

Essence of Time - The Forgotten Journey

Von Deamond

Kapitel 22:

Chapter 22

„You are kidding me...” Callo and Raven both stared at Morgana with a dark gaze.

“No, we have to go to the Dark Forest. There stands the closest Otherworldgate to Galdor’s capital.” Morgana hissed with a demanding tone as they stood in front of the dragon-port.

“Not agaaaaaaain!!” Raven hit her head against Callo’s arm. He was carrying Allen, but as Morgana told them they had to go all the way back he had nearly dropped the poor man again.

“My apologies, but I need the shortest way possible through Utgard... I don’t want to risk to be discovered...” Narwa looked down on the ground ashamed.

“Oh well... Guess the traveling is good training...” Raven shook her head frustrated before walking towards the dragon that was going to bring them back to the Dark Forest.

“My Lord, we have been waiting for you.” A servant bowed in front of the fatigue prince.

“Sorry, I... was on the training-ground with Will...” Zeyir sighed and brushed the sweat from his forehead with the back of his hand. Will was still holding their training-swords as they entered the giant throne-room of Galdor’s castle.

“No need to apologize.” Kyrin smiled warmly from his throne and offered his son a seat next to him.

“Thanks...” Zeyir sighed and sat down. “Now, you said we have guests. Who is it?”

“You will see.” Kyrin grinned brightly. Something seemed to please him... But what?! “You haven’t seen them for a while and I’m sure you missed them.”

“Will you tell me about it now or do I have to beg you first?” Zeyir shook his head,

grinning mentally. Ever since his return he had tried to be as mad as possible on his father but it was just not possible to be mad on him for long.

"Alright. Why don't we let them come in?" Kyrin smiled and signaled one of the guards to please open the gate to the throne-room. Zeyir had no clue who his father was talking about... Guests? Someone he hadn't seen in a while? Someone worth being missed?

"In the name of Galdor we welcome you to our castle." Kyrin stood up and opened his arms as the visitors stepped in. Zeyir nearly fell from his chair as he spotted the persons entering the throne-room.

"Lord and Lady Racell from Eracros and their lovely daughter Lean." One of the guards announced as three vampires entered the hall. They were clothed in finest silk, symbolizing their high status in their country.

"The Duke of Eracros!?" Zeyir hissed.

"And don't forget their wonderful daughter. You used to play with her a lot when you were still a kid." Kyrin whispered under his breath while grinning brighter and brighter.

"And this has nothing to do with the fact that she turned 18 last month... Has it?" Zeyir had a hard time suppressing his laughter. This situation was just so... hilarious.

"Oh really? I had no clue..." Kyrin walked towards the duke, greeting him.

"I can't believe he is trying to couple me again!" Zeyir shook his head and looked over to Will who was grinning as well. He left his throne and walked over to his father. Lean was a really beautiful young vampire. Her golden locks hang down her back while a golden necklace ornamented her chest. She wore a white long dress with laces and ribbons. "Lady Lean. It sure has been some time." Zeyir smiled gently and offered his hand. Just as always, bowing was not an option for a prince of Galdor! This was what his parents had taught him.

"Prince Zeyir." Lean bowed down in respect before taking Zeyir's hand. "I am glad to meet you again."

"Yeah... yeah... same here..." He looked over towards his father who was staring over to them the whole time.

"Please be our guests for dinner, today. Our servants will show you the way to your rooms." Kyrin smiled warmly and lead them out of the room before returning to his son.

"You are so... so..." Zeyir tried to find a word but couldn't find anything matching....

"What? I'm just trying to find a good wife for my son! That's all!" He laughed.

"No, what you are looking for is a good queen for Galdor!" Zeyir hissed angrily.

"That's the same thing." Kyrin laughed and patted his son who by now couldn't hold back his chuckles anymore either. "Zeyir... I've been worried about you ever since you returned from Midgard... You are not the same person anymore and I... hope it didn't hurt you too much that I had to rip you away from this fragile world."

"..." Zeyir closed his eyes. "It... is alright... It was the best for our country..." Zeyir lowered his head. Logically it really was the best decision... but why did it feel so wrong to him nonetheless!?

"I'm glad you changed your mind." Kyrin smiled and embraced his son proudly.

"Ugh, Dad, get off!" Zeyir tried to get away from his father's grip.

In the evening, Lady Lean had asked Zeyir to come out for a walk with her in the castle-garden. As heir of the throne and to get rid of his father, Zeyir had agreed...

"So, my prince... Where have you been during your weeks of absence from Galdor?" Lean giggled innocently, showing interest in everything Zeyir said or did.

"Uhm... Didn't my father tell you? I... uhm..." Zeyir tried his hardest to remember the story, Kyrin had kept telling everyone but... what was it again!?

"You mean your visit in your servant's home? So you really were at the vampire-fort of Galdor?" She chuckled again, trying to get the conversation on.

"Yeaaaaah, right, at Will's place!" Zeyir nodded hesitantly. 'Wow, my father is really good in thinking up stories.' He grinned.

"I would have never guessed that. It is rare to see royal demons visiting their servant's homes."

"Oh, Will is not only my servant. He is a friend of mine. And the fact that the royal demons don't care about what goes on beyond their country borders is just the problem with our world." Zeyir's face turned into an angry expression, but as he realized what he had just said he tried to chuckle innocently. "Just a joke!"

"A... ahahaha, nice one." Lean laughed and kept staring at the prince, hoping he'd keep talking.

"Yeah... of course..." Zeyir muttered. Great, another person that keeps agreeing to whatever he says without thinking...

"So, where are these scars from?" She suddenly pointed down on Zeyir's chest. He wore the black shirt he used to wear back in Midgard, so his chest's scars were very well visible.

"That's a long story."

"It is a long evening." Lean smiled and walked towards the garden's labyrinth. "Please... I want to know what secret is behind these scars. I always wanted to know that."

"..." Zeyir rolled his eyes. But he had no other choice. His father was right. He had played a lot with Lean when they were about six or seven years old, but he had never liked it. Especially cause Lean was the kind of person that didn't give up before she got what she wanted. "Nothing special... I just messed with some Gods when I was four years old. These are the remaining of my stupidity."

"Gods?!" Lean was shocked. She had never guessed that... "But how did that happen?"

"I am a very curious person." The prince grinned and walked on into the labyrinth, silently praying she would get lost on the way...

"And what made you become this curious?" She didn't give up.

"My teacher told me stories about a shining world called Asgard and its wonderful open gardens, the white palaces... and of course the center of this holy world. Menel and its Tower of Eternity." Zeyir walked on, not waiting for the woman following him eagerly.

"And so? What is so nice about with? Black is a much more wonderful color than white. Besides, Utgard's palaces are much greater than Asgard's!" She took her long skirt into her hands so she could walk fast enough to follow the prince.

"I wouldn't say so. I was curious and wanted to see those palaces myself. The white and gold adds a lot of charm to Asgard's palaces. Additionally the Tower of Eternity is the most giant building I have ever seen. It's top reaches so far into the sky that you can't see its top, you can only guess where it ends when there are absolutely no clouds around!" Zeyir tried to remember the holy world he had only seen once in his life.

"And how did you get those scars?" Lean chuckled, happy to get the information she wanted finally.

"As demon, they detected me immediately of course. And I was a little kid, so what did you guess? I had no chance of getting away. The angel-guards caught me and imprisoned me. I tried to escape multiple times, but they got me and as warning, made this." He pointed at his chest. "They wanted to handle out a treaty with my mother for Galdor to surrender to Asgard, but she did not agree."

"And then?"

"I don't remember. I fell unconscious from the fever caused by this wound. When I came back to consciousness, I was in my room in Galdor and my father knelt next to my bed. My mother claimed later on that they managed to free me by force but I

doubt that." Zeyir suddenly turned left, using a hidden path he knew very well. Lean turned around the corner but stopped all of a sudden.

"Prince Zeyir? P... prince Zeyir!" She tried to find him but he was gone.

"Where... is Lean?" Will grinned evilly on a bench as Zeyir left the labyrinth, chuckling eagerly.

"I need a break from this blood-sucker."

"Hey, I'm one of them as well!" Will laughed and stood up, walking towards him. "How about you give me a drink?"

"Dream on, Will... Before you get my blood to drink, I will kiss a God!" Zeyir hissed into his friend's ear. "Now let's go before this banshee gets out of there."

As Will and Zeyir walked towards the entrance-gates, a familiar person suddenly walked towards them.

"Hey, old man!" The young demon grinned as his father came closer towards them. "You are looking so serious, what's wrong?"

"You better go and get back in." Kyrin ignored Zeyir's comment, pushing his son into the castle. "The Flamedevils of the neighbor-country are attacking."

"Huh?" Zeyir looked at his father in surprise. "And what exactly do they want this time?"

"I don't know. They always tried to get some of our land, but this time they sneaked right in front of the capital-city. The guards will hold them off, but it makes me worry that they decided to attack the capital this time." Kyrin grit his teeth as the guards closed the castle-gates. "Please stay inside, Zeyir. You know, if they get you, they win."

"I see..." Nervously, the young prince balled his hands into fists. "Alright, the guards will handle it..." Zeyir grew rather frustrated about the fact that he wasn't allowed to join the fights. But he had to agree with his father. They were the leaders of a country and if they fell, the country would fall apart as well...

"Alright, I will go and join the guards on the hill. Please stay in the throne-room with our guests. Will, are you coming with me?" The king patted his son while eying Will curiously.

"Yes, Milord." Will nodded and followed the older demon towards the knight-room to pick up their armors and weapons.

Left behind like this, Zeyir sighed frustrated and made his way towards the throne-room.

"Ouch, don't push me like this!"

"Shut up! You are going to show them our position!"

"Ugh, can't you guys stay a little more still!?"

Callo had a hard time keeping the shadow-seal of Shade working while carrying Allen and still being followed by three annoyed woman. Fortunately the dark energy of Utgard was so strong, that it was possible to hold the seal up long enough until they sneaked through the empty streets of Galdor's capital city.

"What is going on here?! Why is no one out?" Morgana looked around, trying to spot anyone, but no chance. No one was around.

"Narwa, is your potion-aura-thingy alright and still in place?" Raven asked worried as the goddess had a hard time with her suppressed energy.

"I'm alright..." She sighed and took her friend's hand. The unusual light that used to surround her wherever she went was totally gone, as well was her wonderful magical and pure appearance. Her hair was dim and flat, without any dynamic. The usual crystal-clear blue eyes seemed empty and dead. Her slim body seemed so fragile as if it was going to break any second.

"You know, as soon as we find the prince, I can give you the anti-potion... Or you just use your might, and it should be alright again." Morgana searched through her bag for the right bottle, making even more noise.

"I know it seems as if no one is around, but would you mind making a little less noise!? Cause if you keep up like this, my seal is useless anyway!" Callo hissed exhausted. Shade floated above his head, trying her best to use her master's Mana wisely and as careful as possible.

"Sorry!" The three women muttered ashamed.

"Girls..." Callo shook his head, walking on towards the giant black towers he spotted above the city's houses.

"I know, it probably freaks you out now, but this is just unusual!" Morgana whispered towards the elf. "This city used to be so lively whenever I visited it! It is like dead!"

"I know..." Callo grid his teeth. He was well aware of the fact, that a demonic capital should be much more lively, but maybe this was even a good thing? At least they managed to get through town much faster this way!

"Uhm... excuse me..." Narwa suddenly looked around. The others turned to the weakened goddess worried, expecting her to feel too weak to walk on.

"Shall I carry you?" Raven tightened her grip on Narwa's hand but she only shook her

head.

"Look." She pointed towards the upcoming street. Red lights, like burning and flashing fires ran all over the streets. Slowly but sure, shouts and the sound of weapons rang to their ears.

Zeyir finally reached the throne-room, being greeted formally by two remaining guards and the Duke of Eracros along with his wife. They bowed in respect and offered him his way towards the throne.

"No thank you..." Zeyir yawned.

"Don't worry, Prince Zeyir. This pointless assault means nothing at all. Galdor's guards are much stronger than those pathetic flame-creatures." The Duke smiled evilly, taking his wife's hand. Zeyir looked around in the room... It felt wrong what was going on here... Why were the flame-devils attacking Galdor's capital? And how was this even possible? They should have been able to notice them before they came so close to the castle!

"By the way... where is your daughter?" Zeyir suddenly pointed out, uninterested.

"I... I thought she was with you." The older Lady suddenly dropped her husband's hand and walking up towards the prince.

"She didn't return from the garden yet!?" Zeyir suddenly gasped and turned, storming out of the hall. The two guards turned around, surprised and watched their future ruler.

"My prince! We were ordered to protect you!" One of them shouted after the young demon.

"Then come and guard me!" Only his yell was heard out of the dark corridors as Zeyir was far away from the throne-room already.

"Oh great..." Callo grumped. Morgana shook her head in disbelief.

"Those are flame-devils! What are those filthy beings doing here in Galdor!?" She took Narwa's arm and dragged her on, followed by Callo and Raven. "Shh..."

It was a battle-field. Shortly after the houses lightened to reveal the plane leading up to the castle, the assault became visible. The red-skinned horned demons threw flames towards the black-clawed guards of Galdor, who responded with arrow-showers and steel. It was a bloody fight... The flame-devils were in a clear disadvantage and got killed one by one by the merciless Galdorans. The flaming magicians tried to burn their enemies to ashes, but without much success. The ground was covered with dust, blood and dead limbs.

"Come, they shouldn't see us, if we walk fast enough!" Callo suddenly started running upwards the hill. The others, a little surprised by the pushing attitude of their companion followed him.

Callo was right. By rushing over the battle-field, the warriors didn't notice their dark energy with all the darkness-Mana around them.

Callo jumped over a few dead bodies lying on the grass, crossing the first hill that lead to the castle. On the top, he had to stop for a second. Not because of Allen's weight or because of the seal he was still holding up, but because of the sight.

The dark castle of Galdor was stunning. Hundreds of towers pointed towards the sky while little bridges connected the upper parts in some kind of net. The giant building in their centre had the shape of a pentagram surrounded by two circle-like walls and in two giant towers, a black one and a silver tower, leading upwards in a giant spiral, surrounded by dark clouds.

"Watch out!" Morgana hissed into his ear, while pushing him aside as a troop of guards nearly ran over the stunned man. With his thoughts back to reality, Callo ran after the demoness.

The battles grew weaker towards the castle. Guard-troops prepared themselves for the battle, while those who were ready walked off in rows towards the battle-field on the other side of the hill.

"Next unit in! Royal guards of Galdor, are you prepared!?" A familiar voice sent a chill down Callo's back. King Kyrin, guarded by a giant black armor that made him appear even more respectful, held a giant black broadsword in his experienced warrior-hands while leading his men into the battle.

"Milord!!" Suddenly a second familiar face appeared next to them. Will, Zeyir's personal guard as far as Callo knew, ran up towards the king. "We must hurry!! Intruders managed to get into the castle via shadow-seals!"

Callo, Raven and Narwa felt their heart dropping as they figured they were talking about them, but...

"There are about 5 units of high-ranked flame-devils running through the inner castle-circle!" The vampire-warrior seemed too nervous. What was going on? Callo tried to eavesdrop a little more as it seemed they hadn't notice them so far. "This is not an attack of the flame-clans alone. They grouped up with the Highlander-demon-clans of the mountains! They want our very country!"

Callo gulped. He had learned a lot about Utgard from Zeyir's sayings and also from Morgana lately. The royal bloodline of Galdor was thin. Zeyir was the only living descendant of Nocturne left in Utgard, and the demons of the country would only follow him alone, no other king, like Kyrin. So they were hunting for...

"Zeyir!" Narwa made a squeezing sound while biting her lips. "We must hurry! If they

get him, I won't be able to wake Allen up anymore!" She whispered carefully, to not give away their position.

Callo looked from Narwa back to Kyrin. His face seemed awfully pale... Poor Kyrin... Something seemed to move inside Callo. He started to understand the older demon. His goal had never been to keep Zeyir away from Midgard. He only wanted to protect his country and above all, his very son... Even if this meant hurting him in another way.

"Let's hurry." The dark elf suddenly started running again. He heard steps from aside him, guessing Kyrin made his way back into the castle now as well.

"Oh dammit!" Zeyir dodged another fireball, dragging the young vampiress with him.

"I'm scared!!" Lean cried behind him, not even trying to get away anymore.

"Will you come now, or do you want me to leave you behind here!?" Zeyir shouted as he threw a knife at an ax-wielding demon, to kill him off the spot before he had a chance to hack him into pieces.

"B... but..." The young girl sobbed, hiding behind a statue, while Zeyir did his best to hold the warriors off. They were in a small room, not more than a maid's room, but due to the door, Zeyir had a chance of holding against the massive attacks and the immense number of enemies attacking.

"Ugh..." The prince slapped the door shut and blocked it with some chairs and a bed. The wooden doors of the castle were strong... they should be able to hold against the flames of the attackers at least for a few minutes...

"What are you doing!?" Lean screamed as Zeyir pushed the window open.

"Get out of here." Zeyir sighed and looked outside. "Come on. I know you vampires can call upon dark powers to float in the air! Get out of here already!"

"B... but..."

"No buts! Just get the hell outta here!" Zeyir snapped, his eyes gleaming in a dangerous light.

"Y... yes, Milord..." Lean lowered her neck, ashamed to show her true face in front of the prince.

"What about it now?"

"I'm going, I'm going..." She sighed and unleashed her dark powers. Her face twitsched into an evil grimace as the long teeth started growing. Her eyes turned to little red slits as she walked towards the window and turned one last time towards the young prince. "What about-"

"That's none of your concern. Get out of here. Inform the guards that I'm escaping the intruders towards the main-battle-field on the outer hills!" Zeyir pushed her out of the window, seeing her fall before the vampires managed to catch herself, floating towards the next open tower-window.

"Alright... I hope this stunt works!" Zeyir grit his teeth and concentrated all his dark energy. Ever since he had returned from Midgard, no, ever since he had been touched by the dark powers of Luna, he had been able to feel the darkness within him much better. He had grown stronger through this experience, and now was the time to use it! He looked at the claws on his hand and hopped on the window-border, before letting himself falling down.

The wind rushed through his hair as he pushed his claws into the tower-wall to slow down his fall. He could barely believe it himself, but it actually worked! He slowed down and as he fell on the ground, he was still alright! His legs and hands hurt a little, but at least he was still alive...

"Ouch..." He shook his head and hurried towards the outer castle-ring.

"Now this way!" Morgana lead the team deeper into the castle-garden. By now, Callo had given up on the shadow-seal... he was too weakened to hold it up. But as long as most of the guards were on the battle-field and the others were trying to get rid of the intruders inside the castle.

Morgana and the Midgardians walked through a gate-way leading into the inner castle-circle followed by the exhausted goddess. The air seemed filled with heat and ashes here already. A cracking sound echoed through the garden.

"What the—!?" Narwa hopped back as a giant gate rushed down, closing the path in front of her.

"I got some of the intruders!?" The voice of a guard rang through the giant door from the inner side of the wall.

"Guys!" She rushed towards the iron-bars of the gate, trying to move the giant gate, but without success. She could hear the sound of weapons, could feel magic... what was going on over there!? Suddenly, the sounds stopped, interrupted by painful gasps... then... silence. "Guys!! Answer me!! Please!!" Tears ran down the pure maiden's cheeks.

"We are alright!" Raven's voice rang through the thick gate. "We defeated them!! But... what about you!?"

"I'm so glad..." Narwa sobbed, leaning on the gate exhausted.

"Can't you just fly over the wall?" Callo's words burned deep within the goddess.

"No, Narwa. Don't! They—"

"I know, Morgana..." She sighed, interrupting the demoness. "I will try to find another way... We will meet later on again!" With this, she walked off.