

Essence of Time - The Forgotten Journey

Von Deamond

Kapitel 6:

Chapter 6

„It is so coooold!!“ An annoyed sigh was heard over the dunes of Yora-desert. The sky was clear and the little stars sparkled as if they tried with all might to light the night into day. The crescent moon shone over their heads as two adventurers made their way through the sandy land.

“I thought we are in a desert!? How can it be so cold!?” Allen complained the whole night already about the cold, not able to understand how his companion Zeyir was able to not even shiver, even though he had no scarf to warm himself with...

“It is always cold during night in a desert, Allen! Now stop making such a noise! We must be careful to not run into one of those desert-elves...” Zeyir sighed, his eyes and ears, keen due to the darkness of the night, searched for signs of life in the seemingly eternal ocean of dunes and sand.

“Why can’t we just travel during day-time then?” Allen sighed, rubbing his arms eagerly to war up a little...

“Rub your chest, not your arms. You will feel warmer...” Zeyir scratched the back of his head while shooting the human an annoyed glare. “During daytime it is at least 50°C hot here! That is much harder than traveling during night! Besides, my senses wouldn’t be as sharp as during night, so the danger of running into monsters or one of those desert-people would be much higher!” With a smack against Allen’s shoulder, he fastened his pace. “Come on! We have to find something where we can rest... it had been a long march...” Zeyir just remembered what his old teacher once had told him... Humans feel temperature-differences much more intense than demons... so maybe Allen was really affected by the cold... a break would do well to him! They didn’t have to rush to the temple anyway... Yarna and his angels were gone back in Asgard and Morgana had promised him to take care of the demons searching for him...

“Great!” Allen seemed much cheerier now that he had heard the word ‘break’. He hurried to catch up with his demonic friend.

After a while in which no one of the talked, Zeyir spotted a dark area in the sands far

away from them...

"Hey Allen, I think there is something like... a cave!" Zeyir smiled at the glee in Allen's face. "Time for a break, huh?" With a grin, he started running towards the cave. "First there wins!" He shouted over his shoulder, followed by Allen.

"That's unfair!" Allen laughed more than he complained but tried to run as fast as possible in the fast sand.

It didn't take Allen very long to catch up with the demon. Zeyir was not used to the soft ground at all and kept tripping every few meters while Allen, as experienced hunter, had little problem with the sand under his feet.

"First!" Allen cheered as he reached the little cave while Zeyir was still a few dunes away...

"Yeah, yeah... got you..." He slowed down, grinning. "Hm? That's one weird cave..." Zeyir's eyes nearly doubled in size as he came closer. The entrance was like a giant crack in the sand... it was not surrounded by rocks or anything... the sand alone seemed to be solid enough to keep the entrance open... "Shall we go in? I need something to eat..." Zeyir smiled warmly and didn't wait for an answer, entering the cave carelessly.

"Good idea!" Grinning, Allen followed him, searching through his packs for their supplies. Morgana had given them some money and food for their trip before they had let for Yora. As reward, they had to promise her to visit her again after they were done with Sol and the Light Temple... Weird woman...

Allen glared at Zeyir confused as he seemed to stare at the darkness in awe. "What is wrong?" He ran up to the demon, staring into the black darkness.

"Right, you can't see very well here..." Zeyir's voice was filled with fascination. He summoned his flame-sword to lighten the cave a little. As soon as the beams of fire around him lit the cave, Allen knew what Zeyir had been staring at. The cave was giant. It was not very high, but there was something like a cliff right inside of it, and at the cliffs walls, hundreds of little naturally grown crystals sparkled in the red light of the fire. There was a little spot that lead to a platform a few meters down the edge. A little spring spread out of the ground there, making a small river running over the solid ground, falling down into the depths of the cave.

"This looks awesome!" Allen stared at the scenery, no more words left to describe the natural beauty of the cave. "And there even is water!" He walked down the little path to the platform and checked the waters condition. "It is so clear! Zeyir, this is a perfect spot to rest! Can't we stay here till tomorrow night? Who knows when we will find a cave like this again?!" Allen looked at Zeyir with something that seemingly was supposed to look like puppy-eyes... but coming from the hazel haired human it looked just plain weird...

"Nya... maybe you are right... this is a really great spot to rest!" Zeyir smiled. Those

little games of Allen amused him all the time. He really started liking the human as a person, not only as the summoner that was supposed to prevent a second war between Asgard and Utgard!

"Okay, let's set up a camp!" Allen took off his scarf, forming a pillow out of it near the cliff-wall- he felt uncomfortable at the thought of sleeping near the edge of a cliff... He sometimes rolled around during his sleep, and falling down there would be deadly! Zeyir joined him and laid his sword on the ground. It still gave away enough light to make the crystals sparkle, but it was gentle enough to sleep. Allen slowly drifted off into deep slumber while Zeyir kept staring at the sparkling walls.

"I'm doing the right thing!" Zeyir closed his eyes and with a wink of his hand, the sword disappeared, casting darkness over them.

"Pst... Zeyir..." Allen whispered as quiet as possible into Zeyir's ear. The demon slowly opened his eyes, trying to ask what was wrong, but his mouth was covered with Allen's hand. The human's face was rather pale right now... he looked worried... and where did the light come from? It was still night, wasn't it? Zeyir tried to check his inner time-feeling, and anything within him told him it was still night! So where did that annoying light come from!?

"hmfbp!" He tried to speak through Allen's hand, but not a chance. The summoner placed a finger in front of his lips, telling the demon to shut up. He nodded towards the edge of the cliff above them.

Someone was sitting there! The edge was above their heads, so as long as the person did not lean really far forward, they were save, but if the person came down to the spring, they were trapped!

From the stature of the legs and the sandals she wore, Zeyir and Allen guessed it had to be a woman. Zeyir could feel Light-Mana around her. So she was the one lighting the cave.

Allen and Zeyir sat there, pressed against the wall, not daring to open their mouths. They both had the same thought: Desert-elves!

It had been at least half an hour before the person above them stood up. Zeyir could hear steps... but they did not come from the edge of the cliff, but from where the entrance of the cave was.

"I thought you forgot about me." A female voice cut through the silence.

"I'm sorry, Serena." A male voice, deep but clear, was heard. Zeyir had to gulp. There was more than one elf... "I told you not to visit me during my night-watch!"

"Oh Callo! I can watch over myself alone!" The girl named Serena seemed rather annoyed.

"No you can't. These caves are dangerous! They are filled with dark creatures! You shouldn't even be here with me! How am I going to explain this to your father if something happens to you?" The man named Callo seemed angry, but his voice was still low and somewhat... respectful? Zeyir knew this tone... his friends always talked with him in the same way back in Galdor... they did never dare showing him their real feelings...

"Callo... do you like me?"

"Of course I do. You are my friend and—"

"That's not what I mean... You know what I'm talking about!" Serena's voice grew angrier with every word she spoke. Allen had to shake his head at the conversation... What did they run into now again!?

"I..." Callo seemed to hesitate but then... "Wait, did you feel that too, Serena?" Someone came closer to the edge of the cliff. From the weight of the steps, Zeyir guessed it had to be the man.

"Feel what?" A second person walked towards the cliffs edge. Allen and Zeyir both stared at the cliff, 4 meters above their heads. Their hearts poked against their chests with incredible speed.

"Hm... Maybe I am imagining things..." Callo's voice was a mere whisper. Zeyir had to close his eyes. He summoned a seal in his hand, placing it on Allen's forehead as silent as possible. Then he placed one on himself. Two seals at the same time were hard to hold up and he was still weakened from Yarna's assault... but he had to try his best!

"That won't work, demon!" The deep voice came from right next to Zeyir's ear! Zeyir jumped up, ripping off the sign and staring into blank darkness. Suddenly something like a black hole seemed to form in the space in front of him and a tall man stepped out of it.

The desert-elf had long pointed ears, tan skin-like chocolate- and long golden hair that hang down his back. Beside a necklace and some golden bracelets, he was bare-chested and the short trousers he wore were covered by a long piece of fabric fixed around his hips. Two silver rapiers hang from his belt. The deep brown eyes bored into the men in front of him with an intensity that made the two companions shiver. Callo looked like a well-trained fighter to Zeyir what made him become even more nervous...

"Who are you!?" Someone jumped from the cliff over their heads. A female elf, maybe 20 years old... She had even darker skin than Callo and her hair was as silver as his rapiers. Her hair was rather short and wild, but two long locked bangs framed her face. A black top and the nearly same necklace that Callo wore covered her chest. Long sleeves covered her arms and parts of the many bracelets she seemed to wear. She also wore the same kind of fabric around her hips as Callo and a little dagger was attached on a belt around her right leg. Her golden eyes gleamed angrily in the light coming from her necklace.

"Those are intruders, Princess. It is my duty to kill them, no matter who they are!" Callo's voice was demanding. He drew his rapiers, ready to take down the foreigners.

"But..." Serena looked a little worried.

"Go back to the palace, Serena!" Callo shouted over his shoulder, already in fighting-stance.

Zeyir considered summoning his flame-blade for a second... but looking at the agile well-trained desert-elf speed was more important than sharpness! His claws were his weapon of choice in that case!

Allen, who had drawn his daggers already, looked over at the woman. She was incredibly beautiful, no question... but she didn't look very experienced in fighting, so if he managed to...

"Zeyir, you take on the man, I take the girl!" Allen shouted and ran over towards Serena.

"No!" Callo rushed forward, trying to get in-between the human and the princess, but...

"Not so fast!" Zeyir's claws missed Callo only by a few millimeters. The elf had managed to dodge the assault just in time. "You are all mine! Just leave him alone!" The evil grin on Zeyir's face showed off his demonic teeth. The sign on his forehead gleamed dangerously.

"You little--!" Callo slashed his rapiers towards the demon with incredible speed, but Zeyir was just as fast as Callo. Both men seemed to not hold back an inch of their power. Zeyir was surprised to feel a dark aura surrounding the desert-elf's blades... He could feel the presence of a dark spirit...

Allen in the meanwhile had a rather easy time with Serena. She was very quick in dodging, so Allen had nearly no chance of hitting, but at the same time she couldn't effort slashing with her dagger and dodging at the same time... she could only run from his attacks.

It was completely different for Zeyir though... Callo combined speed with incredible precision. He dodged Zeyir's attacks with ease while his attacks were nearly impossible to get away from... Zeyir already had some bruises around his arms from desperately blocked slashes... With his sword though he would have lost by now... Zeyir's only way to keep up with Callo were his fast attacks... Suddenly though...

"ARG!!" Callo's elbow had hit Zeyir right into the chest, sending him flying back a few meters right on the edge of the cliff. Zeyir managed to rip his claws into ground right in time... his legs and half of his chest already hang in midair!

"Nice try." Callo stepped closer to him, preparing his rapiers for the final slash. Zeyir

closed his eyes... He could feel his heart beating with incredible force... His father once had told him that shortly before their death... living creatures are always the liveliest... Was it this feeling what he had been talking about?

"I wouldn't do that if I was you!" Allen's voice caused Zeyir to open his eyes again. The human held Serena with a tight grip, his dagger right on her neck, ready for a final blow.

Callo visibly grew paler at the sight...

"If you do that, I will kill your friend here first and then you are next!" Something in Callo's eyes gleamed with intensity. Was it anger? Hate? Desperation?

"Yeah, but then your little friend will be dead already... pat-situation I'd say..." Zeyir slowly tried to get himself back on solid ground, but Callo's foot pressed him on the ground, preventing him from moving...

"I'm so sorry, Callo..." Serena closed her eyes, insecure. It looked as if she was just about to start crying...

"..." Allen sighed and loosened his grip, letting go of her.

"Allen!! Play with your own life, but not with mine!!!" Zeyir shouted as he saw his companion letting go of their only chance to survive.

"!!" Callo couldn't quite believe the human was so stupid to let Serena get away like this,... but a feeling of warmth and security returned to his chest. He knelt down, helping the demon up again.

"Thank you." Allen said, smiling, running towards his companion, checking his bruises.

"What are we going to do now?" Serena asked shyly while pressing herself against Callo's arm to comfort herself a little.

"Isn't that obvious? I will kill them as the laws of our tribe demand!" Callo snapped, rapiers still in hand.

"No you won't! That is an order!" She let go of her friend and walked towards Allen. "This human was so gently to let me go!"

"And?! I was so nice to not kick his friend off the cliff!" Callo seemed frustrated about the girls behaviors...

"Why don't we just... separate as if nothing ever happened, huh? You didn't see us, we didn't see you... anything is fine then!" Allen tried to grab his chance and save the situation in a way, acceptable for all of them.

"..." Callo seemed to consider this possibility for a few seconds... To Allen he looked like a good guy after all... maybe a little brutal and coldblooded...

"Deal!" Serena cheered and gave Allen her hand. Zeyir watched the human in frustration. How did he do that all the time!? "Okay, let's head back, Callo!"

"Serena, I'm the leader of the Moon-guards, I can't just let them get away!" The tan man shot something at Allen and Zeyir that was best described as a deathglare... If glares could kill Allen and Zeyir would have died a thousand deaths by now...

"But if I give you the order, what is more important to you? Your duty or a direct order from me!" She demanded in a tone that didn't leave space for two answers. Callo only closed his eyes, sighing frustrated. "Very well. If you want, you can stay here till tomorrow, but then you must travel on. If we meet the next time, we won't let you get away!" Now that the danger seemed to be gone, Serena had a proud and majestic appearance, now that Allen thought about it... She seemed self-confident and strict, at the same time beautiful and like a follower of justice, only fighting seemed to be something she was really not good in...

"Thank you!" Allen smiled and bowed a little in respect. From what he had been able to pick out from the conversations between Callo and Serena, she had to be something like a princess, while Callo was a knight... So a little sign of respect was the least he could do to thank them for sparing their lives...

Zeyir didn't bow an inch... He didn't mind if this girl was a princess, a queen or a peasant... as long as they did not dare harming them, they wouldn't harm the elves either...

Serena turned, walking towards the exit of the cave. Callo remained for a few seconds, turning towards Allen and Zeyir.

"Next time we meet... you are mine!" The tan man turned and followed the princess out of the cave. Now that Serena was gone, the light had disappeared as well...

Back in darkness, the two men stared at the black walls in front of them...

"Next time when you intend to play with my life ask me first, okay?!" Zeyir laughed and shook his head. "Do you think we can trust them?"

"We will be save until tomorrow night... Serena and Callo both look like the kind of people that stand to their word..." Allen walked over to his scarf that was still folded on the ground and went back to sleep, exhausted.