark Mana in the forest..." Zeyir ripped his eyes open.

"That's her!!! She is a light-magician!" Raven hopped up and down, happily.

"She seems to be in serious trouble... Callo! Can you lend me Shade's Mana for a bit? With her help I can speed up much better!" Zeyir shot a glare at the elf. He nodded and summoned his Spirit. Without a further word, Zeyir followed the trace of light-Mana that shone in the darkness like a star at the night sky to his inner eye...

"Leave me alone already!!" A female voice rang to his ears while he kept running... The Mana-pulse grew stronger, he was very close already...

"Divine light!" The white haired witch shot an arrow of light towards something that looked like a giant black bear... It was no use... her Mana was just too weakened by the surroundings... "Oh no..." She dodged another bear's claw by stepping back, but... "Uah!" She tripped over a stone, falling flatly on her back. "Ouch..." She tried to get up but the pain prevented her from moving... "No... this can't end here...!" She closed her eyes as one of the giant bears sprang forward, ready to take her last breath...

"Hey!" Suddenly the sound of flames and steel cutting through flesh reached her ears. She opened her eyes carefully. The bear was burning... No, it was not the bear lone... A flaming sword was stuck in its neck, killing the beast off immediately. It fell forward, right to the woman's feet. A slash announced the death of the second bear... It fell sideward and gave her open sight at who saved her...

"Demon!" She shouted all of a sudden, pointing at her savior.

"Goddess!" Zeyir stepped back a bit, re-summoning his flamesword just in case.

"I KNEW it! You demon-breed are behind all of this!" She shouted angrily and hopped up, her staff tight in hands.

"Tse, your kind should know better than trying to face a demon in an area like this... you are lost!" Zeyir smirked, whirling dark energy around his fingers.

"We will see... I call upon the holy powers of Asgard! Guide me!" She rose her staff into the air and an aura of light surrounded her...

"You think that can stop me?! Pathetic!" The demon hissed, stepping closer. He ran forward towards the goddess, ready to strike, but much to his surprise... "Uah!" He was stopped by holy energy all of a sudden... the Mana around the witch was totally changed... all darkness seemed to be gone around her... Her light shone brightly and finally gave her full sight at her opponent.

"You... you are one of the Grozen-family!" She gasped, surprised. Her eyes focused on the mark on Zeyir's forehead.

"And what are you going to do with this little information?" Zeyir tried to act tough... but now he couldn't just let her go anymore... he didn't know this goddess... and if she returned to Asgard and told them she saw him on Midgard... No, letting her go was no option any longer. "Sorry, but our little small-talk ends here... Speak your prayers, Light-follower!"

"We will see..." She bit her lip, concentrating a little stronger on the light-wall around her. Both enemies started running towards each other, ready to give their all.

"STOOOOOP!" A voices rang through the air, stopping them from continuing their fight.

"Allen! Callo" Zeyir looked at his companions, surprised by their sudden appearance... he had concentrated so much on the that woman that he had totally forgotten about his surroundings...

"Raven!" The witch lowered her staff, visibly relieved to see her friend...

"Narwa, you are alright! I'm so sorry..." The young girl hugged her friend and shot an evil glare at Zeyir. "I told you to find her! Not to attack her you prune!"

"Hmpf!" Zeyir shot Narwa a glare that promised death... but now that he knew her name again... he recognized her. "I gotta talk with you... Alone!" He bit his lip. Maybe he could get some information out of her about what the Gods were up to...

Allen and Callo only stood there, surprised... They saw clearly that something was not right with their friend... but they weren't able to tell what it was...

"Do you think he has a crush on her? Or why does he want to talk with her alone...? I don't get it..." Callo shook his head while whispering towards Allen.

"I have no clue what is wrong... but he doesn't really look as if he was interested in her..." Allen shook his head.

"So... You are the Flower of Asgard..." Zeyir grinned evilly as he was finally alone with Narwa. Raven had decided to set up camp along with the others in the meantime.

"Hmpf! And you must be the Prince of Galdor then!" Narwa replied, a weird gleam in her eyes.

"However... I want you to tell me what you are doing here on Midgard."

"Tse, as if I was telling this YOU among all people on this world!" She shook her head and leaned back against a tree. Her long hair blew around her legs while her hat threw a shadow on her silver eyes.

"Well... if you don't, I will tell your little friend that you are definitely not just a light-magician... Haha, the famous Flower of Asgard! I can't believe it!" Zeyir chuckled and leaned back on a tree as well, shooting her dangerous glares.

"I won't tell you a word! Besides... how about your friends get to know that you are just as much from Midgard as I am?"

"Oh, they know... they know already..." Zeyir's grin grew wider with every second.

"..." Narwa grew visibly nervous. A small blush appeared on her cheeks as she had to admit herself that she was going to lose this fight... "I won't tell you anyway!" She turned all of a sudden, walking back to the camp annoyed. "Go back to your hole, demon!" She shouted from rather close to the camp already what made her gain some weird glares from Raven, Callo and Allen...

"Wow, I never thought Narwa was able to yell at someone..." Raven laughed while watching Allen how he cooked their dinner...

"Hehe, Zeyir can be rather rude sometimes..." The young man shook his head giggling while throwing some more basil-leaves into the pot.

"Hey, I got an idea!" Raven hopped up, smiling happily. Zeyir returned right now as well, sitting down next to Callo.

"And this is?" The white witch smiled gently and sat down on a rock, folding her hands firmly on her lap.

"Hey guys, have you seen a girl called Alena Vanrith somewhere here in the region? Narwa is looking for her! They are old friends, right?" She smiled at Narwa who suddenly grew paler and paler.

"Raven!!!" She beamed and jumped up, looking nervously at Zeyir.

"No, sorry, never heard of her... we are not from this region either... We are just trying to make our way to the Dark Chapel." Allen smiled. Now it was Zeyir's turn to grow nervous.

"Allen! Shut it, that is none of their concern!!!" He jumped up as well, staring at Narwa.

Callo sat on his tree-stump, watching the two exchanging deathglares while nipping on his cup with tea...

"Honestly... this travel gets weirder with every day passing..." Shade floated next to her master, grinning innocently...

"True... But at least we are getting closer to Luna and Sol..." He replied and leaned back, watching the show.