

Essence of Time - The Forgotten Journey

Von Deamond

Kapitel 36:

Chapter 36

The air was filled with a sweet scent, sweeter than the smell of honey. But it was a deadly sweetness.

Narwa had a hard time holding Raven and Nuramond up in the air. Her strength slowly faded away and the ground was still filled with poisonous flowers. She could not let them down. Himikea hang on the roof, holding on a branch to not fall down. The guys didn't have it much easier. The only spot left without river-deaths –that was the name of these deadly helpers of the wyrm, attacking them- was the altar itself, and with three grown up men standing on it, the space left to move properly was rather limited.

"How about we try that technique out that we were talking about this morning?" Callo suggested.

"Nya, I liked the one we used on this emerald-dragon today." Zeyir added, nervously following the dragon-worm as he circled around them like a hawk, spotting its prey.

"The problem is..." Allen interrupted the two of them. "...if you kill Weyards, who am I going to form a pact with?!" He hissed dangerously. "No, killing is not always an option, you two!"

"Awww..." Zeyir rolled his eyes, unsummoning his flame-saber.

"Hey, what are you doing?!" Callo shouted as the demon suddenly jumped towards the dragon-worm. "ZEYIR!"

With his claws, Galdor's prince held himself on the jaw of the beast, trying his best to remain away from the teeth of the spirit while trying to cut the softer parts of the worm's skin in the throat-area.

"I said NO KILLING!" Allen yelled while spreading his arms. Maybe Sol could help, especially cause that might stop Zeyir from doing something stupid.

"How... about some help?!" Zeyir shouted while holding himself on the dragon with all

force. "We need to weaken Weyards at least!"

"Dammit..." Callo summoned a chain from Steel, fixing it on the hilt of one of his rapiers and on his wrist. "Zeyir, watch out!" He whirled the chain like a whip, sending it towards the poisoned flowers on the ground, cutting them down to gain some free spots.

Bad idea...

Weyards's eyes fell on the flowers and he got the perfect idea how to get rid of the demon on his throat. Winding, he let himself fall into the poisonous flowers.

Shocked, Zeyir tried to jump off the dragon's neck towards one of the spots Callo had cleared, but now he was trapped. On all sides he was surrounded by river-deaths and Callo was not experienced enough with his 'new weapon' to cut him a path without risking to chop his head off.

Roaring dangerously, the worm turned, focusing the demon with his small eyes. The flowers and their poison had no effect at all on the Great Spirit of Plants. Gulping even more, Zeyir stepped back carefully, stopping immediately when he felt the first blooms pressing with a deadly softness against his trousers.

"Allen, summon Sol faster!" Callo hissed, watching the human next to him, but he knew just as well as the others that hurrying wouldn't help in this case at all. It would even rather slow Allen down.

"Guys... I need some help here..." Zeyir whispered more to himself than to the others as the worm slowly moved towards him like a snake, ready to catch a trapped mouse. The giant head of Weyards slowly leaned forward. Zeyir could swear the beast was grinning, showing off its teeth while a growl escaped the scratched throat.

Opening his giant jaw, Weyards prepared to swallow the helpless demon with one single bite while thousands of thoughts rushed through Zeyir's head how maybe he could try to save his life, but any of these plans included jumping into the field of river-deaths which was just as great as being eaten by a giant worm...

"Zey!" Suddenly someone grabbed him from behind, pulling him upward out of the way. Confused, he looked up.

"N-Narwa?!" The goddess held him with her tender arms, trying her hardest to fly up as fast as possible with the weight she was carrying. Growling, Weyards tried to snap her with his teeth while she was still in range. "Where are--!" Zeyir looked over to the altar. Instead of only Allen and Callo, now Nuramond and Raven tried their best to not fall down the stone-table while Allen needed most of the space to summon.

"Dammit... I hate flying while holding someone..." Narwa hissed, while trying to dodge Weyards. She was able to carry Zeyir with her wings, but she was slowed down so much, she almost flew on the spot which made her a perfect target for the angry dragon-worm.

"... I summon you... SOL!" Finally, Allen was done and a flashing light blinded anyone on the room. Out of this light, the Great Spirit of Light formed, in all his glory. The white wings and golden hair fell surrounded his tender body while the soft eyes focused on the goddess and demon in midair.

"With the might of Light..." The echoing voice of the spirit was so calm, it gave Allen a chill. "I bless you."

Suddenly, Narwa regained her might. With all force, she pushed herself up, finally getting out of reach of Weyards.

"Watch where you are flying!" Zeyir shouted as the goddess almost hit the roof.

"How about I let you fall?! Then I don't have to worry about it anymore!" She hissed angrily while searching for a good spot to let the demon down so he could return to Raven and Nuramond, taking care of them. Right now, the altar was too much of a good target to keep them all there.

"At least I wouldn't have to tell anyone I was saved by a goddeAAAAAH!" Letting the demon fall, Narwa grinned at his face as he landed on the back of the dragon.

"Keep him busy while I handle the others!" The goddess shouted while rushing towards the altar, picking up Raven and Nuramond again.

In the meantime Himikea held on her branch on the roof, thinking about what to do. It felt weird... She knew that she would be unable to summon Weyards's might against the Spirit himself but... somehow the Mana coming from this Great Spirit didn't feel like the Mana she used to summon... It was worth a try...

"Weyards. Calm down and-" Sol was cut in the middle of his phrase by a roar of the dragon.

"Don't tell me what I have to do, Sol. Go to your desert-folks and stay out of the business of the forest." The Great Spirit of Plants hissed dangerously.

Zeyir, uncertain what to do on the spirit's back slapped his hand against his forehead. Not only the elves but also the Spirits hated each other?! What was this twisted game all about!?

"Since when do you feel a grunge against us, Weyards?" Sol spoke calmly, focusing on the dragon. "We are the Great Spirits of Midgard. This task has been given to us by Mana itself. We are all the same and now our time has come to protect what we have been created for."

"..." The dragon hissed dangerously, his eyes focusing Allen. "I won't let myself get bound by a human just because Mana is going crazy lately. There were diseases

before! And we slept them out and look, the world still exists." Weyards rose to his full height, facing Sol eye in eye. "And just because this human wears the name of a tribe that was blessed with the might of Mana, I will not bow before him!"

"What has gotten into you?!" Slowly, even the calm Sol seemed to grow angry at the spirit in front of him. "Have you forgotten the vow each Great Spirit has to make before the might of Mana opens to it?"

"I don't know what you are talking about." The spirit hissed dangerously while preparing to attack.

"Then be it. I will force you to remember the task of a Great Spirit!" Sol barked while spreading his wings in a fighting-stance.

"Seems as if they will fight this out..." Callo sighed relieved that he could rely on Sol for this. Otherwise he wouldn't have known what to do.

"No, I don't think so..." Allen muttered while whipping the sweat off his forehead. "Sol is fighting through my Mana, remember? I doubt that my Mana will be enough to beaten a Great Spirit even with the help of Sol..."

"Great..." Callo grunted, thinking about something to do. His eyes fell on Himikea. "Wait a second..."

"Hm?" Allen looked weakened over to the half-spirit hanging on a branch. "!! How... how can Weyards obey her when they have a pact with each other?"

"Or more precisely, how can Himikea summon Weyards's might without Weyards himself noticing it! Look!"

The green haired woman was surrounded by Mana. She felt how the Mana she used to feel when summoning Weyards slowly circled through the altar-room, filling the air with the soft scent of flowers.

Frozen by shock, Weyards felt how the ground beneath him started to shake as roots broke through it. Just as before on the giant tree in Titania, they moved around as if they were alive, forming a net of wood and leaves.

The mighty attack pushed the spirit down to the ground, making it unable for the dragonworm to move. Zeyir though had a hard time, being captured as well, his body getting pressed against a weird flower that was uncomfortably hard compared to the usual softness of a bloom.

Fighting against the net, Weyards roared so loud it hurt the ears. Allen felt pity for the poor spirit, looking up at Sol unsecure.

"Please... Awake me, summoner with Mana's blessing..." A tender voice rustled

through the air like the sound of leaves dancing in the air.

"!!" Callo and Allen both looked at each other in shock.

"B... But Lady Weyards..." The dragon stopped fighting against the roots and Himikea slowly released him, unsommoning Weyards's might.

"Does that mean, you aren't Weyards?!" Nuramond almost let go of Narwa's hand in surprise. "B-but the elves worship you as their..."

"You are a protector." Sol interrupted. "This is why you cannot remember the vow of the Spirits, and it is the reason why different from us other spirits you weren't sealed." A small smile formed on the usually emotionless face of the Great Spirit of Light. "So you are just the guardian of the real Great Spirit of Plants."

"..." The dragon looked aside ashamed, slowly building himself up again. He made the poisonous flowers on the ground disappear while his gaze drifted off on his back.

Zeyir still lay rather dizzy next to the weird flower. He could swear he was able to feel an immense amount of Mana within that little bloom...

A soft light surrounded the flower as it slowly started opening.

The dragonworm lay down, presenting the flower to the summoner and elf on the altar.

Narwa and the two girls hanging on her arms landed next to the stone-table, watching in awe as the flower opened slowly. Himikea came running towards them as well, her hands folded in silent prayers to the Great Spirit, thanking it for borrowing her its might again.

"!" Zeyir was the first one to get to see what had been hidden inside the bloom. His mouth fell open in shock. "You must be kidding me!"

"What's wrong? I can't see it..." Raven whined while hopping on the spot to see better what was going on.

Inside the flower, a little fairy was lying on a bed of leaves and down. Her rainbow-like hair shimmered in the soft light shimmering through the trees above while her tender body rested sleeping and bound by ivy.

"This small... thing... is Weyards?!" Callo's jaw clapped open, feeling lost between amusement, shock and disappointment.

"Indeed. This feels much more like it." Sol's last words echoed through the hall before he disappeared in a soft mist of white sparkles.

"Holy Spirit of Plants. Lord of Nature! Awake and fulfill your divine duty!" As Allen finished his chanting, the Mana that still filled the air seemed to flow into the small

spirit in front of them.

Blinking carefully, she opened her eyes. The small animal-like ears moved slowly up and down, concentrating on the surrounding sounds. Her slim body rose from the bed of blooms while small butterfly-wings spread on her back.

Yawning, she rubbed her eyes sleepdazed.

"Are... you Weyards?" Allen rose an eyebrow... 'Great Spirit' wasn't really matching for the small pixi-like spirit... 'Tiny Spirit of Plants' was a much more fitting title for her...

"Yes, I am." She smiled softly while still rubbing her eyes sleepy.

"Milady, I am sorry for letting these people interrupt your sleep..." The dragon's voice crackled in shame. He seemed dead-beaten.

"Vega, I am glad someone finally awoke me from my unnatural sleep." Smiling she took a step closer towards Allen. Beneath her feet, more plants started growing with every step she took.

"Why does anyone believe, this dragon is you?" Nuramond couldn't believe it. Anyone... Absolutely anyone of their kind worshipped the wrong spirit!

"Probably because no one would kneel down in front of a pixi..." Zeyir rolled his eyes, getting smacked by Callo.

"Almost..." Weyards lowered her head ashamed. She was about the size of a hand, but that was not her main-problem. "If anyone beside my closest followers knew who I really am, other spirits might try taking my place."

"Killing a Great Spirit is the greatest crime a spirit can commit, but when a smaller spirit actually manages to fulfill an assassination on a Great Spirit of their Mana, they will take over their place." Zeyir grit his teeth angrily.

"How comes you know about that?" Narwa rose an eyebrow, folding her arms in front of her chest, demanding an answer.

"Because, even though Utgard doesn't care about Midgard, Galdor cares about the Great Spirits of Darkness. And the very first Great Spirit Nocture –my ancestor- has been killed by a spirit that took her place." The demon hissed. "We follow the history of the Great Spirits of Darkness very closely as the Grozens share their blood with the very first of them." Zeyir sighed... Remembering his lessons in Utgard was anything but funny... He remembered in horror how he had to learn about that almost every day with his old teacher...

"Exactly..." Weyards nodded. "When I was elected as next Great Spirit of Plants, Vega offered me to pretend to be the new Great Spirit... He took my name and protected me... No one would dare standing against him." She smiled softly, looking at her

companion with dreamy eyes. "I am not a strong representative of the might of nature, but Mana chose me to be a Great Spirit... and so be it... I will do as I vowed a long time ago."

"But..." Allen lowered his head. "You cannot form a pact with me."

"Huh?!" Zeyir, Callo and Raven snapped, staring at their friend.

"He is right..." Himikea sighed sadly. "A spirit can only form one pact, and a pact can only be broken by death of either the pact-maker or the spirit itself... and in this case it means either me or Weyards."

"!!" Nuramond shook her head. "No! This can't... this can't be!" Desperately she looked over to Allen. "You cannot do that!"

"I will have to." The expression on the summoner's face grew serious. "This whole journey would be in vain if I can't form a pact with Weyards. However..." His gaze turned to the green-haired woman. "I can form the last pact with Weyards, so you can at least live as long as this journey lasts..."

"Allen!" Raven barked at the rudeness of her friend.

"He is right... as much as it bothers me, but there is no other way." Callo grit his teeth. He disliked the fact that the destiny of Midgard depended on the death of a woman...

"I apology..." Weyards lowered her head. "I will go to sleep again. If you need my powers, just call for me, and I will do my best to help you." With this, the bloom slowly started closing itself again, Weyards lying down within it, resting on her bed of ivy and leaves.

It was a silent way back to the elven town. Almost no words fell between the group-members. The only discussion that had taken place during the whole time was an agreement between Himikea and Nuramond not to tell anyone about Weyards's true nature and about the pact.

Grenlin sat on a café at the entrance of the city along with Argon who read a book, seemingly awaiting the group. At their long faces though the dwarf saw immediately that something was wrong. As Argon spotted them though, he jumped up, running towards Callo and Nuramond.

"If you dared touching my sister while you were away, I will-"

"Do what?" Callo interrupted. "Punishing me with your non-existent summon-partners?" He grinned evilly, mocking the poor forest-elf with the fact he had three pacts and the youngster not a single one...

"..." The greenhaired man lolled out his tongue and took his sister's arm.

"Man, I really miss the desert sometimes..." The tan elf sighed and rubbed the back of his head, sending his long hair flying around wildly.

"Is something wrong?" Grnlin asked worried as she saw Narwa's saddened face. "A beautiful woman as you shouldn't look so sad..."

"We were unable to form a pact with Weyards now, but we will soon enough, that's all." Allen interrupted. He shook his head towards Raven who was just about to say something. He didn't want the cheery dwarf or the elven boy to know what was lying at the end of their journey...

"Oh..." The dwarf blinked. "Well, if you will be able to form a pact in the future, there shouldn't be much of a problem, right?" She grinned and patted the goddess. "No reason to be sad about!"

"She is right! Which spirit are we heading for next?" Raven tried to change subject as fast as possible. She disliked this delicate subject and lying was something she hated even more... So avoiding was the best thing to do!

"How about we have a stop at the Inn first? I feel like breaking down at any possible second..." The demon held his head. He felt still a little dizzy. "Man, seems as if I got hit harder by that net than I had thought..."

"Even for being a demon you look rather pale right now..." Narwa sighed and walked up to the demon, placing her hand on his forehead. "Yeah, you are rather hot..."

"Thanks for the compliment." The demon lolled out his tongue, mocking the goddess at any chance he could get.

"No, honestly, your forehead is really warm."

"Do you have a cold?" Raven walked up to him, taking his arm carefully. Allen ran up to the demon as well, placing a hand on his shoulder.

"Do you feel sick?"

"Maybe you got hit on the head a little too hard." Callo stated sarcastically. "Come on, let's get back to the Inn."

"Yeah, and leave me alone! I'm not a little kid!" Zeyir grunted, running ahead.

As they finally reached the Inn, Zeyir went up to the guys' room while the others stayed in the entrance-hall to discuss their next steps...

"You can travel with me to the dwarven capital..." Grenlin suggested. "I have a dragon that I need to deliver to the capital but from there on we have to travel by foot."

"Which options do we have from there on?" Allen tried to remember the map around

the mirror-mountains... Luna would be a good goal there but as they already had a pact with her this was out of question...

"On this continent, there aren't that many spirits left to form pacts with." Callo interrupted. "There is Flamera in the Numari-desert and Windy on the Abrassar-Fields. Other than this there is only Aquarius on the edge of the ocean. The other Great Spirits are all oversea."

„I think there is a station to Numari is I'm not completely mistaken..." Grnlin tried to remember.

„Gret so then Numari is our next goal!" Raven chirped. "Then our poor desert-elf here get's to see a desert again finally! Hehehe..."

Rolling his eyes, Callo turned over to himikea, Nurmaond and Argon. "What about you? Are you coming with us?"

"No way! Not even if the world was about to end!" Argon snapped.

"Sure thing!" Nuramond smiled.

Shocked about his sister's reaction, Argon had no other choice than to change his mind...

"I will come with you as well!" Himikea smiled and took Allen's hand. "I want to see with my own eyes how Mana is revived again!"

"..." A small smile appeared on the summoner's lips. "Alright... so be it. Flamera is our next Great Spirit!"

Up in his room, Zeyir prepared for bed. He really felt as if he got himself a cold... Weird... Putting off his shirt and trousers, he threw them over a chair before lying down in his bed, falling asleep.

With deadly silence, a small thorn fell down from the demon's trousers, landing softly on the wooden ground.