

Essence of Time - The Forgotten Journey

Von Deamond

Kapitel 12:

Chapter 12

Mirror-mountains... a massive mountain range that is divided by a giant valley. The soil of this area is filled with metal and it's lakes and river are giant mercury-streams... Yet, this dangerous land is the fastest route from Yora to Agreal, the residence of Luna, Great Spirit of Darkness...

It had been three days since Allen, Zeyir and Callo had taken off from Nihil. They had spent their nights in small villages to prevent angels or demons but villages grew rare the closer they came to Mirror-mountains.

"I'm hungry..." Zeyir complained at the end of the small group.

"Then eat the lunch you packed!" Callo barked over his shoulder, annoyed by the whiny demon. "Someone could come to the guess this is your first journey, wimp!"

"Hmpf!" Zeyir blushed a little and lowered his head. "I already ate it..." He muttered under his breath. He shot a help-searching glare towards Allen who –much to Zeyir's disappointment- had eaten his lunch by now as well...

"Uhm... maybe... we should make a break?" Allen suggested, influenced by Zeyir's pitiful glare.

"No way." Callo deathglared both of them. "We can make a break when we set up a camp for the night! Until then, this... annoying bratty little demon will have to wait!" The older man's ears went up in anger.

"Hey!" Zeyir braked and ran up to Callo. "I'm not bratty! I admit that I'm kinda annoying sometimes, but I'm not bratty!"

"..." Allen closed his eyes, making a decision. "We stay!" He said promptly and sat down right where he had been standing. "Decision made!" He grinned towards Zeyir, a bright smile forming on his face.

"Allen, you are best!" Zeyir laughed and threw his bag next to Allen, sitting down as well.

"You... can't be serious!" Callo looked at the human in confusion. "It is only two hours until sunset! He will survive that little time!"

"I don't mind taking a break at all! We are not in a rush, okay? If we over-do it no one will be helped." Allen sighed and searched through his bag for a pot. "Zeyir? Would you mind..." He pointed at the ground. The demon nodded and summoned his flame-saber to set up camp-fire.

"I can't believe it..." Callo sighed and sat down as well. "But next time..."

"I will set p camp again if I think it is necessary!" Allen completed Callo's sentence, receiving another deathglare.

"Haven't we had this nice little talk about the newest group-member has to cook for us?" Zeyir grinned evilly and patted Callo. "Now, show us what you can do!" Grinning, the demon enjoyed the annoyed face of the tan elf.

"Hmpf!" Callo shook his head but couldn't avoid showing a slight smile on his lips.

"You know what? I will go hunt something! Wanna come with me, Allen?" Zeyir hopped up, all hunger and exhauster forgotten.

"Nya, fetch something nice for us. I will stay here and help Callo!" He grinned, remembering the last time Zeyir had hunted a rabbit and giving it him for breakfast the day after they had met the first time...

Zeyir grinned and ran off, ready to slice something.

Callo sighed and took out some knives hidden under his belt. He cleaned them with a small piece of fabric. Allen gulped at the sight. He remembered what Callo was doing before betraying his clan... an these knives had probably killed more humans than he had killed animals...

"Uhm...d... don't you want to... take one of my knives?" Allen gave Callo the knife he used to use for cooking. Callo blinked for a second, suddenly getting what was wrong.

"Oh, sorry.... My apologies..." Callo put away his dagger and took Allen's. He sighed and leaned back. "Do we have any vegetables left?"

"Nope. The vegetables of the last villages looked weird, that's why we did not buy new supplies..." Allen remembered the weird fruits.

"I guess that is due to the soil..." Callo looked down on the ground. "There is so much iron and other metallic things inside this ground, I doubt crops can grow properly here. They must be using special techniques to keep them growing anyway."

Allen blinked a little surprised. What Callo said really made sense!

"Callo... how did your tribe survive in the desert anyway?" Allen gulped at the sight of Callo's sad face as he heard the word 'tribe'. "I... I'm sorry, I did not mean to..."

"Don't worry about it... I don't belong to the desert-elves any longer!" Callo's eyes had an angry gleam in them. "I can't believe they knew about all this and kept their silence... They hope Sol's blessing will keep their crops growing, their wells springing... but if this whole world dies, Sol won't be able to prevent this destiny for the desert-elves alone!" He hit his fist into the solid ground in anger.

"They do what they think is best for their tribe..." Allen closed his eyes and leaned back. "I wonder why Zeyir is here anyway... If the demons are interested in preventing a war against Asgard, why should they search for the only demon that tries to help Midgard?! I can't forget about what Morgana said..." Sighing, Allen laid down, looking up at the blue sky.

"You were the one telling him he doesn't have to talk about his past!" Callo chuckled and looked around. "I wonder where he—"

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

The scream came from not too far away. Allen recognized the demon's voice immediately, jumping up from the ground. "Zeyir!" He gasped, trying to figure out from where the scream had been coming.

"This way!" Callo shouted while loosening his rapiers from his belt and running towards a small dead forest.

"D...dammit..." Zeyir held his leg as it was bleeding rather badly. He looked up. He had been falling right into a giant hole... a trap as it seemed. It was at least 5 meters to its top and he was hurt from the fall...

"Ouch, that's gotta hurt pretty badly!" Zeyir turned around by the sound of a voice. He couldn't locate anyone! Neither with his eyes nor by searching for specific Mana-signatures...

"Who are you!?" Zeyir hissed and tried to summon his fireblade before remembering... he had left it with Callo and Allen at the camp!

"Huh? Oh right... you can't see me!" Someone chuckled and suddenly a small... person appeared out of the hole's wall. It looked a lot like Shade from the size but instead of only one eye, this spirit had two clear blue eyes. Metallic plates covered its forehead, the back, his knees and shoulders. It had grey skin and it was smiling innocently.

"You are... a small spirit..." Zeyir leaned back and relaxed a little... a spirit would not form such a trap... or would he?

"There are a lot of these traps around here... A real pity if you ask me..." It nyorned and floated above Zeyir's head. The demon hissed in pain while trying to stand up. The

small spirit shot the demon a pitiful look. "You won't get out of here this way. If I just could use all of my Mana... I could get you out of here..." The spirit tried to help Zeyir up as good as his small body allowed him.

"You can't... use all your powers?" Zeyir tried to lean on his healthy leg and the wall while looking at the small spirit.

"You don't know much about spirits... do you?" It smiled. "Smaller spirits need the might of a summoner to unleash all their might." Sighing, the spirit looked up. "Hm? I hear someone coming..." It flew up. The small metal-spirit floated over the edge of the hole, looking around. From behind some dead trees he could see someone running towards them... There were two men... One man was a tan elf with long golden hair, and a human with hazel hair... The small spirit blinked confused at whatever the elf was doing... he seemed to form signs with his hands as...

"Shade! I summon you!" Callo shouted through the trees, spotting a spirit floating over a hole in the ground. It was right the spot the scream had come from, he was sure of it.

The small shadow-spirit rushed forward, leaving her summoner behind and attacking the spirit in front of her. The long floating fabric that usually hang down her back formed into two sharp rapiers which she held tightly in her small hands.

"Uah!" The metal-spirit floated backwards in surprise, dodging Shade's blow by curling up into a small ball. The steel-plates on its back saved it from harm.

"Show yourself and fight!" Shade demanded the spirit and poked it with her rapiers.

"N... no way!" A dimmed voice rang through the metal. The small ball seemed to shake slightly.

"Sh... Shade, is that you!?" Zeyir's voice came out of the hole. "I'm down here!"

"I'll be right there, Zeyir! Give me just one minute to beat up this fry!" She shouted towards the hole, keeping her angry eye on the metal-spirit.

Callo and Allen now reached the spot where Shade was floating and rushed towards the hole, looking down. They could see Zeyir leaning against a wall, a dead capercailzie and...

"Zeyir, is that your blood!?" Allen shouted from up the hole, nearly falling down as well.

"Hell, yes! Now get me out of here!" The demon shouted desperate.

"But... how...!?" Callo looked around, not sure what to do. They had no ropes in their bags, there were only dead trees that were going to break if they used them to get to the demon and he really couldn't think of something better.

"M... maybe... I can help?" The shy voice of the metal-spirit reached Callo's ears and he turned around, looking at the small metal ball on the ground.

"Shade, who is that?" The elf asked his summon with a demanding tone in his voice.

"I have no clue, but I guess that was the one forming this hole!" Shade barked angrily while keep poking the spirit.

"N... no! I swear I didn't!" The small spirit stood up, carefully, eyeing Shade nervously. "I live here... and those stupid mountain-tribes keep digging their holes everywhere... That was not me!"

"..." Callo kept looking at the spirit, thoughtfully. "Can... you help us getting him out of there?"

The small spirit nodded. "Yes... I think so. But..." It looked down on the ground. "Would you mind forming a pact with me? I... am sick and tired of being a free spirit..." It looked at Shade with interested eyes. "I'm the only metal spirit left here... the others all went to the mountains."

"Hm..." Callo closed his eyes. "Alright... guess we have no other choice." He looked down towards Zeyir who had to breath heavily due to the blood-loss. "My name is Callo Moerbin. What is your name?"

"I'm Steel!" The small spirit hopped up and down in glee of finally finding a summoner to form a pact with.

"Very well..." Callo stood up and spread his arms. Mana floated out of his body. Allen stared at his companion intensely. He had never seen anyone forming a pact with a spirit and if he had to form pacts with Luna and Sol soon, he was lucky about everything he could learn from the other summoner.

"Steel. Spirit of Metal, Child of Arazath... I demand to form a pact with you by the holy name of Mana! May thy might and mine combine to form a new bound on the foundation of the essence of life!" Callo chanted while letting all Mana inside his body whirling freely between himself and Steel. The small metal-spirit opened his arms, taking in the Mana of his new master. He could feel the might inside him growing.

Allen watched the forming of the pact in awe. He prayed he would be able to do the same at the temples...

"This... feels awesome!" Steel looked down at his little hands. He could feel the might inside him unleashing. He floated down the hole, followed by Shade.

Zeyir sat on the ground again, holding his leg. Shade gave him a sad gaze as she looked up. A pointed metal-fragment hang loosely on the wall... She guessed Zeyir broke it when crushing down against it.

"How do you intend to get him out of here?" Shade asked with a suspicious voice.

"Just wait and look." Steel grinned and offered Zeyir his hand. "I will need your hand. Yours too, uhm... What is your name?" He shouted up towards Allen who was leaning over the edge of the hole.

"Allen!"

"Okay." Steel smiled happily and formed a chain around Zeyir's wrist. "Now you!" He floated towards Allen, forming another chain around him as well. The chain lead from Allen to Zeyir... Now they got Steel's plan!

"Alright! Let's get him out of there!" Allen shouted and started pulling on the chain. Shade and Steel helped him. After a few seconds they had pulled the weak demon out of the hole.

"Was... about time..." Zeyir gasped as Shade took a closer look at the wound while she tried to clean it with a small piece of fabric. "What is wrong with Callo!?" The demon tried to stand up all of a sudden as he saw Callo who was leaning against a tree, exhausted.

"Huh!?" Allen gasped as well, but pulling Zeyir back on the ground. "You stay where you are!" He barked while running towards the desert-elf. "Hey, what... what happened!?"

"It's nothing... Go and handle Zeyir." Callo breathed heavily.

"That is due to the new pact." Shade looked over at her master. "Forming a pact with a spirit you have to unleash all your Mana, so all your energy is gone afterwards. That is normal!" She smiled and fixed a bandage she had summoned over Zeyir's wound.

"I'm sorry... I didn't know that..." Steel looked down at the ground, sobbing a little. "I... I just didn't want to be all alone anymore..." With a whiny voice he looked at Shade, blushing a little as she looked back at him.

"How about you help me instead of staring at me like a complete fool!?" She snapped and looked back towards Zeyir. "I will get our bags. It will be best we move our little camp here... You better don't walk too much today."

Zeyir nodded and lay back down on the ground, relaxing a bit. Steel looked from Zeyir back to Shade and followed her towards the former camp. He saw how Allen helped Callo up before they disappeared behind a couple of trees.

"I'm really glad to meet you!" Steel grinned and tried to start a conversation with the other small spirit.

"Hmpf!" Shade closed her eye and fastened her speed, ignoring the metal-spirit.

"..." Steel slowed down. What was wrong with Shade? She didn't want his help at all...

Well, maybe the way they had met each other was a really weird one and her master was totally exhausted due to him... Maybe that was the reason? "I... I go back and... help the others..." He talked more to himself than to Shade as she was already gone out of sight.

Callo was taking a nap on a tree while Zeyir slept on Allen's scarf on the ground. The human was the only one still awake as Shade had returned to the camp. Steel had carried the prey of Zeyir out of the hole and Allen was cooking it over a small flame that Steel had set up with the help of two firestones he had found in the surroundings.

Shade looked from Allen to Callo. 'You have no clue how lucky you are that Callo is too exhausted to cook for you...' She shook her head and flew towards her master, placing herself on his lap. She looked up at the tan man and leaned back against his chest before closing her eye, falling asleep aswell.