

Essence of Time - The Forgotten Journey

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Prolog:

Prologue

The dark night was like a cloak over the lands of Galdor. No light was seen tonight - neither in the skies nor in the villages around the mighty black castle. Such nights weren't rare in the demonic country, but tonight it felt different... it was as if all life had left the land. A lonely person stood on the roof of one of the castle-towers, searching through the landscape for a sign of life. The blue mark on his forehead gleamed weakly in the darkness. Silver strains of hair fell around his face, covering the pointed ears. The man leaned forward as a small sounds reached his keen ears and he climbed back into the tower. As he just entered the room through a window again, the door to the chamber went open.

A young lady stepped in. She wore the dress of a maid and bowed slightly before shooting a little fireball at one of the torches at the wall to lighten the room. The flickering fire revealed the true shape of the young man. A black tunic with silver marks covered his slim body and his crimson-red eyes gleamed golden in the firelight. The prince of Galdor in his full glory watched the maiden as she stepped in the room slowly.

"My apologizes, Prince Zeyir... but the messenger has just returned." The young lady made a shy gesture and stepped aside to not stand in the way.

"Thanks, Minerva. You are allowed to go to bed now." Zeyir replied and hurried down the tower towards the Great Hall. 'Was about time he came!' He growled in his mind and stopped all of a sudden. He had reached the hallway to his father's chambers... Slowly he tried to sneak past the giant wooden door. No one was supposed to know what he was doing!

"Ah, Prince Zeyir! You are still awake?" A cold chill ran down the prince's back as a servant with long black hair called him from one of the doorframes on the opposite side of the hallway. Suddenly the giant door next to Zeyir swung open. The young demon had the feeling as if his heart was about to stop beating. His father stood in the doorframe, eyeing him curiously. He still wore his black armor and the red cloak that represented his high status. The grey hair hang wildly over his face. Three scars that made their way over the left eye of the king and the small beard gave him a majestic aura that deserved respect.

"Why are you still awake, Zeyir?" The king asked with a cold voice.

"Uhm, Lord father, I..." He hesitated. "I was hungry and wanted to get something to eat!" With a face-expression that screamed out that it was all a lie, Zeyir turned and wanted to walk on, but a hand on his shoulder forced him to stay.

"Don't call me Lord father... you always call me this if you hatch up for something!" The golden eyes bored into the young man like little arrows. "I hope it has nothing to do with the rumors about the Spirits of Midgard." The tone in his voice became

sharper with every second.

"Not at all, Kyrin! I swear by Mother's grave!" Zeyir slapped himself mentally for abusing his mother's memorial so easily, but what he was about to do was just too important to be canceled by his father.

"So then tell me what could be so important that you have to sneak around in the castle past midnight?" The pressure of King Kyrin's hand on Zeyir's shoulder became stronger and stronger. The servant that had greeted Zeyir before slowly sneaked past the two members of Galdor's royal family to not interrupt their fight.

"I..." Cold sweat ran down the prince's neck. He couldn't think of anything that might apologize the fact that he was still up at this late hour. He went through different ideas in his mind that might save his neck now, but they were either not good enough or he had used them in the past already... Maybe if he could... or better... no, then maybe... that's not good... the thoughts spun around in his head like carousel...

"I'm waiting." Kyrin stated flatly.

"I wanted to meet with... a girl...?" Zeyir felt how his mouth turned dry. But all in all it was a great excuse! After all, his father had told him multiple times that he should start dating with girls! So maybe he was even pleased with him if he used a girl as excuse for his manners. "Midnight-Date, you know?" He relaxed a little as he saw a small smile appear behind the beard of the king.

"I see. But I hope you don't only play with her..."

'Oh great... he is not going to give me relation-advice now, is he!?' Zeyir stared at his father in frustration and shook his head unbelieving. "I think I can handle that on my own. I'm old enough to make my own decisions and to keep such things private. And with private I mean private for me alone!" He snapped before turning around and running down the hallway towards the entrance hall of the castle.

King Kyrin only watched his son fading into the darkness before returning into his room and continuing with his duties.

Down in the Great Hall, Zeyir looked around nervously. "Will, where are you...?" He whispered into the dark while keeping an eye on the different doors that lead towards the Hall. He prayed that the servants and maids were all in bed already... He had ordered the patrol that was responsible for the hall to go on patrol at the courtyard yesterday, so beside him and the missing messenger, no one should be around. The prince concentrated all his senses to feel if someone was spying on him or eavesdropping... but no one was here! Where was that idiot!? He said he was going to await me in the Great Hall! Zeyir leaned against one of the many pillars. Two small white crystals gleamed at the main-door of the hall and dived the giant pillars in a surreal light. The hall really deserved its name... The roof was not even visible anymore in the weak light. Only small little sparkles seemed to dance in an indefinable height but Zeyir knew that during daytime, these sparkles were white crystals, placed on a dark-blue roof that represented the night-sky. The crystals didn't

sparkle like stars during, but it was still enough to be seen. Four rows of giant silver-white pillars separated the different parts of the hall from each other. Ornamentations made of pearls and diamonds adorned their sides. Sumptuousness that Zeyir disliked... Of course it looked magnificent for visitors of the castle, but living here day in day out it became annoying to the young prince...

Suddenly, Zeyir felt that someone was eyeing him from behind. He knew this aura...

"It was about time you made your appearance! I'm still the prince of this country, so never dare letting me wait again!" Zeyir turned around to face the dark figure. A grin appeared on his face as his messenger stepped out of the shadow of a pillar to show himself.

"I will never manage to sneak behind you, huh, Zey?" The man with dark blue hair smiled warmly and put away a long spear he was using as weapon. He placed it on a belt that hang from his formal blue tunic and patted over his dusted white trousers. "Man, this was a long ride... next time I use one of the wyverns instead of a horse..." He complained over-sensitive.

"It was up to you, Will... Now tell me. Are the rumors true?" Zeyir's face-expression changed. His eyes mused his favorite guardian with a worried look.

"They seem to be true... Midgard's Great Spirits have disappeared a long time ago." Will nodded towards the dining-room. "Can we talk while I get something to eat? I really need something for my stomach now..." He sighed and walked towards the room, followed by Zeyir.

Will mumbled on a piece of cake while searching through his packs for a piece of paper and a pen. "dothe eid spwits havnd iusd difabbead a few weegs ago..."

"Could you please swallow down first before talking? This is disgusting..." Zeyir replied flatly and shot Will a glare that promised death and suffering if he dared showering him with crumbs again...

"Sorry. Anyway, what I wanted to say was that those eight spirits haven't disappeared a few weeks ago as the rumors said. In fact they are gone for decades by now! The last remaining reports that confirm the appearance of one of the 8 Great ones was over 80 years ago!" Will paused and looked at his friend's confused face. "You... know about Midgard's Spirits, right?"

"A... little..." Zeyir said while trying to remember what that old witch that had taught him years ago had always tried to explain to him.

"Okay, there are three worlds, Asgard the godly world, Midgard the middle world and Utgard, the world of demons, so it is our—"

"I know that!" Zeyir snapped, blushing slightly. "I just don't know about that Middle-world-things spirits!" With an annoyed glare he leaned back in his chair.

"The source of life on Midgard is Mana and it is provided by the 8 Great Spirits of Midgard. Each Spirit represents one element. Darkness, light, earth, wind, fire, water, wood and metal!" Will paused and waited for a sign of Zeyir that he was following. "Now these spirits have disappeared and can't provide the world with Mana anymore. It will wither away. Midgard once was the battlefield of Asgard and Utgard and both sides, demons and gods know that whoever manages to fully conquer Midgard will win the war! Our worlds haven't fought since over thousands of years now due to the armistice treaty but the death or the disappearing of these spirits will cause fights to appear again!" Will hesitated. He took another bite from his piece of cake and looked around in the room to make sure no one else beside them was here, though he knew that Zeyir already controlled this the whole time with his senses. "Anyway... there are rumors that the Gods of Asgard sealed the Spirits away. So it might be a tactical strike against our world!" Will leaned forward to whisper into the prince's ear. "They say the time of a new Eternal War has come."

Lying in his bed, Zeyir stared at the roof, thinking about what Will had just told him. So he was right... the world had started to change... the little sparkling stars of Midgard that had symbolized its life over all the years started disappearing. Why haven't he noticed it before!? He loved gazing at the stars... Legends of Midgard said that those stars were the servants of the Great Spirit of Light... his old teacher had told him this... wait...

"Of course! Yamura-Sensei!" Zeyir jumped out of his bed and packed a small bag. He looked around. For a journey he needed some replies and his favorite weapon... Zeyir looked at his hand and concentrated for a second. Flames formed around his fingers and a golden sword with crimson blade appeared in the air before him. "Good." The sword disappeared again and he hopped up from the ground. He packed in some of the food that he was always hiding under his bed and a bottle with water. What he needed now was a matching set of cloths... not the whole royal stuff he had to wear all the time here... just some regular every day cloths! The prince looked around... his father hated it when he wore such things, so he didn't have any custom-cloths in his chambers... but when he went to town with Will he always used the cloths he was hiding behind a bush in the courtyard.

Slowly Zeyir opened the door. His chambers were much closer to the exit than the tower he was in before, but he still had to pass his father's room and the knight-guild... If Will was still awake he would be in there for sure!

The young demon-prince gulped and started to walk down the corridor. He didn't want Will to come with him here... it was his quest alone!

It was more like a miracle to him... but he had managed to come down to the Great Hall without being spotted! Zeyir slowly opened a window to the courtyard and looked around. Two guards were patrolling the entrance-door. About a half dozen of guards was patrolling around the garden-area. But the bushes were the best spots to sneak through the courtyard and he needed his cloths anyway... So Zeyir hopped out of the window, landing silent like a cat on the soft grass. He used some of his demonic magic to fuse with the shadows that were covering the whole area at this time of day.

Slowly he sneaked past two guards that were talking about the latest results of the knight-games that were held in town right now... They didn't even try to guard the garden... Zeyir only shook his head, grinning while walking towards the bushes behind which his secret cloths were lying.

"There you are..." He slowly pulled out the bag and took a look inside to make sure his cloths were alright... in it there was a fir-green vest, black trousers with a silver belt and a black halter top. Turning towards the wall, he put some branches of a tree aside and moved his hand over the stone-wall... "Where are the hidden ones!?" Zeyir hissed in frustration while searching for the right stones. Finally he found a stone that moved with a little pressure of his hand. "Finally..." He pressed another couple of stones and it formed a small ladder to climb up on.

On the other side of the wall was a way that led towards town and Zeyir was just about to walk towards town as...

"Excuse me, Sir? What are you doing here by the castle-walls?" A guard walked towards him. Zeyir's heart seemed to beat faster now. He was still standing in the shadows and so the guard wasn't able to figure out who he was... but if he came close enough he would know for sure!

Zeyir turned around and started running like mad towards the houses of town. The guard ran after him and a couple of other guards followed them as well. Zeyir hoped to be able to hide in one of the small streets of the town...

After a few minutes of running through the alleys, he couldn't hear the guards anymore. The sound of metal clinging against other metal was gone...

Zeyir sighed and sat down behind a few crates to change his cloths. He put on the black trousers and fixed the silver belt and a few little chains. After finishing dressing up, he hopped up and walked towards the marketplace. The town was like dead... no one was out and even the pubs were closed already. Yet it was too early for the shops to prepare their opening. A cold breeze blew through the empty streets and sand from the streets danced in little dust-clouds around the feet of the demon-prince.

After a few steps Zeyir finally reached his destination: The Dragon-Port.

He looked around. It still was closed, but he didn't care. With a jump he crossed the wall and landed on the other side of the entrance gate. Slowly he moved towards the stables. Every sort of dragons slept in the stables... from small forest-dragons for one person to fly on up to the giant Wind-dragons that carried whole passenger-ships to other countries. Zeyir stopped on one of the stables that had a silver sign on them. It was the sign of the royal family of Galdor: A pentagram with a circle and a yin-yang sign in the center.

With a smile Zeyir touched the silver plaque and looked over the door into the darkness of the stables. A pair of poison-green eyes stared back on him and a hiss ran through the silent air.

"Sh... it's alright." He opened the door and stepped in. A creature with black scales appeared in the shadows. It had a long neck and blood-red fangs. The dragon's wings

were crimson as well while the belly had giant orange scales that covered the soft parts like armor. A black leather-saddle hang on it's back – the royal emblem attached on the knob. "Hope you slept well, Korar. I need you to carry me to Yamura." Zeyir patted his dragon's head and hopped on the saddle. They moved outside slowly to not awake the other dragons... He feared they were going to make a tumult.

On the plaza of the dragon port they stopped. The sun slowly started to go down over Midgard and now sent its rays of light towards the demon world. A small roar of Korar told Zeyir that his dragon was ready for take-off. "Okay, you know where we are headed!"

Spreading his wings, Korar pressed himself off the ground and flew up into the skies of Galdor.

"You soon will be the king of this land, so don't wait for an old demon to allow you to enter her house." The rough voice of an old demon-witch rang through the air. Her grey-silver hair hang in wild strains down her head while framing her face perfectly. Despite the creases on her face and the freckled skin she still looked rather vital.

Zeyir stepped into the old wooden hood of his former teacher and closed the door behind him. His hair was rather wild due to the flight with Korar to the outer skirts of Galdor to the hood of Yamura. His dragon was waiting outside for his return while enjoying a mouse that had the misfortune to pass it's way...

"I guess you are here due to the rumors spread lately?" Yamura sat down on a small old oak table and placed a bowl on it that was filled with strange items like bones, shaped stones and crystals...

"I fear those are not only rumors." Zeyir replied flatly and sat on the chair on the opposite side of the table. "My spies found out a lot of facts about the missing of the Great Spirits. They have been gone for quite a while now. What does this mean for Utgard and Asgard?"

"Zeyir... you know the answer already, don't you?" Yamura smiled weakly and threw smashed the bowl on the table. The small items fell on the wooden surface. The long tin fingers of the demon-witch moved over the items as if she was reading a book. "A new war will burn the lands to ashes. Midgard will turn into the battlefield of the Gods and Demons once again like it was thousands of years ago. Without the protection of Mana the ground will turn dry on the middleworld and life will die. But this is the logical consequence if the very source of life has run out." She paused and looked at the young demon. "Is that all you wanted to hear? Or are you here because you want to find a way to prevent this?" A smile formed on Yamura's creased pale lips.

"And now I guess you know the answer to this one, right? Now can you tell me about my destiny?" Zeyir tapped on the table nervously while looking down on the bones and crystals.

"Your destiny is clouded, young prince... I see death, I also see new life and rebirth. I

cannot read the signs of destiny for you. Your decision is too important for the worlds to dare influence you with my words. But I can tell you who to search for if you decide to take the road that leads you to the Middleworld. I can tell you who you must find to make the Spirits return to Midgard." Yamura took the items from the table and placed them into another bowl. Her eyes fixed Zeyir who was deep in thought now.

"If... I just let these things happen... the logical consequence will be a second war against Asgard... but I can't just send troops to fulfill this quest. This will endanger the armistice treaty and again the consequence will be war!" Zeyir shook his head frustrated. "But... if I go alone..." He met Yamura's gaze and a hopeful gleam appeared in her age-paled eyes. "If I go, no one will bother and I can search for a way to fix the Mana on Midgard!" The demon-prince slapped with his fist on the table. "I will do it! Yamura, please tell me what I must do to change Midgard's destiny!"

"Very well, young prince." The witch smiled brightly now. She stood up slowly and moved towards one of the book-shelters. After a few seconds of staring she finally pulled out a very old looking book with dark-blue cover. On the top was a sign that looked like a crescent moon with a sun inside and a beam of light shooting out of the crescent moon's opening. "This is the old legend of the Guardians of Mana, if this tells you something?"

"Not yet." Zeyir pointed out but didn't dare interrupting her with questions.

"The so called Clan of van Tirith is a clan of humans with the blessing of the essence of time. They obsess the ability to summon the Great Spirits – an ability that is said to be only possess-able for this very clan and for no other living being on neither Asgard, nor Midgard, nor Utgard. If you can find these summoners, you will be able to change Midgard's destiny! There is only one problem..."

"And this problem would be?" Zeyir grew more and more nervous. The weight of his decision slowly started to show it's effects on him...

"Their bloodline is nearly fully obliterated... there is only one summoner left."

Kapitel 1:

Chapter 1

Midgard, a world in which all life comes together and chaos and war reigns the lands. Gods reside in Heaven, Demons and Devils in the Underworld and the struggle for dominance amongst each other drives the countries into a disastrous fight of faith and traditions. Only few places are left in which the question of faith and origin is still unimportant to the people, in which a person's behaviors are still more important than the fellowship of Gods or Demons.

One of these places is the small village Ardon. Long forgotten by the giant cities and erased from all maps, refugees and seekers for peace find a place to live without fear in Ardon. So does a young man whom's destiny will change the entire world...

"Hey Allen! Wake up!! You're going to be too late again!" A shrill female voice dashed through the wooden door, interrupting the peaceful silence of the dark room. Small rays of light broke through little holes in the door, falling on the dusted ground of the small little house. On the right side, a small fireplace with pots and old beans in them gave the room a smoky smell. On the other side, a cupboard and a bed stood seemingly random in the room, wasting a lot of space in the anyhow small room. A young man with middle-long hazel-brown hair turned around in the bed, scratching his chest with a hand, before slowly opening his emerald green eyes.

"Five... five more minutes..." He snored into the warm air before turning around again and yawning into his pillow.

"Oh no, young man!! You will wake up NOW! I can't handle the fields on my own and after all that is YOUR job, Allen!!" The door crashed open and an older woman in the forties entered the room. Her brown dress and the beige apron gave her the look of a peasant wife. The long blond hair hang around her shoulders, covered with a red headscarf. Small little horns on the top of her forehead and the slightly brown skin showed that she was in fact a half-ogre. "Will you move your lazy butt already!?" She shouted and drew away the blanket. Allen, he was about 20 years old, rolled himself together to a ball and continued snoring. He had a small goatee and had slept in his every-day-cloths... grey trousers, with blue belts, an orange shirt and the green headband he used to wear laid on the ground next to the bed. "Allen!"

"Come on, Gwen... what time is it... 7 am? 8am? The fields can wait a lil' longer..." He turned around with sleep-dazed eyes only to meet the frustrated and furious face of Gwen.

"No, they can NOT wait! It is 11 am already, you lazy little... I told Chris you were not good enough to take that job, but he believed in you! Now don't let him down that easily!" Both hands on her hips she eyed the young human boy while making the mattress wave up and down with her foot.

"I don't know what you want from me anyway... I make my living with hunting and selling the meat... why should I work on a farm all of a sudden!?" Allen slowly got up from his bed, reaching for his headband and fixing it around his forehead. His brown hair framed his face perfectly while on the back of his head the hair stood out wildly. With another protesting yawn, he stood up and followed Gwen outside.

"Ardon can't live from meet alone, boy! We need crops as well and right now we need help on the fields! Without anything to exchange, we can't buy your meet anymore anyway, so be grateful you can help to keep the farm running!" Gwen looked over her shoulder and had to giggle at the frustrated sight of the young man. "Don't worry. In a few days the work will be done and you can return to your usual way of life... just help us out a little okay?" She smiled softly and patted Allen's shoulder. "We all must help each other out if we want to survive. You are a refugee as well, you should know how important it is to look after each other!"

"Yeah, yeah..." Allen snarled. She was right... when he came here ten years ago, he was so lost that he had died if the village elder hadn't taken care of him... since then the 'old man' how Allen used to call him, taught him all kinds of fighting-techniques, but especially in summoning... weird enough, he thought. Summoning usually was a technique that only elves and arcane beings were able to master... how came he had the ability to summon? Allen shook off the thought and followed Gwen to the fields. Her husband, a giant blue-skinned ogre with horns on his forehead and green hair waved eagerly as he spotted his wife and Allen.

"Hey! There you are, Allen! Slept well?" He smiled and showed off his toothless mouth. Allen only nodded, still sleepy, and picked up a towel from the ground.

"So Chris... what is it?" Allen yawned again and looked at the farmer in front of him. The only things he wore were brown trousers and a straw-head to cover himself from the heat.

"I just want you to give water to the crops, that's all. I will do the heavy work!" Chris took the towel from Allen and patted his shoulder. "I don't want you to overdo it, right?" He chuckled and continued working. Gwen smiled love filled and shot an evil glare towards Allen that screamed 'dare disappointing him and you are dead!'

Allen shook his head and took the buckets next to him. Time to get some water...

After returning a few times from the well and carrying the water to the crops, he was beaten... Allen looked at his hands and sighed heavily... his stamina sucked... and the heat of the sun did an additional job to exhaust him.

"Uhm... Chris?" Allen asked carefully to not attract Gwen's attention. "I..." He started.

"Oh yeah, I see! Wait a sec!" Chris smiled and ran towards him. Allen had the feeling as if the earth was shaking under the heavy steps of the ogre... Suddenly the world around him was all black.

"Huh? What..." Allen reached with his hand for his head only to touch a weird... wet material... it also smelled a little sweaty... "URG! CHRIS!!" Allen shouted and ripped the straw-hat off of his head. "I don't need a hat, I need a break!" He said while holding the smelly hat as far away from himself as possible.

"Oh, sorry... I thought you needed some cover from the heat..." The ogre said, a little disappointed and looked down on the young man. "You know, you are a really nice person, Allen... I want you to enjoy the work here..." He said, sniffing.

"Oh... I... I do!" Allen waved with his hands in front of his chest in apology. "It's just..." He tried to think of something nice to say... Chris always treated him more like a son than just a hunter like most others did so he really didn't want to hurt his feelings. "I... am used to hunt, so my legs are much stronger than my arms! Don't you have a job for me in which I can use my speed better than my none-existent power?" He grinned and was pleased to see a smile returning on the older man's face.

"Hm, not really..." Chris thought a little and scratched his chin while thinking.

"Allen, there you are." A smoky voice reached their ears and Allen turned around by the sound of the familiar voice.

"Hey, old man!" Allen grinned and threw aside the waterbuckets.

"Elder Crane." Chris grinned and bowed in respect before looking back at Allen again.

"I would like to train your summoning with you a little, Allen. Are you up for it?" The elder smiled weakly, making the creases on his face seemingly even deeper. "It is important for you to keep up your training!" A demanding tone appeared in his voice...

"Yeah, yeah, I know... but I gotta help Chris and Gwen on the fields!" Allen said panicking... he preferred carrying waterbuckets over a lecture about the 8 Great Spirits by far! Those sessions were always so boring... and yet he did not have the chance to form pacts with any spirits so this so called 'training' was theory only and Allen was more the practical kind of person.

"Oh, if Elder Crane wants to train with you, you are dismissed of course!" Chris smiled, deep in the belief he had done the young man a favor...

"Oh... well then..." Allen closed his eyes and hissed 'DAMN!' mentally before turning to Crane again. "Guess I'm done here then..." With a sigh he followed the old man to his hut.

"Now tell me who the 8 Great Spirits are right now..." Crane had his nose hidden in a book while testing Allen's knowledge about the 8 Great Spirits.

"Hmm... I know Darkness is Luna and Light is Sol... Aquarius is water and Windy Air!" The young man scratched his beard while thinking. Who was the wood-spirit again?

Was it Ambard or Azarth? No... that was Earth and Metal... "Flamera was Fire and Ambard is Earth, Azarath is Metal and Wood was... uhm..." Allen tried thinking harder and harder... he had the feeling his ears were growing hotter and hotter while thinking...

"Woods is Weyards, Allen... you have to know such things if you want to form pacts with spirits!" Crane sighed deeply and laid his book aside.

"But that's exactly it: I don't want to form pacts with spirits! I'm human, I'm not supposed to be a summoner! Humans do things like hunting and using swords... Why do you want me to become a summoner so badly!?" Frustrated Allen slapped his hand on the table and leaned back in his chair. "It was fun to learn about this stuff when I was younger, but now I'm a hunter, and a pretty good one! I don't want to become a summoner anymore!"

Crane closed his eyes thinking for a few seconds. He touched the book he was holding before and leaned forward towards his student. How was he supposed to explain all of this? Was the boy even old enough? But he needed to know the truth... and the earlier he knew about it, the less risk there was for failure...

"Allen... do you know what your name stands for?" he opened his eyes again and grabbed the young human's hand.

"Allen? Uhm, nope, no clue." Allen blushed, not knowing what this was all about so suddenly... but he felt very uncomfortable with it...

"Not Allen! Your name! Van Tirith!" Crane snapped, frustrated... the boy could be so dumb sometimes...

"I have no clue. I just know it was the name of my Mother and she wanted me to keep it." Allen took away his hand and hid it behind his back to prevent Crane from grabbing it again.

"The van Tirith-Clan is a clan of summoners elected by the very first spirits of Midgard to save our world in the case of a new war between Asgard and Utgard!" Crane's face had an unexpected and unusual hard expression on it. "The Mana of our world is running shorter every day, and the faithful of the Gods abandon the Great Spirits as well as the followers of the demons! There is no one left but you to help this withering world!"

"Crane, no, I..."

"Whoever managed to seal away the Great Spirits also hunts your clan to obliterate your bloodline! They want to prevent the return of Mana on our world for a reason we don't know, but... You have to learn these things for the sake of Midgard!" The elder stood up now, moving towards his book-case.

"Crane, that... is not funny! You know, I used to like jokes but this really goes too far!" Allen tried to make an amused face-expression... but deep within something seemed

to move inside him. It was not his breakfast, but something deep within... it felt so true...

"I wish I was joking, Allen..." A smile appeared on the old man's face. "Look at yourself... you are the hope of our world? We better sell our souls to the demons right away..." He chuckled and leaned on the bookshelf. "Your parents were escaping to our village to survive the assaults of whoever was hunting them, but they knew someone followed them wherever they went. They left you in this village and traveled on. I had to promise them that I was going to teach you the art of summoning."

Allen stood up without a word. His mood was lightened by the joke of the elder, but it hurt so deep within... "I... I can't..."

"It is too early for you to set up a journey to change the world. This weight is too much for you yet, you are not mature enough to take this quest." Crane smiled at the youngster, satisfied. "But I am glad that you seemingly accepted this now. You are free for the rest of the day. Go hunting or whatever you feel like doing... but be aware: The disappearing of the Spirits is no longer a secret to neither of the worlds, so you are in constant danger... you must stay close around Ardon. Promise me, Allen" Crane threw a set of daggers towards Allen who caught them with ease. "I think you need a little cheer-up now, so... these are for you!" With a wave of his hand, Crane opened the door and left the hut, followed by a now eagerly grinning Allen.

Back in his own hut, Allen laid the daggers aside and walked over to a broken mirror on the wall... If he thought about it... everything in his house was broken... the windows, the door –since this morning- and even the roof was flicked together every few inches...

The mirror showed the face of a young man with hazel hair and emerald green eyes... but... this man didn't look like a hero at all. This man looked like the typical stereotype average hunter... Ha was a typical stereotype average hunter!

"How am I supposed to change the world...?! This must be a nightmare... this can't be true..." Allen leaned forward with his head against the wall. "I better go hunting a little..." He grabbed for the new daggers and left his house in a rush.

It was rather cold in the woods today. But maybe it was only Allen's mood? The hunter sat on the top of a tree, waiting for prey while playing around with his dagger. He thought about everything the old man had said... This seemed so unreal. It sounded like one of these hero-stories little kids used to tell each other if they were bored...

But maybe these kinds of stories were based of things that really happened? How is a hero born? A hero won't just stand up and be a hero from the very beginning... it needs time and change to become a hero!

Allen closed his eyes. He felt something changing deep inside him. It was like the innocent lazy young boy changed into something more mature. Someone who was able to take the weight of a huger quest than being a mere hunter.

"I'm ready..."

Kapitel 2:

Chapter 2

It had been a few days since Allen and Crane had talked about the van Tirith-Caln...

Since then Allen had visited Crane's lessons about summoning every day. He had taken the lesson much more serious now and spent every free minute with sword-training to be prepared for traveling around. If he kept up with this, Crane was very positive that within the next ten years he would be good enough to take on the travel to the Spirit-temples!

"So where is the Light-temple located?" Crane eyed the young man curiously.

"Wait, I know it, I know it... in the... Yora-desert?" Allen thought about it for a few seconds and nodded reassured. "Yes, it was Yora, correct?"

"Very good, Allen!" Crane smiled and laid the book on the table. "This is enough for today. Why don't you visit Gwen and Chris? The crops should be planted by now so it is time for the strawberry-harvest. So ask them to get you some of them. You deserve them!" Grinning, Crane opened the door again and let the young man out.

"I better fetch some prey first. It is a good time for hunting right now and that way I can exchange it for the fruits." Allen talked more to himself than to the elder. With a nod he said good-bye and ran off towards the forest. It was evening already and the forest was rather silence today...

Allen walked slowly through the thick wood to find some unfortunate animal that he could hunt down today. The silence was unnatural... even for a bad day, how Allen used to call it when no animals ran around in the woods... There were no birds, no leafs danced in the wind, the rustle of dead branches and dried leafs underneath his boots was the only sound that reached his ears.

"What is wrong here today?!" Allen muttered to himself while concentrating on the surroundings. He moved his fingers through his wild hair and played on the hilt of his dagger with the other hand. He grew more and more nervous... this was just not the forest he used to hunt in! What was wrong here!? Allen took the chance and jumped up a tree on an open spot in the woods. The sight didn't really make him any more comfortable... He was right: There were no birds, there was no wind and the sky was dim and grey...

Something in his mind screamed as if it wanted to warn him, but Allen only shook his head and threw away the thought... He was nervous from all the stories he had heard about the wars between the worlds and the unusual silence was only a stupid coincidence that made him a little nervous, that was all!! Come on, Allen! You don't believe in ghost-stories!! Allen repeated this in his mind again and again.

"Maybe I'm too nervous to hunt today..." Allen sighed and leaned back against the stump of the tree. "So, no strawberries today." He said while playing with his daggers to calm down a little.

His thoughts drifted off. He thought about the past and how he first entered Ardon...

It had been a rainy day... His parents were very nervous whenever they heard a sound in the woods. Allen had wondered about it a few times but his father ordered him to be silent again and again. His mother had always said that the village was only a few miles away... What were they running from? Who was hunting them? Why were his parents so afraid?

"Luna, oh, Midnightqueen, I summon you by our pact! Guide us the way!" The voice of his mother was trembling and he was sure she was crying... The ten year old Allen stared in awe as he saw the dark lady, Luna the Great Spirit of Darkness, forming in front of them out of dark sparkles.

From the bodyshape it had to be a woman, but Allen was never really sure about that... he didn't know if Spirits had genders at all... The long silver hair hang in pointed locks down her back while the red horns where her ears were supposed to be gleamed in the dark. Her long dark dress floated around her legs, gently revealing the contours of her legs. At the same time the dress seemed to have little white crystals attached on the fabric that sparkled like the stars of the night sky. Her grey eyes fixed the little boy before turning towards the person who summoned her.

"You called for me?" The voice of the spirit sounded so unreal, like echoed a hundred times at once... It was an amazing yet clear voice...

"Please... guide us to the hidden village!" Allen's mother begged the Spirit and pressed her child against herself. She wanted to give him shelter but... it felt more like a cage to Allen...

"Come." Luna replied flatly and floated into the deep forest. Allen's mother and father hesitated for a second but then followed her.

A few hours later the forest finally grew lighter and the stars of the night sky sparkled above them like tiny crystals... It was weird... it still rained but they couldn't see any clouds...

"Mother? Why are the stars back?" Allen asked, shyly.

"This is my power to guide you, young Allen." Luna turned around and moved her black fingers slowly through the boy's hazel hair.

"..." Allen pressed his face against his mother's legs. Luna seemed so creepy to him...

Small flickering lights behind the trees told them that they had finally reached the hidden village they were searching for so long...

"My pleasure." Luna's voice faded into darkness just like her body. She was gone again. The clouds returned to the sky, dropping their heavy water above the lands. A hand gently pressed the shivering Allen forward. His mother held him tight while walking on. The village was very small... only two dozens of houses were set around a little well in the centre of the village... One house stood on the top of a hill and his parents moved towards it. On a small wooden sign, Allen could read the words 'Ardon, village of the lost and found'.

His father knocked on the door and an old man slowly opened it from the inside. Allen looked up into the creased face of an old human with grey hair and a brown jacket. He smiled gently and showed off his yellow teeth.

"My, my... so you have come finally... My name is Crane, and you are?" The old man knelt down and took Allen's hand.

"My name is Allen van Tirith! I am 10 years old!" Allen replied formally and greeted the elder with a nod. His mother knelt down too and looked at the young boy, tears in her eyes.

"Hey, sweetheart... Your father and I have to go on a little journey... we will leave you here with Crane, he is an old friend... please be nice to him, okay?" She couldn't hold back her feelings anymore and pressed her son tightly against her chest. "I'm so sorry, Allen... I'm so sorry..."

"What... are you sorry for, Mother?" Allen now started crying too. He was not sure why, but to see his mother like this gave him a feeling of good-bye... forever...

"Just make sure you don't trouble Crane, okay? We have to go now... Good bye, Allen..." She moved her fingers through the young boy's hair. She loved doing this... "You are such a cute boy... please stay as you are." Without a further word she took the hand of her husband and they ran away into the dark night.

"Where... are they heading to?" Allen asked, still crying while watching his parents disappearing in the dark night.

"Come in, boy... the sky starts to clear up... Look!" The old man pointed towards the sky. It was clear again...

"This must be Luna..." Allen said with trembling voice. "She... she can show the night sky to guide the way... even if it is clouded..." He sobbed into his shirt and leaned against the door-frame.

A light flashed over the sky. And another one.

"Look! There is a shooting-star, Allen." The elder said, calmly. "An old legend of Midgard says, that whenever a God from Asgard visits our beloved world, we can see a shootingstar falling from the sky." Another set of shootingstars gleamed over the dark blue of the night. It was a spectacular sight. "SO many of them... strange... But it

looks beautiful, doesn't it? If you want, you can watch the night sky from the inside. I have a large window you can look outside from... Just let's get out of the rain." Crane patted the boy's shoulder and led him inside. Allen ran towards a window and looked back outside. He prayed to see his parents again... but he did not pray to the Gods... his mother had taught him to better pray to the Great Spirits. She had told him that the Gods were too far away to hear them...

After a couple of minutes another set of shooting stars crossed the night sky and rained down into the woods. Allen blinked for a second. The shooting stars fell into the woods?

"What the..." The boy pressed his nose against the cold glass and breathed heavily, forming little clouded spots on the window. Some more shooting stars rained down from the sky. But all of a sudden a giant one fell down into the forest. A flash of white light... and the sky turned cloudy again.

Allen opened his eyes and yawned on the top of the tree he sat on. He had been asleep for a while... it was night already! Allen scratched his goatee and hopped down from the branch. He looked up into the deep blue sky.

"Luna... are you still guiding me or have you left this world too?" A cold chill ran down Allen's neck. This nervous feeling returned again... his gut felt like filled with ice. "What is this... feeling...?" He gulped heavily and looked back up into the sky.

Flash

"No!!!" Allen shouted at the sight of a shooting star. There was another one. And another! Allen shook his head and tried to figure the place they were headed. "Ardon!!" He started running towards the village as fast as his legs allowed him to run through the thick wood.

"No... no... this can't be happening..." Exhausted he had to pause at the half way. Shooting stars lit the night above him. He felt like the little boy again he was ten years ago... the insecurity and yet the inner knowledge what was just happening... the very same thing that happened ten years ago.

His legs and lungs hurt badly as he kept running even though he was exhausted. A shimmering red light fell through the trees. Fire was burning behind them. Allen stood behind a tree, too scared to turn and look at the village he belonged to. He was no hero at all... even too afraid to face his own destiny...

"We are searching for a person with the name van Tirith!" A male voice shouted through the night. Allen pressed himself stronger against the tree... "If you bring him to us, you may all live, otherwise your punishment of in-cooperation will be death! Van Tirith! Show yourself or we will kill every single person in this village!" The voice came from the middle of the plaza as far as Allen could tell... He slowly turned his head to see the situation in the village. Allen had to blink a few times... He couldn't believe his eyes! He saw the villagers, kneeling on the ground around the well, guarded by...

people with white wings. Most of them had halos floating above their heads.

"Angels...?! You must be kidding me... this can't be!" Allen shook his head while whispering to himself. He turned his head towards the plaza again to see who the person was that was speaking...

A tall man with black hair and white wings stood in the middle of the row. A violet crystal was attached on his forehead and different from the other persons around him no halo hang above his head. Instead of ears he had something that looked like fins and his cold violet eyes seemed to absorb all warmth around him... The white armor gave him a royal look that added to his imposing appearance...

"Your last chance. Reveal yourself and your friends here will stay alive!" The God walked through the masses, looking at the different villagers, kneeling on the ground. Allen was pretty sure that the man was not certain if he was among them or not. If he ran away now... he wouldn't search for him maybe? But then Crane, Chris and Gwen and all the others... Allen shook his head. Running was not an option! But he was too scared to move an inch...

"STAY AWAY, ALLEN!!" Chris suddenly stood up from the ground and shouted with a roaring voice into the night. "DON'T COME FOR US!!" An angel came behind him and hit him back on the ground with the flat side of his blade.

"YOU ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN WE ARE!!" Now Crane stood up. His eyes were filled with tears but his face showed an expression of strength and confidence. Another angel pressed him back down on the ground.

"Seems as if you two guys want to be the first ones to be sacrificed..." The tall man flapped a little with his wings. "Van Tirith! If you don't show yourself within the next 2 minutes, those two will be the first ones to die!"

Allen leaned against the tree... his breath was heavy. What should he do!? He felt so torn apart... was this the price for being a hero? Was this what Crane had kept telling him about so often? The weight of responsibility?

"So guess they are looking for you, aren't they?" A cold voice appeared next to Allen's ear. Shocked, scared and angry at the same time he turned around and searched for his daggers. They were gone! And he couldn't locate the source of the voice either! "Be silent! You will guide them over here, you human fool!" The voice came from right in front of Allen, but he couldn't see who was speaking! It was as if a shadow stood in front of him that dulled the world behind it into a colorless grey...

"Who..."

"No time. Come on already!" The shadow grabbed Allen's hand. It was cold... like iced water flowing over his skin. Allen pulled away his hand.

"No I won't! I must help them!!" Allen hissed, his eyes focusing the village-plaza.

"You can't! Do you know who that guy over there is? That is an Asgardian Veteran!! He is known for his unforgiving attitude! He will kill those villagers no matter if you show yourself or not!! Do you want their lives to be sacrificed for you in vain!?" The shadow started to materialize in front of Allen. A young man appeared in front of him. He was average tall, wore black trousers, a green shirt and a black vest. The silver-grey hair gleamed orange in the firelight and the red piercing eyes fixed Allen like arrows ready to be shot. A blue mark on his forehead gleamed gently, illuminating the pale face into a soft light. Allen spotted the pointed ears behind the silver bangs...

"You are a demon...!!" Allen muttered shocked. "I won't come with you!"

"Haha, so much of a racist? Didn't expect that from you concerning the guys protecting you over there don't look too human as well... but hey..." He pulled out Allen's daggers from his pocket and offered them to the young man. "...I am not the one to kill your friends."

"This is your last chance! Show yourself!" The voice from the plaza rang in Allen's ears... He was so confused, scared, frustrated... What decision should he make!?

"They will kill not only the villagers but you too." The demon leaned back against a tree and watched the happenings in the village centre.

The thought kept spinning around in Allen's head as suddenly he heard a slash behind him... a scream...

"Chris!!" Allen gasped and turned around. He saw the ogre sinking on the ground lifeless...

"You did the right thing, Allen... go and follow your destiny!" Crane shouted into the darkness. Allen could have sworn the old man had just looked into his direction...

"I... will come with you..." Allen whispered under his breath, taking his daggers from the demon. He closed his eyes. He was such a coward! Allen shook his head and closed his fists around his daggers tighter and tighter.

"Very well. At least you made the right decision... they will die anyway. Come, come! This way!" The demon smiled satisfied and turned towards the dark forest.

How dared he...!? Allen shouted in his mind. This ignorant person acted as if the villagers were only junk to be thrown away... Did he really want to come with this man!? Allen looked up. The back of the demon was still turned towards him. Allen raised his daggers, ready to strike down... but who was he going to hold onto? He had nothing left to go to... With a trembling hand, Allen returned the daggers to its shelves. He followed the young demon... The cold feeling inside him seemed to melt away. Could he trust this man? He didn't know. He didn't want to know... but he wanted revenge! And if freeing the Spirits was this man's goal, he was going to stay on his side.

Screams filled the air and rang to their ears from behind them. Cries, desperation,...

The sound grew quieter with every step they took away from the burning village until it was a mere whisper through the darkness.

"This is the price of being courageous and following the right path." The demon turned around all of a sudden, facing Allen.

"What do you mean?" Allen shook his head, unbelieving. "I'm running away... this is not courageous! They are dying because of me! And I'm the only one that survives this assault!! I'm a coward! Nothing more!"

"That is not true. You could have chosen to run into the mess to get rid of the weight of the lives of those villagers, but you are aware of the fact that these Asgardians would have killed your people anyway... now you have to carry the weight of your friends' lives on your shoulders. You have to live on for their sake!" The young demon looked right into Allen's face. "I respect that. Sorry, I don't know how to talk with humans... I'm not used to them... I shouldn't say such things. For you Midgard-folks this must sound strange..." He shook his head and sighed.

"No... it made a lot of sense... even though I can't really accept these things like this right now..." Allen muttered. He felt lighter now though. "My name is Allen. Allen van Tirith."

"Yes I know. I'm here to help you preventing a new war between Asgard and Utgard." The demon smiled, showing off his pointed teeth.

"And you are?" Allen gave the demon a strange look...

"Oh yes, of course... my apologies" He bowed slightly like a nobleman would do in front of someone he introduced himself to... "They call me Zeyir. Zeyir Grozen."

Kapitel 3:

Chapter 3

Scream. Scream for your life. Scream if you can...

Allen felt as if a cold hand was touching his heart. He slowly opened his eyes... light fell around him.

"Finally awake?" A cheering voice reached his ears...

"Chris...?" Allen blinked and looked into the pale face in front of him... but that wasn't Chris, and the voice was not deep enough... but it wasn't Crane either... "Who... oh yeah, right... that was no nightmare..." The young man stated sarcastically into the face of a rather confused demon...

"Nightmare, huh? Guess you could call it that... I wouldn't want to mess with that God of War that attacked your village yesterday... you are really lucky. Breakfast?" Zeyir offered the sleepy human something that looked like... raw flesh...

"Irks! What is that!?! " Allen hopped up from the ground and looked around. They were still in the forest, but by now miles away from the village...

"I hunted some creature... no clue what it is called though... I think it was... rabbit or something..." Zeyir shot a disgusted face at the small creature. "But somehow it tastes weird..."

"Of course it tastes weird! It is raw!" Allen gulped at the thought that the demon actually tried to eat it without cooking it... "Honestly... where are you from if you don't even know rabbits!?" Allen sighed and took the dead animal from Zeyir's hands... it looked as if it had been slashed with claws. Zeyir blushed a little and scratched the back of his head with his... well... claws... that explained a lot. "Honestly, boy..." Allen only shook his head and took a look around. There was nothing to make fire with... so raw really was the only solution... "I don't guess you have firestones?"

"Firestones? Nope. Why?" Zeyir visibly felt uncomfortable about the situation...

"To make fire and cook this rabbit!" Allen snapped. How came this demon had no clue from ANYTHING!?! Or wait... he knew about Asgard... so maybe he was from... "Uhm... Are you from Utgard, Zeyir?" Allen moved his fingers over his goatee and shot a curious glare at a now nervous demon... that was answer enough for him. "I take this as a 'Yes!'"

"Hm..." Zeyir nodded and looked on the ground.

"Guess I have to apology then... you probably don't know rabbits." Allen sighed. Who

needed who's help here?!

"I don't have firestones, but I have a fire-blade if that helps you!" Flames formed around Zeyir's hand. A golden light flashed through it. Out of the flames formed a crimson blade with golden marks. The hilt had a crimson crystal-ornament while the red parts of the blade sparkled like white stars.

"That... is amazing!!" Allen's eyes started gleaming. He LOVED weapons! All kinds of them, but especially magical ones! He ripped the blade out of Zeyir's hands and took a closer look at it. The riffled sheath was balanced perfectly with the base of the sword while the hilt had the exact same weight as the blade, making it out-balanced to no end. "Such a wonderful sword... this must have cost millions of Gar..." Allen spoke more to himself than to the demonic owner of the sword...

"Gar? Oh you mean your money on Midgard... No not really... it is an heirloom of my family." Zeyir grinned, glad that the human seemed to feel better now and finally started open up to him. When they were escaping the previous night, he had refused even talking with him...

"Heirloom, huh?" Allen gave back the blade with an eager grin.

"The... rabbit?" Zeyir took his sword and looked at the still raw 'breakfast'.

"Oh yeah, right... can you shot some fire at these branches?" Allen pointed on the ground. A few dead branches laid randomly on the ground. With his foot, Allen pushed some of the branches together on a little pile. Zeyir took a look down on his blade before slashing it on the pile causing a giant jet of flame to appear.

After a while, the rabbit was finally done... Allen was used to cook in the forests. He had done this before when he wasn't successful with hunting and wasn't fast enough back at home again before the nightfall...

Allen sat on the ground, using his little daggers to get the meat off of the bones. Zeyir used his claws to get the meat... Allen was fascinated by the precision of the demon... he was damn good with his fingers! He would make an awesome hunter with a little practice!

"Now it tastes like I'm used to it..." Zeyir grinned and took another bite.

"Didn't you ever go hunting back in Utgard? Or didn't you ever cook something?" Allen couldn't withstand chuckling.

"Not... really..." Zeyir blushed again and took another huge bite. Allen could feel that the man didn't want to talk about it so he wouldn't be the one to ask anymore... maybe he was a noble back in Utgard? That'd be an explanation... maybe he was a lord or an aristocrat, politician or whatever they had down there... "So, now that we are stuffed, can we move on? There might still be some angels around." Zeyir threw away

the bones and with a snap of his fingers the fire on the ground went out.

"Angels? I thought... well... we rested, didn't we? Wasn't that risky enough!?" Allen sweatdropped and hopped up, remembering the winged person from the last night. He could recall the brutality with which they had killed off his village... The cold feeling in Allen's chest returned at the thought.

"You needed a break. It would have been harder to travel with you collapsing... I shielded us with some shadow-magic, so don't worry." Zeyir stretched himself a little before standing up and pointing towards south. "Twenty miles away there should be a little village with a silt-walker-station. At least that is what the map says... If we make it till there, we should be alright!" He grinned and started walking.

"Zeyir? Just... what would happen if we ran into... one of them?" Allen gulped at the thought... and followed the young demon.

"They will shoot light into the sky and alarm their master. Then we will have a damn problem." Zeyir sighed and thought about the possibilities they had if they ran into a mob of angels... when Allen was asleep and the angels had no clue where they were, it was no problem to use a simple shadow-seal... but if it came to a confrontation and they had to walk to escape, this wouldn't work anymore... Walking while using the shadow-seal was too energy-consuming as well! Zeyir shook his head. He didn't want to think about the consequences... they just mustn't walk into angels!

"Allen...?" Zeyir closed his eyes...

"What is it?" The human grew nervous at the worried tone in the demon's voice.

"If we run into angels. Don't move, okay?"

"Don't move!? You must be kidding me! If they find us, running is the only option!?" Allen thought Zeyir had to be insane! He couldn't be honest! But he didn't sound as if he was joking...

"I know, you know me since yesterday and you would prefer trusting any other creature but me... but please trust me just this once, okay?" He turned to face his companion. "Utgard is rather... un-wealthy right now. We couldn't stand a war against Asgard at the time being. But this would be the logical consequence if the Mana of Midgard is drawn to its end! I have enough reason to protect you, no matter what... you don't have a reason to trust me, but be aware that I have not a single reason to let these Asgardians get you!"

"..." Allen looked down on the ground. He liked Zeyir for some reason... he was a good person, Allen was sure of this... but he didn't like the thought of running into angels and doing nothing but standing around. "Okay... I will try not to move. But... what is going to happen then?"

"We will see!" Zeyir grinned playful and fastened his pace.

Allen wasn't really happy about the answer but he followed...

It had been a while since they talked with each other... they had walked a few miles already but it was still a while to go. The mood grew heavier and more nervous with every second.

"Zeyir?" Allen broke the silence finally.

"Hm?" The demon didn't turn around. He just kept walking on, his keen ears always concentrating on the surroundings.

"Why does this happen? I mean... aren't there other summoners that can summon the Great Spirits?"

"Not as far as I know... The witch that used to teach me about Midgard, told me about only one summoner left on Midgard! Nut as far as I know there are other spirits... smaller spirits! Elves are able to summon them, if I'm not mistaken..." Zeyir tried to remember one of his lessons when he was younger... ugh... how he hated the lessons back then... he had never paid attention...

Suddenly he heard something in the bushes... something huger than a rabbit! He turned around, only to see a pair of white wings. An angel shot a ball of white energy into the sky!

"NO!" Zeyir ran forward, stabbing the angel right into his heart with his claws. Allen could see how the hand of the demon passed through the chest, coming out on the other side of the chest again... The white fabric of the robe the angel was wearing turned red in a stream of blood... Zeyir was really precise... deadly precise... The demon formed a ball of dark energy and shot it on the dead body. It fell to ashes, leaving nothing but dust behind.

"What now!?" Allen started panicking... in a few seconds the God from before would be here... should they fight? Should they run? Should they... stay?

"Don't move!" Zeyir barked and threw something towards Allen that formed out of his hand... it looked like a piece of paper – it landed right on his forehead. He could feel cold coming from the seal... It was like cold water running down his body. He knew this feeling... it felt like this when Zeyir had touched him the first time back in Ardon when he was still a mere shadow... Allen looked down on his hands. He was invisible! Like a walking shadow...

"The more you move the harder it is for me to keep it up!" Zeyir hissed, feeling every movement of the human... he took a look around... there was nowhere he could hide... He had to stay!

Allen did not understand why he did not use a seal on himself!? Did he intend to sacrifice himself just as the villagers were sacrifices for the sake of his life?

"I won't die... don't worry..." Zeyir whispered silently while listening to the surroundings. He could hear wings flapping above them... a mob of angels, but one pair of them was stronger... these wings weren't as fragile as the other ones around them... they belonged to a God!

The black haired man with the crest on his forehead landed right in front of Zeyir, looking at the demon in surprise.

"I doubt that you are the person we are looking for!" The man's cold voice gave Zeyir a chill... He knew this person in front of him way too well... every person in Utgard did...

"So... if that's not Yarna..." Zeyir replied playfully. His chest felt as if it was going to burst. A ripping pain ran through his body. He could feel the three scars that were running down his chest hurting... they were a memorial of his last meet and greet with a God... But his mask of cheerfulness and glee was right in place.

"I know your mark on the forehead... you demons show off your heritage like it was a trophy... you must be a Grozen I guess?" Yarna grinned evilly. "This must be my lucky day..."

"I wonder how you intend to explain this in front of the Holy Senate of Asgard then... You are not allowed to be here on Midgard." Zeyir chuckled sheepishly.

"Same goes for you..." Yarna hissed angrily.

"Well... but I'm here as a visitor of this world. I don't have half of my personal army with me. But it looks like my trap worked!" Zeyir's face switched into an evil grimace.

"Trap?"

"You got it!" Zeyir laughed and moved his fingers through his silver-grey hair. "You won't be able to find the van Tirith-clan-member anymore. He is in Embra by now, north of here, using a silt-walker. You won't find him anymore..." He laughed successfully and leaned back on a tree. "And your angel-friend here..." He kicked into the dust on the ground with his foot. "He lured you all the way here!" Zeyir chuckled and turned towards Yarna... the God looked as if he was going to kill the demon every second. Allen stood there between two trees, afraid of moving the slightest, but he couldn't believe what Zeyir was just saying... Embra was over 50 miles north of Ardon and the completely opposite direction than what they were headed! Zeyir was a genius! But they were still in danger... especially Zeyir... Allen didn't quite get why Yarna wasn't 'allowed' to kill Zeyir off right away... were there any rules between Asgard and Utgard he didn't know about? And what was the Holy Senate?

"Tell me, boy... I guess you must be the son of this filthy old demon, Kyrin..."

"That's Lord Kyrin to you!" Zeyir snapped and walked towards Yarna, showing him that he was not afraid at all! In fact... he was, but he did not dare showing it off a single second... He could never hide anything in front of his father, but when it came to others he could lie on them without getting red or hiding all kinds of emotions.

"Whatever... so you must be Zeyir then. Give me a single reason why I shouldn't kill you right away? No one will find you, no one will question it if I say I wasn't here on Midgard! So..."

"Because I would not give up without a fight... and believe me... I know you would kill me, but I am good enough to at least let some nice wounds running down your pretty holy face! Explain that to the Senate, Yarna!" Zeyir was shivering slightly for a few seconds before he regained control over himself. Yarna seemed to have not noticed it... but Allen saw it...

"Hmpf!" Yarna turned around, looking at the forest. "Who tells me that the person we are looking for is not here with you?" An evil grin appeared on Yarna's face as he randomly shot lightspears into the woods. Allen pressed his lips together to prevent himself from gasping... one of the lightspears had missed him only about a few inches!

"No one. But why if I was you... I would go back to Asgard now before I call for MY servants... if it comes out that you were here... the Senate will have a nice little chit-chat with you about it!" Zeyir felt how a weight was taken off of his shoulders as Yarna turned back towards him again, stopping his tried to find someone in the surroundings. "I just want to come out of here alive again. I don't intend to make you troubles... as long as you don't make me troubles!"

"We leave!" Yarna shouted. The angels next to him took off, flying towards the sky. Yarna stayed for a few more seconds. "You better watch out, Zeyir... you might be mighty in your world, but here you are worth nothing at all!" He took off. Zeyir watched the God slowly flapping with his wings, flying through the trees' branches. Suddenly Yarna turned again, looking at Zeyir. "Oh, before I forget again... a little good-bye present!" A giant spear of light formed in Yarna's hand. Zeyir had only time to gasp before everything around him turned white. A thrilling pain ran through his whole body and he could feel his legs giving in to his weight. Coughing, Zeyir laid on the ground, trying to focus all his remaining energy on Allen's seal.

Yarna grinned at the sight of the pained demon and continued his way back to Asgard.

"Arg..." Zeyir gasped, not daring to lift off the seal... Allen couldn't stand watching all of this anymore... he wanted to run towards Zeyir and help him, but if Yarna noticed him, everything would have been in vain!

A few moments passed before Zeyir snapped his fingers and the cold feeling around Allen disappeared as well as the seal on his head. The young summoner ran towards his savior trying to talk with him.

"Zeyir!? Hey! Stay with me!! Zeyir!!"

Zeyir couldn't hear his companion's words anymore... the world around him grew dim and grey... the light of the spear was too much for him to take... he was used to darkness... now his energy was all sucked out of him... He closed his eyes and fell

unconscious...

Kapitel 4:

Chapter 4

„Come... on... Why the heck are you so heavy!?“ Allen had a hard time, carrying the unconscious Zeyir... the demon was out cold for hours by now... Allen had checked on his injuries, but the light-beam somehow had knocked him completely out without injuring the outer body...

Allen needed a break every once in a while... Zeyir wasn't heavy for his size –not at all- but he was not used to carry weights like this over longer distances, and it was a good chance to check Zeyir's heart-beat every once in a while...

“Don't dare dying, you hear me?“ Allen smacked Zeyir's shoulder, hoping he might wake up... of course he didn't. There were so many open questions! Who was this Yarna-guy? What is the Holy Senate? Why weren't they allowed to kill each other? – Though Allen was really happy that there was some law or something that prevented Yarna from just killing Zeyir!

With a sigh, Allen swung Zeyir over his shoulder again, ready to march the next mile. “Just a little longer... we will be in the town soon...”

It was a cold evening. Even though the area used to be rather warm, the air felt so cold today... The streets of the small town Lorwangen were nearly empty, only few persons were out.

“I need a healer... A healer...” Allen breathed heavily while walking through the townsgate. A guard wanted to stop him, but as he saw the wounded demon on his back, he called for aid. Allen just sunk back on a wall, trying to regain some power... how had he managed to drag Zeyir along all the way?! He was surprised about that himself...

He watched the guards, carrying the weak demon to a small house with a sign over the door that showed an Dieo-leaf. Allen remembered his mother telling him that the Dieo-plant was a flower that contained the highest Healing-Mana-concentration within its veins on whole Midgard, and that most healers gain their medicine from it. That was the reason why it became like a multifunctional sign for all kinds of healers.

Allen was too exhausted to stand up and follow the guards to the healers house right now... He wouldn't be able to help anyway, probably only standing in the way even!

One of the guards left the house of the healer, walking towards the sitting man.

“Your friend should be alright... Morgana is a very good healer. She should be able to heal him in no time! Want me to bring you to the INN in the meantime?“ The soldier offered a hand to Allen and helped him stand up.

"Thank you..." Allen leaned on the wall again for a few seconds to bundle his power before following the soldier to the next Inn. It was a small wooden Inn, nothing special at all... The Inn-keeper, a small dwarven woman –not that any of them were very tall... - greeted him friendly and brought him to a room upstairs. Just then, Allen suddenly noticed...

"Oh noes!!" He slapped himself against the forehead. "I'm sorry, but... I can't stay! I don't have money with me!!" Allen remembered that he had left his wallet in his house in Ardon when he had gone to the forest for hunting...

"Don't worry about it. The soldier said your companion is at Morgana's house? Then you may stay for free tonight!" The Inn-keeper shrugged a little before receiving a confused glare of Allen. "Let's just say, Morgana... is very special in such things..." She laughed and opened a room with a small silver key on her belt.

Allen entered the room and let himself fall on the bed. It felt so nice and soft... and he was so tired...

It took only a few minutes before Allen drifted into soft slumber.

"And to Yora?" It was morning already. Allen talked with the son of the Inn-keeper about the routes of the slikwalker-station in Lorwangen. He was looking for a good root to either Yora-desert or Titanu-Fortress... The Temple of Light was located in the hot desert of Yora, but in Titanu-Fortress, there was a station to the Eternal Woods, the forest of elves and location of Weyard's temple, the Great Spirit of Plants.

"To Yora? Hm, there is the a slikwalker traveling there tonight. It brings you to Iowa first and from there on it is only a half-day-trip to Nihil, the underground-town on the edge of Yora. Guess that is the fastest route, but the slikwalker travels there only once a month..." The dwarven man scratched his beard, so did Allen with his goatee.

"So either tonight or we will have to go for Titanu..." Allen thought for a few seconds... so it was probably going to be Titanu... he didn't know in what conditions Zeyir was yet... and traveling tonight? This was probably way too early for him... "Thanks a lot. I better go to the healer now... Thanks for the room!" He smiled and waved the nice dwarves before leaving the Inn.

Allen knocked firmly on the door of the healer... a weird scent came from inside... It smelled like different herbs and medicine but also like flowers and perfumes...

"Come in!" A rough female voice shouted from inside. Allen opened the door slowly and a tall demon woman greeted him with a smile. She had long black hair that fell around her back like a scarf. A small black mark on her forehead was visible through her silky bangs. The violet robe she wore fell around her body with almost liquid softness. "Oh, you must be the one who carried this boy here, right?" She opened her mouth, showing off her demonic teeth. "Do you have a clue who this is?" She asked curiously.

"Uhm, he said his name is Zeyir Grozen..." Allen was a little surprised about the question.

"He is from Utgard, right?" She laughed and patted the shoulder of the still unconscious man. She moved her fingers over his forehead, tracing his demonic mark. "Thehehe... very interesting... You are just in time. I want to wake him up now. I restored his Mana inside and fixed it a little. It needs only a shove of Mana to wake him up now."

"You restored his Mana?" Allen was confused... he knew Mana of course, but wasn't the Mana within the body of a living being unchangeable?

"Correct. Some really strong lightmagic destroyed his whole Mana-balance. He was filled with Light-Mana! He is a demon! He needs darkness, not light!" She grinned evilly. "Now he should be alright... The Mana within a body is a floating substance that varies depending on race, family, personality... And if the flow of the Mana in your body is suppressed, stopped or even replaced, your body can't contact with your soul anymore. You are seemingly unconscious but still can hear, feel, see, taste, smell... Most people don't know that, but the demon magic of Utgard works with this kind of phenomenon, to heal themselves from nasty wounds that are deadly usually... If your soul can't die through your body, you are still able to survive even if your body is mostly destroyed. It is a technique from the old Eternal War that once drove the lands into chaos." Morgana moved her fingers through Zeyir's silver hair. It felt like silk around her hand.

"Who are you..." Allen stepped back a little, not sure what to think of this woman. She knew too much about all of this to be an ordinary demon! Was she going to try to kill them too?! But why would she heal Zeyir in the first place then?

"My name is Morgana Farsey. I come from Utgard, as you might have expected... just like your little friend here... But my family left Utgard ages ago... now I am a healer. Dangerous, life-saving and undying..." She laughed and leaned back a little. "Other than you humans, we demons live very long!" She grinned and took a little bottle from her desk. A green liquid that looked awfully much like poison was filled in it... "Guess it is rude to let your friend wait any longer, right?" She opened the small bottle and let a few drips of it fall into Zeyir's half-opened mouth.

The demon flinched a little, shivered but then slowly opened his eyes.

"Ugh... I feel horrible..." He gasped and looked around. Allen couldn't effort not to grin with glee and hopping forward towards him.

"Zeyir!! You are alright!" He helped the dazed demon up. "Don't dare startling me like that ever again!!" He hugged Zeyir in enthusiasm.

"A...Allen! Get off!!" Zeyir barked a little confused. "I'm alright! I'm not hurt, okay?" He needed a few seconds to orientate himself. He felt like he knew this scent... as well as the woman... but hasn't he been out cold? How could he know this room?

"Very well. You seem to feel good again. This looked like the work of a very strong light-magician... an Arc-angel or God I presume?" Morgana walked towards Zeyir, pushing Allen out of the way a little before tracing Zeyir's mark on the forehead with her finger again.

"Hey, Zeyir! If you feel alright, we can travel on tonight!! There is a slikwalker traveling to Yora! Otherwise we can take the slikwalker to Titanu-Fortress tomorrow evening!" Allen grinned, trying to start a conversation with his companion. He felt so glad that Zeyir was alright again...

"That's great... which temples are close to there?" Zeyir moved his head aside to prevent Morgana from staring at his mark all the time.

"Light is Yora, and from Titanu we can take another ride to an area around the Plant-Temple!" He grinned proudly before remembering his previous conversation with Morgana... "Maybe we should go to Titanu then... You must have had a hard time with Light-Mana..."

"No, I think Yora would be perfect for you two!" Morgana interrupted Allen harshly and looked at Zeyir again. "Cause I will travel with you there. The only way to enter Yora-desert is a so-called 'adventurer-passport' that is given to only very few persons from the knight-guild of Nihil. They want to prevent pilgrims from dying in the desert... and I know the guild-master, so you can travel right on! That is a great chance for you! Besides, Zeyir can stand such a little Light-Mana very well! Additionally, if you have got a pact with the Light-Spirit, you can heal a Light-surplus yourself! Now how about you get out of here and get our tickets and such? I need to check on other wounds on Zeyir, so get out of here!" She pushed Allen out of the door before he could react, pressing him her wallet in his hands. "Tell them Morgana sent you and they will give you a discount!" She slapped the door and sighed after a few seconds. No one seemed to enter again... Allen must have gone... "Finally alone again..."

"Who are you!? How comes you know about the Light Spirit!?" Zeyir stepped back, preparing his claws just in case.

"My, my... you are really as handsome as everyone says..." Morgana grinned and sat down on her desk.

"Huh?" Zeyir was caught by this comment totally off-guard.

"Well, I have heard a lot of you, Prince Zeyir!" She giggled and leaned back. "I visit my old home Galdor every once in a while and as Galdor's beloved Prince you are the crush of most girls there!"

Zeyir stepped back a little more. It was dangerous now! No one was supposed to know he was here!!

"Don't worry, sweet-heart, I won't tell anyone your little secret... your human friend

doesn't know about your origins, right? How should he...? But you have to watch out... a blue gleaming mark on the forehead... only royal demons have them on their head. Wherever you will go, if a demon sees you he will know that you are a mighty descendant of Utgard's royal demons. And the shape of yours... So clear... that is just as rare! You have to watch out a lot better, my dear..."

"How comes you know that we are headed for the Great Spirits?!" Zeyir relaxed again... she seemed to be no danger for him.

"Will." She grinned.

"Will?"

"Correct. I'm one of his informants on Midgard and he kept asking me questions about the Great Spirits lately... and this boy... I can feel a strange Mana-constellation within him! This kind of Mana inhabits summoners, very strong summoners. So I just combined 1 and 1 and came to the conclusion that this must be the person that is able to solve your little spirit-problem." Morgana grabbed some bottles from her desk, putting them into a small bag. "Mind sitting down so I can check your chest?" She laughed and stood up.

"Ch...chest!? NO WAY!!" He barked trying to step back... but there was the wall already!

"Awww... too bad... you are really cute, you know that?" Chuckling she continued packing her bag. Zeyir let out a deep relieved sigh... "You should check for your little friend!" She grinned and pointed towards the window.

The young hazel haired human waved on the other side of the window with three slikwalker-tickets

Kapitel 5:

Chapter 5

The journey to Nihil had been a really hard one for Zeyir... Not only that the Slikwalker – a giant lizard with long, spiderlike legs- was a rather uncomfortable though fast way of traveling, but Morgana kept annoying him with all kinds of ambiguous questions about his past and origins, eagerly trying to let him tell Allen about his royal origins... it had been really hard for him to find ways to get out of the situation all the time... and it was a looong journey... the ride had taken over 15 hours and even the lizard-rider had shot Zeyir sympathizing glares... Allen haven't even noticed the delicate situation he had been in... he was just surprised about how much a single woman could talk!

"Finally!!" Zeyir jumped off of the lizard even before the ramp has been fixed on the saddle on the lizard's back...

"Hey, Zeyir, sweet-heart! Wait! Awww... he looks so cute when he is all embarrassed!" Morgana nyorned and giggled playful. The other guests from the slikwalker rushed down the ramp to get away from Morgana as fast as possible. Allen followed the demoness down the ramp and went over to the lizard-rider to get their packages.

"So, now what are we supposed to do to go to the Temple of Light?" Allen looked around. There was no town out here! But the sign over the station said "Nihil-slikwalker-station"... There were only mountains. Very high mountains. It looked nearly impossible to climb them without wings! Margana walked over to him, taking her bag and pointing towards a giant stairway that lead right into the earth.

"Nihil is an underground-town... In this region it is winter right now, usually they have over 50°C on the surface-air, so they built the town under the surface to gain cool air from the surrounding rocks." Morgana smiled and looked over at Zeyir. "Shall we?"

Down in the town-center, Allen couldn't quite believe what he saw... The whole town was like one giant room... the houses were only mere doors on the walls, no special buildings. The roof was about 10 meters over their heads. Torches and small gleaming flowers lit the town. Even though they seemed to try to make the town look friendlier by decorating it with all kinds of plants, it looked like a prison to Allen... he was used to open range, to fresh air, to natural light... but this town seemed so hectic, the air smelled old and used...

Morgana lead them slowly towards the Inn. Zeyir did not dare leaving Allen's side... he was afraid of being alone with that 'witch' how he used to call her...

In the Inn, Morgana was so 'nice' to pay for their rooms before leaving for the knight-guild. She wanted to talk with the guild-master about a permission to enter Yora.

Zeyir sat in the room, staring outside what was supposed to be a window, but it lead

only to another crowded street... He held a small book in his hands that had been in their room. A small golden word was printed on its shelf, writing "Nihil-Guide" in a beautiful handwriting.

"What is that?" Allen leaned forward, looking at the book.

"A guide about Nihil..." The demon yawned and leaned back in his chair.

"...I can see that myself... I wanted to know if there is anything special!"

"The passage to Yora has been closed about 20 years back to prevent victims." Zeyir looked at Allen with anger-gleaming eyes. "The Temple of Light was said to be a domain of the Gods... many pilgrims died due to the heat out there. And whoever was not killed by the heat... was killed by the elf-tribe living in the desert... Seems as if this is going to be harder than we thought..." He sighed frustrated. "Maybe it wasn't such a good idea to come here first..."

"We can still take another route!" Allen sat down next to Zeyir. "You know, I owe you a lot... I really trust your feeling and if you think it is too dangerous..."

"No, it is alright... we will have to get to that temple anyway, and if it is winter here right now I don't want to know how it is going to be if we come here in summer!!" Zeyir looked down at the little book. "They don't give away any decent information about the dangers of Yora though... They want to make it look as if there is nothing worth to enter Yora anymore, so there is no need to help them with providing information about the desert itself..." Zeyir moved his claws through his hair in deep thought.

"So... then why don't we search for someone who knows?" Allen grinned and grabbed Zeyir's arm, dragging him outside.

The people outside were crowding the streets making the space in town appear even smaller. Allen looked around, searching for something that might provide them with information... He had always been good in talking with people even if he did not know them. He spotted a small flowershop on the side and walked towards it, Zeyir holding on his scarf to not lose him in the masses.

"Excuse me?" Allen opened the door slowly. It was a rather dark room, decorated with all kinds of flowers.

"We open the shop in about two hours. Please stay out till then..." An old man looked through a couple of blooms, before turning to his work again.

"Uhm, my apologies... I only wanted to ask some things..." Allen scratched the back of his head, stepping further in. "We want to travel to Yora and can't find anyone to help us providing information about its dangers..."

"You won't get there... you need an adventurer-passport and there are only very few

to receive one... I doubt, boys like you will get one!" The old man said-with a warm friendly voice- before returning to his work. Zeyir already wanted to pack Allen's arm to lead him back outside as...

"Yeah, but we need to go there no matter with or without passport. We have a friend that knows the Guild-Master of Nihil, so we got good chances to get there..."

"..." The old man stood up, looking at Allen. "You are serious about that, huh? When I was younger, I was just as stubborn..." He chuckled before leading them in with a wink of his hand. Zeyir couldn't believe it! How did he do that!?

"Thank you!" Allen cheered before hopping in and sitting down on a chair at the side.

"I need to bring this into the room over there. I will be there for you in a few seconds!" The old man smiled and brought a few pots with earth into another room in the back of the shop.

"Allen, how did you know he was going to help us!?" Zeyir whispered, eyeing the door nervously.

"Did you see the flower-shop-sign? It was very old and the name of the shopkeeper was changed once. You can see it on the different conditions of the wood. But the name-sign is still rather old, so I guessed it must be a family-shop, given down from father to son or something... You said the path to Yora was closed twenty years ago... so maybe someone that lives here much longer already knows something about it! Besides, he had the symbol of light underneath the sign." Allen grinned satisfied. Zeyir just shook his head, unbelieving. He had underestimated Allen by far... For his age he was one smart cookie!

"So..." The old man entered the room again, smiling. "You two want to travel to Yora..." He sat next to Allen, smiling at the young adventurers. "I guess I can provide you with a lot of information... My grandfather used to take me with him when he traveled to the tribes of the desert..."

"We heard the elven tribes in the desert killed many travelers!" Zeyir interrupted curiously. He thought of them as the largest danger...

"That is correct... The desert-elves, how we use to call them, hate civilization... they have it very rough in Yora, even though they live with the blessing of the Lightspirit himself! When they were banned into the desert a very long time ago, they had to learn to live in the heat with the dry soil and the rare water there. The pilgrims that wanted to travel to the Temple of Light to pray to the Gods started suggesting things to the town-council of Nihil things like building roads towards the temple through elven terrain or building wells... Well... twenty-five years ago the town-council gave in... They dared intruding the fragile balance of Yora, causing a disaster for the elves. One quarter of them were killed by the consequences... After this they declared their territory as officially forbidden for anyone beside their tribe-members. And they kept to their word. The city-guard was unable to protect the pilgrims and so the knight-guild decided to close the path to Yora. Since then, no one was allowed to enter the

desert anymore." The old man sighed, sadness in his eyes. "But there are still some exceptions."

Allen looked at the old man, confused. "Exceptions?"

"Yes." The old man pointed at the door. "They don't respect the Gods. They are faithless. But who they worship is Sol himself, the Great Spirit of Light."

"Sol..." Zeyir closed his eyes, thinking for a second. "So if we travel under Sol's sign, they will let us through?"

"Who knows... but they will not just kill you off most likely!" He sighed. "Okay, is there anything else you want to know? Otherwise I got to get back to work!"

"Thank you very much for your aid! It is really appreciated!" With a grin, Allen bowed in respect and looked at Zeyir. "Do you have any questions left?"

"Nope!" Zeyir grinned and thanked the old man as well. They were much more informed now! At least they knew something about the upcoming dangers now, and about how they might save themselves if necessary...

They returned back to the Inn. Morgana was already waiting in the lobby, rather frustrated.

"Why didn't you tell me you were going out!?" She shrieked and hopped up from the couch. "You have no sense of respect towards elders!" Standing up, she threw two little passports towards Zeyir. "Here..."

"Those are..." Zeyir looked down on the pieces of paper in his hand. 'Adventurer Passport' was written on it with big black letters. Underneath there stood their names, Allen van Tirith and Zeyir Grozen.

"A little sign of my respect towards your handsomeness." She grinned and bit on her fingernails with her pointed teeth. Zeyir grew more and more red before offering Allen his passport.

"What do we owe you?" Zeyir replied flatly, hoping to receive a decent answer instead of more comments about his look or origin or whatever...

"Oh, that is for free. Let's say... this is my part of restoring this little world. It is so much fun teasing those poor Midgardians!" She laughed in a shrill tone and took Allen's hand. "I entrust you with Zeyir's safety! So bring him back alive, okay?" Grinning she looked at Zeyir.

"I'M NOT A KID!!" Zeyir barked before sitting down on the couch... he just didn't get this woman...

"Shall we leave town then, Zeyir?" Allen looked as if he couldn't stand the heavy

atmosphere of this town any longer... "I hate it here to be honest..."

"I do too... Okay then. Let's pack our stuff and leave as soon as possible!" Zeyir smiled and Allen answered by simply running to his room, packing his bags.

"It was a good decision to travel to Yora first." Morgana sat next to Zeyir, leaning her head against his shoulder. "With the aid of Sol, your father won't be able to find you here. The rumors about your disappearing spread fast among Utgard and will soon reach Midgard. If Sol protects you with his aura, no demon will be able anymore to tell your true might." She smiled, eyeing her prince with amused eyes.

"This is why I decided to go to Yora first... it might be one of the most dangerous temples of Midgard regarding its location... but if the angels of Asgard AND my father is hunting us, we won't stand this very long..." Zeyir sighed, leaning back a little deeper into the soft fabric of the couch. "Now honestly... what can I do for you for your efforts? Please don't say—"

"Haha, no worries... I just want you to write me a little letter... in which you confirm that I was the one healing you back there in the woods!" She grinned evilly, and handed him over a feather and a piece of paper. "As soon as you are back on your throne this will be worth more to me than gold or favors!" She laughed at that one, glaring at Zeyir while he was writing the little note.

"..." Zeyir only shook his head but he couldn't hide a small grin on his face.

"You know, Zeyir... you are the kind of King Galdor was waiting for all the years..." She moved her fingers through his hair while talking. "You don't only see the problems of our world but the problems that influence all worlds alike. This is what makes you a great ruler in my eyes." She sighed and took the piece of paper from Zeyir as he finished it.

"So I guess you will stay here then?"

"You want me to stay, right? You don't like me..." She tried to act a little pained but the amusement was visible all over her face.

"Yupp." Zeyir grinned and stood up. "I got to get my packs now. If we leave town now, we can travel during night... that will make it easier for us." He smiled and helped Morgana up.

"Yes, that'd be best... I will stay here a little longer, so in the case of your save return, please make sure to pay me a visit at the knight-guild okay?" She smiled, hugging the demon in good-bye.

"Promise, but now GET OFF OF ME!"

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.

Kapitel 7:

Chapter 7

In the evening, Allen and Zeyir packed their bags to travel on through the desert towards the Temple of Light. Refreshed and restocked –they had filled their bottles with fresh water from the spring in the cave- both men were ready to travel another couple of miles through the soft sand of Yora. Their encounter with Serena and Callo had made them grow more careful though... Zeyir concentrated on the surroundings the whole time while Allen kept silence and watched the dunes for movements.

The first day they had slept at a set of rocks, but that was nothing compared the wonderful cave they had been in before... In the early evening they had traveled on towards the Temple.

"Are you alright?" Every once in a while Zeyir checked for Allen. He still felt rather cold during night.

"Yes." Allen replied flatly to re-concentrate on the desert.

They walked for hours. Somehow they seemed to not mind walking in the sands anymore. Refreshed from the long break before they just kept walking on and on.

The hours passed and the sun slowly started rising.

"Wow, it looks so giant here!" Zeyir stared at the horizon as the mighty sun arose from her sleep.

"Well, Sol's temple is here in the desert and he is the one, moving the sun, so I guess it is natural." Allen smiled. Now that the sunrise had started it was about time for them to search for a spot to rest for the day. Zeyir looked around as they walked, always trying to spot an old tree, a cave, rocks,... but no luck. They walked on for another hour and the heat started to return to the desert-air.

"It is... so hot... Why is it so damn hot here!?" Zeyir kept complaining about the heat and the intense light the whole time... He seemingly had forgotten about the desert-elves already...

"The more you complain, the worse it will be!" Allen snapped annoyed... He preferred the cold of the night as well but complaining would not make it any better! "As far as I know, Sol moves the sun in an ellipse-like route over his temple, so the sun shines directly on the ground here, heating it much more intense than usual..." He sighed... knowing this did not really make it any better...

"I know thaaaaaaat!!" Zeyir moved his hands through his hair and sighed annoyed. "That is the only way we will be able to find the stupid temple... Following that unforgiving, stupid lightball... CURSE YOU!!" The demon leaned on Allen's shoulder. "I

hate light so much..."

"Awww..." Allen patted Zeyir's head playfully while grinning in his usual amused manner.

"You don't take me serious... do you?"

"Not a bit!" Allen laughed and looked up at the sky. "I wonder how those elves manage to survive under these conditions..."

"Don't complain about it... the less of them are able to live here, the luckier we are!" With a painful grimace Zeyir remembered the encounter with Callo... The desert-elf had been a real challenge...

"Maybe you are right..." The summoner sighed and took a look around. "Uhm... Zeyir...How far do you think we walked already?"

"We walked non-stop till yesterday evening..." Zeyir was too lazy to think about it right now... "But it sure had been kinda the distance! Why do you ask?" He looked at his companion in confusion.

"..." Allen pointed at something in the far distance... it looked like a spiral of light that shot directly into the sky.

"Is that... the Temple of Light already!?" Zeyir gasped and started running towards the light.

"Hey! Wait for me!!" Allen smiled and ran after him.

After a couple of minutes, the roof of a giant temple appeared over the edge of the dunes. Allen -faster than Zeyir again- stood on top of the dune, looking down at the gigantic temple. The golden roof sparkled softly in the sunlight and the white marble-walls seemed to be unaffected by the sand of the surroundings, they were white as snow. The whole temple was built as some kind of circle in which's center an altar was placed that was surrounded by light. This was the spot the light-spiral was coming from. Something like a small path seemed to lead away from the temple, marked with small torches.

"Wow, this is... amazing! Our summer-castle is small against that temple!" Zeyir looked down at the Temple of Light in awe...

"Summer-castle?" Allen looked at Zeyir, surprised.

"Uhm..." The demon blinked and tried to think of something... "I was working at a castle! Yeah, that's it!" Zeyir blushed a little and started chuckling embarrassed.

"Yeah... of course..." Allen made it pretty obvious that he didn't believe the demon, but it was none of his concern. "Well, we found it but... we have still one problem..." He pointed towards the temple. Zeyir looked over and stopped breathing for a

second. At least a dozen of desert-elves patrolled around the temple, well-armed. Zeyir grabbed Allen by his scarf and dragged him to the ground.

"This is bad... well guess we won't have a chance to enter the temple during day-time... We will have to sneak in during night!" The demon growled frustrated.

"Can you keep your invisible-sign-thing up that long?" Allen sighed and lowered his chest to stay close on the hot ground... the heat seemed even more intense down on the sand than when he was standing!

"Probably not... It wouldn't be a problem if this was the Temple of Darkness, or if we were in Midgard... but I can't keep the sign up for long under these conditions!" The demon seemed annoyed by the fact that he wasn't able to keep the invisibility up for long enough... With a wink of his hand he symbolized Allen to retreat for now.

The two men waited on a nearby dune not too far away from the temple, covered by Allen's scarf and a piece of fabric in which Zeyir used to carry his food.

It had been an awful long day for them... The heat was unbearable! From time to time they took a sip from their water-supplies, but they did not dare drinking too much... they needed water for their way back, and who knew when they were going to find a well or a spring again?

Dawn came and Zeyir and Allen prepared for their trip inside the temple.

"Are you sure?" Allen looked at Zeyir, nervous.

"Yupp! The temple is well-guarded so we will need the shadow-walk to get inside the temple... From there on we must find our own way to its altar. If we manage to call for Sol, they won't be able to hurt us in his present! They worship him, so they won't dare intruding us if Sol already appeared. Then it is his decision alone if he forms a pact with you or not... It is risky, but we have no other choice!" Zeyir hopped up from the ground, enjoying the cool air around them.

The light-spiral at the temple's center was gone by now, it died when the night came.

It was dark around the temple. Only a few torches and gleaming rocks that reminded Zeyir of the star-crystals in Utgard, lightened the area. Allen and Zeyir sneaked through the sand as slowly as possible to not attract the attention of the guards.

Once they were pretty close on getting caught by a female guard... They didn't have noticed her right away, so she was dangerously close to them. Walking while someone was around was suicidal as the sand would start whirling around on the ground and she was walking right towards them... fortunately she had missed them by about two meters...

Inside the temple, Zeyir loosened the seal and they had to make their way through the hundreds of hallways guiding through the temple. The many statues, paintings or

wall-carpets gave them an advantage to hide if someone came...

Allen slowly sneaked towards a giant door that looked pretty much like their destination... The oaken door was decorated with crystals, golden ornaments and a giant symbol that Allen recognized as 'Sol's blessing', a sign that symbolized Sol's unleashed might and the sun itself.

"I think this is it, Zeyir." He whispered towards the demon who sneaked towards the door now as well.

"Great! That was easier than I had thought!!" Zeyir grinned and placed his hand on the door, pushing it a open a little. He looked outside. Allen was right! There was the altar! They had made it!! And not a single guard around! That was a piece of cake!

Zeyir opened the door a little more, so they could enter the altar-room. The giant stairway in the middle that led up to the altar was made out of pure marble. Allen had to keep staring at it all the time while walking up towards the altar.

Zeyir hurried up the staircase, eyes always watching the doors leading to the altar-room to not miss any entering guards...

The altar was made out of a material the demon did not know... it seemed to gleam from inside but wasn't a crystal, more like marble with a certain intense white that seemed too strong for a natural mineral though...

Allen reached the altar now too looking at the weird table...

"See, I told you someone was sneaking around inside the temple!" A female, almost devilish voice reached their ears... but what made both men even more nervous was the awfully familiar voice that spoke from seemingly out of nowhere now...

"Right, Shade. Good job." A black hole formed in front of the altar. A small little creature that looked like a kid with too short legs and only one eye floated out of the darkness, followed by a golden-haired tall man with tan skin...

"Callo!" Allen gasped and stepped back, almost falling down the stairs...

"!!" Zeyir prepared his fightingstance right away just in case the elf was about to attack them.

Callo only grinned evilly and snapped with his fingers. The doors that lead towards the altar-room pushed open and from every door, one guard stepped in. Zeir gulped. He counted a total of twelf guards plus Callo...

"This time, Serene won't be around to save you." Callo was surrounded by a dark aura as he loosened his belt on which his rapiers were attached and threw it on the altar. "I told you... next time we meet you are mine... But I must admit, this was way faster than I had expected."

"Lord Callo, what do you intend to do?!" The female guard that they had nearly run into before looked at her superior in surprise.

"I will give them a chance." He grinned in a way that Allen and Zeyir both disliked for some reason. "I will fight them with only the help of my summon-spirit... if they manage to defeat me, I will let them go! Otherwise... well, let's say they won't get out of here in one piece!"

The small shadow-spirit giggled and floated around in midair. It wore a headscarf with two long pieces of fabric hanging down the spirit's back-in the same way as Allen's scarf.

"But, Lord Callo, that is against our tribe's rules! I..." The female guard shut down as Callo shot her a deathglare.

"I know. But they managed to intrude Sol's very altar. This is immense. We have to be more careful in the future if two mere... kids... manage to break in here!" Callo looked at the two intruders and then towards his spirit. "Are you prepared, Shade?"

"Any time!" She giggled and faded into dark mist that seemed to float into Callo's chest.

"Who do you call a kid here, huh!?" Zeyir felt how his head turned red. How much older could that elf possibly be!? Five years? Six? But not enough to call them kids!

"And... if we win, we are allowed to go?" Allen ignored Zeyir's outburst of anger and tried to stay as calm as possible.

"You have my word as leader of the Moon-guard." Callo nodded and leaned against the altar. "Now what about it? Will you come already or do I have to wait here till sunset for you to act?"

Zeyir closed his eyes for a second... 'Please, send me some might! I need it!' He silently prayed to the depths of Utgard but he knew that it was useless... Their only chance was to attack Callo together and to knock him off his feet while he was concentrating on only one of them...

Both men waited for a second, looking at Callo... he had a dark aura surrounding his body... and he did not move an inch... almost like a statue.

"What is he waiting for!?" Allen whispered towards his companion while glaring at the desert-elf.

"I have no clue, but something is wrong. His aura is... different from before..." Zeyir blinked a few times... He felt dark Mana coming from the man, but how was that possible. "Wait a second... That... is not him!" Zeyir wanted to turn around, but in this moment, the edge of Callo's hand hit into Allen's neck, knocking him off out cold. The human sank on the ground, unconscious. Zeyir gasped and stepped back a little. He looked over at the 'Callo' standing at the altar... it formed into the small spirit again.

Shade chuckled amused and flew towards its master.

“That was fun! Now to you!” The eye of the spirit focused Zeyir and the demon was not quite sure if he should concentrate on Callo or the spirit first... but why fighting anyway!? He had lost already... and he knew it. He had used most of his Mana while sneaking into the temple and his fighting skills alone were not enough to defeat the skilled warrior... Zeyir breathed heavily. They had lost. There was no hope left for them... He closed his eyes.

A forceful hand knocked the demon out. The world grew black around him once more.

Kapitel 8:

Chapter 8

Zeyir awoke slowly in something that looked like... a prison. He had to blink a few times to realize what had just happened... or... well, whenever they had been knocked out...

He looked down his body. Let's see, two arms, two legs, one head... Jupp, he was still in one piece! Only the pain in his neck kept bothering him...

"Man... I start hating Midgard... Whenever something happens I always end up on the ground unconscious..." The demon grumbled to himself under his breath. He looked around.

"!! Where is Allen!?" He hopped up from the ground searching with his eyes through the other prison-cells but he could neither see nor feel his human companion's presence.

"Allen!?" He shouted out loud, hoping Allen was going to hear and answer him.

No reply...

"Allen! Can you hear me!?" Zeyir started to realize that he wasn't there, but he didn't want to realize!

"Allen!"

"Your friend won't answer. He is in another prison." The female voice sounded familiar...

"Hey, Princess!" Zeyir was never so glad to see a desert-elf as now. Serena smiled and walked towards the demon. "Where is your bodyguard?" He added sarcastically.

"You are really lucky... Callo has to explain all of this to my father right now. Letting someone live who managed to break into Sol's sanctuary is against our tribe's law... and he let you live... I wonder what got into him to save you." Her hand reached for the demon. "You are a demon, right? I have never ever seen one before... Callo is the only one amongst us that formed a pact with a shadow-spirit... but your dark aura is just as intense as Shade's. You must be a mighty demon..." She drew back her hand and turned around again, ready to leave.

"Wait! What will happen to us!?" Zeyir tried to reach the tan beauty but the bars kept him away from her.

"You are so impatient... But I guess all youths are as hot-blooded as you are..." She smiled and moved her fingers through her wild silver hair.

"What is your thing with my age!? I'm... maybe two years younger than you! Stop acting as if you were so much more experienced and grown up than I! That's just... weird!" Zeyir remembered Callo calling him a kid back at Sol's temple... and it frustrated him... no one had ever dared calling him a kid!

"Haha, you think I'm as young as you? I'm over 80 years old already!" She laughed amused and leaned back against the wall. "I thought demons don't grow older that much when they turn 20 anymore as well..." She looked at him in a way that made him feel like an interesting pet...

"You... man, you..." Zeyir was too shocked to reply. With a shake of his head he regained his thoughts and looked at the princess. "I did not guess that... Yeah we age slowly too but... our aura tells how old we are!" He grinned and thought for a second. "Wait a sec... How old is Callo then!?" He laughed and sat back in his prison-cell. Serena smiled softly losing nothing of her royal appearance...

"I see!" Serena smiled and looked at the door that led outside the prison to make sure no one was listening. "He is as old as I am. But he hates to admit it!" She chuckled and looked at Zeyir with a warm and trusting expression in her eyes.

"And you two are a couple, huh?" The demon grinned playfully. He had nothing to do and just waiting in his prison-cell would drive him insane... so a little small-talk with Serena was a welcomed way to keep him entertained.

"..." Serena's mood seemed to drop all of a sudden. Zeyir slapped himself mentally for asking.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to..."

"Don't worry about it... I don't really know that myself... Our parents engaged us but we are more like friends than a couple..." She sighed and looked down at her necklace. It was a small white crystal made of the same material as the altar in Sol's temple. A metal crescent-moon seemed attached to it, showing towards her chest. "Oh well... guess I got to go back to the palace. Maybe I can influence my father's decision concerning you..."

"Concerning us?" Zeyir gulped.

"Yes. Our rules are very strict and this means you have to die but... maybe I manage to let you get away with an easier punishment." Smiling she left the room, leaving Zeyir behind.

Allen sat in his cell, waiting for something to happen, while he counted sand-corns on his trousers to keep himself entertained... Since he had been awakened by a guard in his cell, nothing special had happened... It had been hours since then.

Sighing, Allen patted off the dust from his cloths and stood up, stretching himself a

little.

A door opened slowly. Allen yawned and looked at the wooden door, hoping Zeyir would be the one to enter, but he had little hope this was going to happen...

"Oh... it is you..." Allen fell back on the ground, leaning against the wall.

"Hmpf!" Callo entered the room, closing the door behind him. His Shadow-Spirit floated over his head, grinning in her evil usual manner.

"What are you going to do with us?" Allen did not really ask, just talking with himself. Callo wasn't going to answer probably anyway.

"..." Callo only stared at the human while sitting down on a chair close to the bars of Allen's cell.

"Are you going to stare at me now without saying a word? If you think that is mystical to me, forget about it..." Allen stared at the desert-elf, trying to copy his 'deathglare' failing miserably though...

Callo had to laugh at that one.

"Nice try, boy." Callo smiled a little and leaned back. "I've got some questions."

"Then ask already!" Allen barked annoyed. He had enough of the games, he just wanted to get out of here already! The boredom killed him!

"Well then... Why did you enter the Temple of Light?" Callo's deep eyes looked directly into Allen's emerald eyes. "Lying is useless. I will notice it, so don't even try!"

"Okayokay..." Allen shook his head. "We wanted to meet with Sol..."

"And why? You don't look like pilgrims."

"I... I want to form a pact with him. I know this is hard to believe, but... If we don't awake the Great Spirits again, Midgard will slowly die due to its lack of Mana! We must prevent this!" Allen felt how his stomach seemed to turn inside his belly at the thought how ridiculous this must sound out of the mouth of a mere human...

"See, I told you Mana grows weaker, Callo!" Shade sat down on Callo's lab, looking up at her master. Callo closed his eyes for a few seconds.

"So... you can... actually summon Sol?" Callo looked at the human man in front of him, a weird expression on his face. Allen couldn't quite understand what this expression was about... it was somewhere between sadness, disbelief but also... hope?

"Uhm, I guess! My family is able to summon the Great Spirits! My mother used to have a pact with Luna..." He hesitated for a second. "I never tried it out myself though!"

"I see... and you say... the lack of Mana will..."

"It will destroy the very essence of our world." Shade completed her master's sentence. "Mana is something like... life itself. The substance time is made of. The disappearance of Mana would cause a collapse in time on Midgard, destroying all life here." She closed her eye and concentrated. "So it was true... it was not only a coincidence that the Mana here is running dry and Sol won't show up anymore..." She leaned against Callo's chest, sighing heavily.

"Maybe I should ask the king again about this..." Callo patted his dark spirit, standing up slowly.

"Wait, Callo!" Shade looked at her master worried. "He is pretty mad at you, maybe it is not the right time to talk with him now..." Shade floated towards Allen.

"I have no other choice. You stay here!" Callo looked at Allen and turned around, walking towards the door, followed by Shade.

"Not that I intended to go away anyway..." Allen shook his head, amused and leaned against the bars.

Shade eyed her master worried while they hurried down the hallway towards the royal hall.

"Are... you okay?" Shade had a hard time following the desert elf as he rushed down the corridors with incredible speed.

"I can't... believe King Geera did not know about this! He must have known, Mana is running dry, but why didn't he do anything against it!?" Callo hissed under his breath, so only Shade could hear. He did not want to attract the attention of the guards... even though they already kept staring due to the rumors about him saving two pilgrims in the desert the day before... They were not quite correct, but wrong neither... Callo was annoyed by the irritated looks of the other guards. "I must ask him what is wrong!"

"But he is already mad at you because of-"

"I know!" The elf barked and pushed the door to the throne-room open.

Serena and her father sat on their seats at the end of the long hall, looking confused at the man that just stormed into the room...

Callo knelt down in front of the throne to show his respect.

"What is wrong, Callo?" The king, an older elf with white beard and short fancy hair, stood up from his seat, walking towards the younger elf. "You are allowed to stand up." He added before placing his hand on Callo's shoulder.

"Milord, I..." Callo hesitated for a second as he felt a soft and tender hand grabbing his own. Serena had come next to him, leaning on his right arm while looking at her father.

"I won't be mad at you for leaving those strangers alive anymore. I must apologize. I did not know they saved my daughter in the desert..."

Callo shot a glare down at Serena that screamed 'SAVED!?!'. She answered with an amused 'Whatever I say'-smile. Funny how they understood each other without words sometimes...

"Uhm, well... whatever..." The princess leaned a little more against her fiancée and smiled innocently. "I asked my father to let them free as reward for my rescue and he agreed! We will lead them out of our territory tonight." She smiled.

"That is exactly what I wanted to talk with you about, King Geera..." Callo took a deep breath. Shade, still floating behind him, closed her eye and covered her face with her little hands...

'Please don't Callo... please don't do that...' She wished she would just disappear again, but she could not leave her partner all alone now that he was about to run directly into his doom...

"Milord, this human... he is a summoner and as it seems he obsesses the ability to... summon the Great Spirits." Callo paused for a second. Serena stared at him in shock, not certain how to react. The face of king Geera changed as well... the friendly warm smile from before turned into an angry grimace, but he held back and gave Callo the chance to explain himself.

"Sol disappeared a long time ago, so wouldn't it be wise to let this summoner trying his best to bring him back? Besides, if the Mana on Midgard is running short, this will affect all of us!"

"Lord Moerbin! Watch your tone!" A guard from the side stepped closer towards the tan man, spear drawn.

"This is none of our concern, Callo! We desert-people never cared about what happened outside our territory and we won't ever care. Sol's disappearance is nothing but a coincidence!" Geera snapped, returning to his throne.

"You can't be serious! How naive are you, Geera!? This is no coincidence! And if it concerns whole Midgard, it is of our concern as well!" Callo's voice grew louder, but he recognized the rudeness in his voice immediately and knelt down again. "My apologizes, Lord Geera... I did not mean to raise my voice in your presence." Callo felt how cold sweat ran down his forehead. She landed on the ground next to him, feeling the urge of kneeling down next to her master.

"Hmpf! It is my decision, Callo Moerbin! You will have to accept it, no matter if you like it or not!" The eyes of the king burned with anger. Serena stepped back a little. She

had never ever seen her father that furious. "I will over-think my decision concerning the two prisoners again." Geera waved with his hand to signalize Callo to better get out of his sight... a sign the younger man was not going to ignore if he wanted to save his life.

"Yes, I understood, Milord." Callo replied quietly. His voice did not show his anger, but inside him deep hate started to burn... how could Geera just ignore this!?

With another bow, Callo turned and left the room followed by Shade. Serena looked up at her father and closed her eyes. "I will talk with him, father." She said with a calm tone and ran after her friend.

"What was that just about!?" She shouted at Callo as they were back in his room. "Everything was all right until you started with this summoning-stuff! What has gotten into you, Callo!" She pushed him back in anger. Callo just looked at the ground, deep in thought.

"Callo?" Shade poked her master and swung her arms around his shoulder. "Hey!"

"Sorry, Shade... what was it?" Callo looked at his little spirit who was pointing at a now even more annoyed Serena. "I'm sorry, I wasn't listening... what did you say?"

Serena let out a frustrated growl, throwing herself on Callo's bed, biting a pillow in frustration.

A few minutes passed without any of them speaking... Serena looked up from the soft mattress and watched her friend, how he stared out a window, in deep thought again. She knew him... ever since they were little... she knew him better than anyone else... and so she knew what he was up to... She wished she didn't know.

"Please... don't do that..." She could not hold back a tear as she grabbed Callo's hand, dragging him on the bed. "Please don't! There won't be any way back anymore! Do you really want to destroy all of this!?"

"There won't be anything to destroy anymore, if we don't do something..." Callo lay back, staring at the roof. "It is my only choice."

"..." Serena closed her eyes, placing her ear on Callo's chest, listening to the soft beat of his heart a little... "I want to help you... but I can only help you this once. After you set out for the temple, I can't help you anymore, you will be a traitor."

"I know..." Callo closed his eyes, thinking about the possibilities again and again.

"I want to give you something..." Serena sat up, working on her little necklace. She leaned over Callo, fixing the small pendant on his neck. "Please, never forget about me... can you promise me that?" Tears ran down freely over her cheeks by now, dripping on Callo's face like little raindrops.

"How could I ever forget about you... But I want you to take my necklace instead

then, alright?" He smiled warmly, giving her his own necklace. It looked nearly the same as the one Serena had given him, only that the crescent-moon attached to it pointed upwards instead of downward. With a kiss on his cheek, she thanked him, standing p slowly.

"I will go and pick up the demon. He will be waiting for you at our secret spot." Without a further word, she left the room, leaving Callo behind.

"Time to go... Say good-bye to this room, Shade, we won't be coming back here." He stood up from his bed, looking at his little partner.

"So we are going to leave the desert? Hehe, I never really liked the sun-shine here anyway!" Shade grinned and disappeared with a little *plop*.

Allen stared at the bars... He was sick and tired of counting sand-corns on his trousers, though it had taken him rather long to count them all... Suddenly, the door to the prison opened, as well as the door to his cell.

Allen stared blankly at the shadow in front of him.

"Zeyir! You were able to escape!? Great!" Allen hopped up wanting to welcome the shadow, but the answering voice was way deeper than Zeyir's...

"Not quite right, but your demon friend is alright. Come on, we have no time!" Callo appeared in front of him, together with Shade.

"Callo!? What are you doing here?"

"Saving you and our world!"

Kapitel 9:

Chapter 9

„I’m saving you and our world!“ Callo opened the door, leading Allen outside.

“But... aren’t you going to get serious trouble if you help us?” Allen rushed after the elf, trying to keep up with his pace.

“That is none of your concern, just follow me!” They ran down a corridor with a dozen statues on its walls. Callo looked up and down on them, counting from right to left. “Two... three... four... five... six!” He stopped at a statue of a desert-elf with long hair that looked a little like Callo. The tan man pushed the hilt of the sword in the statue’s shelf. With a growling sound the wall behind the statue swung open, discovering a hidden staircase, leading down into darkness.

“What the...” Allen looked down. The stairs seemed to not end anywhere... The darkness illuminated the small stairway with a black curtain.

“Do you remember the cave we met first?” Callo stepped in to the dark stairway, walking down towards the black hole. “The tunnel-systems lead deep down through all over Yora. Only very few know about them and even less dare entering them. Desertelves don’t like darkness and those caves are the only spots for dark spirits and night-creatures to hide. This corridor should lead us to a spot right under the temple-altar.” Callo looked around. Allen couldn’t even see his fingers in front of his face anymore... A small red eye appeared in front of them.

“Okay, Callo. Shall we?” Shade’s voice was a mere whisper in the dark surroundings. “Hey, you!” Allen felt someone poking against his arm, so he assumed, the spirit was talking to him.

“Uhm, my name is Allen.” He slowly walked on, trying not to lose grip of Callo. Yes, grip... he had reached for Callo’s long hair to not lose him in the heavy darkness down here.

“Just a suggestion to keep you alive down here. Don’t make any rushed movements or noises. My brothers and sisters are not as nice as I am!” She giggled and floated towards Callo. “Okay, then. Let’s get going. I tried to form a shadow-mirror of Allen and Zeyir in their prison-cells... but it won’t take long until they find out!”

“Zeyir is save? Thank goodness... Who freed him?” Allen tripped over something on the ground, landing right on Callo... “S...sorry...”

“Oh, that was—”

“No one!” Callo cut Shade off while trying to stand up again.

"I better make you some light, huh? Hehe, not that I don't find it amusing but..."

"Shade!" Callo hissed and Allen could imagine the deathglare he must be sending the little spirit right now... He heard the clapping of small little hands before the air around shade seemed to light up.

"H... how did she...?" Allen glared at the spot in midair that seemed... normal...

"Well, I'm a darkness spirit!" Shade grinned evilly. "I can control darkness, so I can summon it or send it away... depends on what I need." Smiling she hopped up and down while still floating above the ground.

"But... when you send the darkness away then the logic consequence would be..."

"Light." Shade nodded. "Light and darkness are the only elements that can exist only next to each other. If light is gone, darkness comes and if darkness goes away the empty spot will be filled with light." She smiled and flew on.

They went deeper and deeper into the corridor that from what Allen could see turned into a small cave by now. The young human had the bad feeling someone was watching them. Chills ran down his back and he tried to stay as close to Callo as possible. For some weird reason, Callo seemed to know the darkness down here pretty well... This surprised Allen. Weren't the desert-elves followers of Sol? So didn't they dislike darkness? Allen shook his head to get rid of those thoughts.

"What are those... small red dots in the darkness?" Allen felt how he started shivering while looking at tow little red gleaming dots that seemed awfully close...

"My siblings." She grinned. "And now shut up. They want to sleep." Allen gulped and tried to breath as silent as possible. "You can breathe normally, but... stop talking so loud okay?" Shade chuckled and looked at the startled human. She didn't watch out for a second, flying very close on a wall. One of her 'siblings' became visible. Allen gasped and rushed towards Callo. Those little red gems belonged to small white creatures that looked as if they haven't eaten anything in ages. Their white skin made them look awfully sick and the red eyes gave them an atmosphere of death and danger that made Allen's whole body turn cold.

"Don't worry about them. They usually don't attack." Callo's voice sounded a little pained.

"Usually?!" Allen grew more and more nervous...

"Yes. The eighty years I use these tunnels regularly they attacked me only once." Callo sighed, rubbing his hands at the bad memory.

"Why did they attack you?" Allen felt curiosity retuning into his mind, pushing away the fear.

"None of your concern, Allen." Shade tried to imitate Callo's voice and she did a pretty

good job in it!

"Just as she says!" Callo had to smile at his little spirit and shook his head. He closed his eyes for a second. "I met Shade down here the first time. She kept the other spirits away from me and helped me out of the darkness of the cave. As reward I formed a pact with her."

"Reward? Haha, you must be kidding." Shade chuckled and poked her partner playfully. "I saved your life and you thanked me by binding myself on you? That's a joke!" Laughing she kept flying against her master.

"You two are a really good team. I can tell from the way you act with each other!" Allen smiled walking forward to not interrupt little Shade while poking the older man. Suddenly he tripped over something again. "Ouch!" He landed on... stairs!

"Oh, great. There we are!" Callo looked up. "This is the entrance to the temple." Allen grumbled a little disappointed. "What's wrong?" Callo looked down at the human with an evil grin on his face.

"Couldn't you have warned me!?" Allen felt how a small smile appeared on his face. They had reached their goal! Sol...

The altar-room was peaceful and quite. It was noon and the light-spiral shooting from the altar seemed to touch the sun above the Temple of Light. Down the stairs that lead towards the altar, a small statue started moving... From behind it, Callo, Allen and Shade climbed out of a hole in the ground.

"Phew..." Allen looked around, not sure what to say or do... Suddenly his gaze fell at some guards, standing next to the altar. His heart nearly stopped beating.

"Lord Moerbin!" The two guards knelt down and looked confused at Callo.

"Everything is alright... I just felt like taking a break." Callo replied calmly before walking towards the two guards. "Would you mind leaving the altar? We received order from the King to try summoning Sol. Such a holy procedure shall not be performed with ordinary guards around!" Callo's voice had something dangerous in it... Holy procedure? The King ordered it? Allen was confused....

"But..." The guard pointed at Allen with a nervous expression.

"Do you really want to ignore a direct order from the leader of the Moon-Guards!?" Anger entered Callo's calm voice causing the guards to shiver. They took their weapons and hurried towards the doors.

"We will make sure no one interrupts you, Lord Moerbin!" The guard shouted before closing the door behind them.

"That was a lie, wasn't it?" Allen looked at Callo. "You did neither receive the order

from your king nor am I allowed to be here." He closed his eyes. "This is treason... they will kill you."

"I know." Callo took Allen and pushed him forward towards the altar. "Now summon Sol, so I know my sacrifice won't be in vain." They moved towards the altar. The light seemed so intense here... Allen gulped... This was going to be his first pact!

"Holy Spirit of Light. Lord of the mighty Sun! Show yourself and fulfill your divine duty!" Allen released all Mana in his body. He could feel how the Mana around him entered his body. It felt just as his mother had described it to him once, or how the Ardon-elder had taught him.

Callo could not believe his eyes... He knelt down immediately as he saw a figure forming in the centre of the spiral of light.

"Who are you to awake me from my slumber?" Sol showed himself. The long golden hair hang down around his white robes. Instead of ears white wings framed his pretty face. A golden tiara held back his bangs to not fall freely into his face. Three pairs of wings flapped on his back.

"Uhm... Hey... Hello! My name... is Allen!" Allen tried to remember how he had been taught to form a pact... but he had a total black-out. Callo knelt on the ground looking at the summoner with a mixture of amusement and disappointment.

"Lord Sol... My name is Callo Moerbin, I'm the head of the Moon-Guard of the desert-elves..."

"I know who you are... You have grown since the last time I saw you though... Why did you awake me?" Sol looked at the kneeling desert-elf now. His golden eyes looked so empty... Just as Luna's eyes... Allen shook his head. He was glad Callo seemed to take over for him. At least he already had a pact with a spirit... Where was Shade anyway?

"Thanks, Milord... This young human seeks to form a pact with you. As it appears he obsesses the necessary abilities to forge pacts with the Great Spirits of Midgard. Mana is running shorter in our world and so we hope a re-awakening of the Great Spirits might cause a constant Mana-supply as it used to be back when all Spirits were still inhabiting their altars." Callo did not dare looking directly at Sol but Allen watched the Great Spirit of Light in awe.

"Uhm, yeah that is right... My mother used to have a pact with Luna. So I hope I will be able to form a pact with you as well." Allen scratched his goatee, receiving a deathglare from the other man for his ill-suited manners.

"I see. I am certain you obsess the abilities to form a pact with me... Otherwise you would not have been able to awake me from the unnatural slumber I have been sealed in." Sol flapped with his wings a little, floating closer towards Allen. "The happenings on Midgard reach further than you expect, young human, and forming pacts with us will cost you your whole Mana one day. Are you still prepared to take on this quest? If not, go back and live your life as long as it lasts. It needs a strong will to

keep up with our might." Sol's gaze grew more intense as he eyed the willing summoner with a weird curiosity.

"I am willing to do whatever it takes! Midgard is my world as well, and if it comes to an end how am I supposed to live in it!? I must fight for it so I deserve the right to live in this world!" Allen was certain. He wanted to save his world. Otherwise he would have given up much earlier already! He had lost his village, had to face a God, travel along with an impatient demon, resisting the unforgiving heat of Yora, facing desert-elves,... He would not let his newly gained friends down! Not Zeyir, neither Morgana, nor Callo...

"Very well. Then bring me to Luna's temple next. I will form a pact with you if we are there." He –Sol was male... was he?- replied calmly.

"Why at Luna's temple?" Allen was a little confused. Callo stood up now as well.

"Lord Sol, we—" Callo was cut off by the sound of doors. They looked down the stairs.

Serena and her personal guards looked up at them, weapons drawn and ready to face Callo and Allen.

"I will meet you at the Moon-palace then!" Sol said calmly before disappearing in a flash of light.

"This means trouble... right?" Allen stepped back drawing out his daggers. "And we don't even have a pact with Sol to get rid of them!!"

"This really did not work out as expected... Well then... I will give you some time! Shade! You will lead him out of here!" Callo looked up and with a *plop* the small shadow spirit appeared above them.

"No way! I won't just leave you behind, Callo!" Shade demanded with her unnatural voice. "There must be another way!"

"There is none! They are blocking the way to the cave!" Callo hissed while drawing his rapiers ready to fight.

"It is over, Callo!" Serena looked up at them. Allen could see in her eyes that she was worried. Maybe she even felt guilty. But not for facing them here... it was something else... Allen was not certain what it was though... "Daughter of Light, Spirit of the holy Sun... Come forth and lend me thy strength! By our pact! I summon you! Sparkle!" Serena held her hand high. Light formed around her fingers before a female spirit appeared. The Spirit had the proportions of a human woman with long silver hair and the white eyes were just as empty as Sol's...

"Oh great... not that annoying nag!" Shade complained while trying to think of something.

"Shade... it is alright!" Callo closed his eyes before rushing forward, ready to face

Serena and her knights. Allen tried to step in-between, Shade gasped,...

Light... Anything seemed white. Allen had to blink intensively to see again...

Callo had a hard time dodging Sparkles beams of light while Shade tried to irritate the other guards with shadow-spells. Allen tried to think of a way to help them but... he had only his daggers and Callo would prefer him to escape anyway...

"Dark spear!" A familiar voice came from behind the guards. Suddenly a dark aura surrounded the surprised desert-elves. They were dragged to the ground by an invisible force.

"Zeyir!" Allen could not believe the demon just jumped out of the hole behind the statue! Shade nodded towards the demon, ready to face the remaining guards.

Callo had it rough though... Serena was not good in fighting... but her spirit was! She was able to teleport in the sunny area and so Callo had no chance of hitting her while Sparkle's far reaching attacks were really hard to dodge...

'Come on... please beat her...' Serena prayed mentally. She must not help him anymore... Otherwise they would know that she helped Callo. 'Please just beat her!'

Callo dodged another lightspear that hit him right into the arm though... He hissed in pain. If it just wasn't so sunny, Sparkle would not be able to use this whole lot of light-Mana! Callo could feel his arm growing numb from the hit. He lost grip of one of his rapiers... With an echoing sound it fell on the ground.

"No..." Serena closed her eyes and looked away. She could not watch her own spirit killing her best friend... Her hand closed around the necklace he had given her. Her keen ears tried to listen to what was happening... but there was neither a painful his, nor the sound of steel or anything... just... silence... She opened her eyes and looked around.

Shade held the rapier Callo had dropped before on her throat while throwing deathglares at the Lightspirit. Allen helped Callo up while Zeyir knocked the last remaining guard off.

"So... I guess you won this one..." Serena tried to hide her happiness while Sparkle was visibly uncertain about what to do... "Sparkle, disappear!" The princess demanded before looking at the guards on the ground. From what she could see none of them were dead only unconscious.

"That's it, Serena." Callo stood up, facing his friend. "The next time we meet, one of us must die..." With that, he turned towards the statue, followed by Shade and Allen. They disappeared in the darkness of the cave. Zeyir remained for a second...

"Thank you." He smiled warmly and turned towards the exit as well before looking back one last time. "You will become a good queen, I'm certain of it!"

"How are you supposed to know about such things..." She replied with agony. "I betrayed my tribe and no one of them even knows how much I betrayed them..."

"Sometimes we must turn our backs on our own country to save our whole world... to be a prince is not easy if you want to be a good one..."

"Prince? Wait, what do you--!" But Zeyir was already gone. Serena stared blankly at the hidden path. "What was he talking about...?!" She closed her eyes, concentrating but...

"Princess!!" Suddenly the door to the altar-room swung open again. "What happened!?" A dozen guards -ready to fight- looked at the surprised princess.

"The Moon-guards..." Serena took a look at the statue again. 'Next time we meet, one of us must die...' Callo's voice echoed in her head again and again...

"Princess?" A guardian with long brown hair with small locks and blue eyes stepped closer towards Serena, worry in his eyes.

"Mobilize all units of the Moon-Guards! Callo Moerbin is a traitor and we will hunt him down for what he did. Eron, you are the new leader of the Moon-guards! This is your chance to prove your worth!" She looked at the soldier with anger in her eyes. "No one betrays our tribe and just get's away with it!"

Kapitel 10:

Chapter 10

"Come on!!! Hurry!!" Shade shouted from afar towards the three running men. Zeyir was already exhausted, Allen was close to collapsing and Callo had a hard time keeping up with Shade's pace due to the numbness that slowly started spreading inside his right body-half. The hit from Sparkle must have been a real bad one... But they did not dare taking a break. First of all because of the shadow-spirits lurking around here... They seemed pretty mad! Shade tried her hardest to keep them calm but if they dared stopping they sure were going to attack! But what pushed them even more was the sound of steps echoing through the cave. Someone was following them and even though they could not see who it was Callo knew who it had to be...

"Hurry up! They will catch up with us in no time!" Callo looked around. "Shade! How far till we reach the exit!?"

"We are half-way through!" Sade chirped, trying to cheer them up a little... without success.

"Only half through!?" Zeyir gasped and shot the Spirit an unbelieving glare. "You are kidding, right!? We can barely keep walking! I need a break!"

"It can't be helped now!" Shade complained while taking a look around. "Maybe... no that is too risky..."

"What is too risky?!" Allen demanded between gasps. "What is... too risky?"

"I could ask the other Shadow-spirits to attack the intruders... but as soon as some of them attack, the whole bunch of them will attack, and they won't make a difference between friend and foe!"

"So they will attack us as well?" Callo bit on his lip, painful memories rising inside him... He received a nod from Shade. "Right, that really is risky..."

"Wait a second!" Zeyir stopped all of a sudden. "So they attack in groups whenever they sense a danger? And they attack only others or their tribe-members as well?"

"Only foreigners, but..." Shade was confused about the question and stared at the evilly grinning demon.

"That is the very same with werewolves!" He looked at the walls. Two small red slits watched him intensely. "During full-moon they hide in the forests to prevent victims but if someone dares interrupting them the whole tribe will attack! As soon as they start killing, they can't stop attacking anymore. They will kill anything around them!"

"And how is this supposed to help us!?" Callo asked frustrated, though he was glad

they took a break from running right now... He leaned against Allen a little... he did not dare using a wall to take a break.

"Well... there is a trick to prevent them from attacking you! My father taught me this when I was younger... You have to use the shadow-seal therefore." Zeyir smiled and looked at the Spirits. "If we... combine our powers we should be able to use the shadow-seal for kinda the while down here, right?" He looked at Shade with hopeful eyes.

"Huh? Yeah, of course! This cave is filled with darkness... but that won't help!" Shade sighed. "Shadow-creatures can see through such seals without problem and as soon as the Moon-guards and their light-spirits show up our seal will be useless! They will see our shadows and know that we are there!"

"Well, the trick is to give them a stronger feeling of danger for something else but you! Dark spirits think of light as something dangerous, right? And if they show up with their light-spirits, your 'siblings' or whatever you call them will concentrate on them first... am I correct?" Zeyir's grin grew wider and wider and even Callo and Allen got his point now.

"They will help us with their very spirits!" The desert elf nodded towards his little friend.

"That's not even a half-bad idea... I doubt you would be able to out-run them anymore anyway..." She pointed downward the corridor. A small light was seen from afar. The Moon-guards were coming closer and closer...!

"Shut down the light now, Shade. And ask the others to attack as soon as they are close enough to reach!" Callo nodded towards Zeyir. "Good job!"

"Hey, am I dreaming!?" Zeyir poked Allen. "Did that old deathglare-king just... compliment me!?"

"Don't push your luck, demon!" The tan man growled. "As soon as the spirits start their assault, stay as close to the ground as possible!"

The other two men nodded and knelt down behind a large rock. Shade made the small light around her disappear and they remained in darkness. The little red eyes of the other spirits stared at them. The steps came closer and closer and slowly but sure they had the feeling as if the cave around them light up again...

Hundreds of small shadow-spirits hang down the walls like bats blinking constantly. Their small pointed fingers crawled into the walls trying to cover their lid-less eyes with their arms.

"Poor creatures..." Shade whispered... "Those are the weakest of us shadow-spirits... they probably won't survive for long in the light of the elves' spirits..." She closed her eye and leaned against Callo who comforted her a little with his still healthy hand.

"Shade, are you ready?" Zeyir asked the small creature next to him while preparing for the spell. The steps seemed so close now, it couldn't be more than 50 meter distance between them and the light was so intense that Zeyir had to get used to the light-conditions again first!

"Yupp!" She nodded and looked around. "Brothers and sisters! I seek your aid!" She shouted and floated up. She could see the Moon-guards now, lead by a familiar man...

"Shade!" Eron, the new leader of the Moon-guards prepared for battle, his spirit of light floating over his head. "Where is the traitor?!" He demanded from the small spirit in front of him.

"Was pretty obvious that you would take over for Callo, huh?" Shade grinned evilly. "You always wanted to become the next leader of the Moon-guards... too bad only that we were better than you!" She chuckled and pointed at the walls. "How about you meet my friends?"

Suddenly, all the shadowspirits on the walls looked down at the intruders, their eyes turning into small slits. A roaring yet shrill sound echoed through the cave and thousands of Shadow-spirits stared at the frightened Eron.

Zeyir used his seal in the meantime on Callo and Allen before making himself turning invisible as well.

It looked like a swarm of wasps, bats or wild black birds that flew directly towards the Moon-Guards. The Light-Spirits did their best to kill off as many of the small spirits as possible with their light-beams but it was just way too many!

"Stay down!" Callo shouted towards Allen and Zeyir while they covered themselves with their arms. Screams, the sound of breaking bones and running feet echoed above their heads.

Minutes passed and slowly... it turned silent again... The sound of swords and spears was gone...

"It is... over..." Shade whispered into their ears while staring at the battle-field in sadness.

Allen and Callo stood up again, holding against the empty walls as they could not see anything in the darkness, before removing the darkness-seal from Zeyir. The demon looked up a little and stared at the black ground. A chill ran down his back.

"Let's... just leave it dark until we walked on a little... okay, Shade?" The demon looked up at the small spirit, receiving a weak nod.

"Why? What's wrong?" Allen was confused... walking in absolute darkness? What was the sense behind—"UAH!" He tripped back against the wall. He had just stepped on something... something soft, yet solid... He could hear liquid under his boots,

dripping off of them with ever step he took.

"I see..." Callo closed his eyes and sent a silent prayer to Sol for the souls of the fallen knights and spirits of this assault.

"Most of the Moon-guards retreated in time... but some of them weren't as lucky... and ... so many of my..." Shade sobbed a little before shaking her head. "No, it is alright... They did not lead a good life down here anyway... So it doesn't matter!" She looked at the others. "I will try to not light too much of the ground, okay?"

Without a further word they walked on through the dark cave.

After a couple of hours of mute walking, Allen suddenly broke the silence. "Those caves are giant! How many tunnels are there!?" He stared at the many corridors leading through the dark cave in awe.

"They lead through all of Yora!" Shade turned towards the human. "On the surface, light rules over Yora, but to keep a certain balance between light and darkness, the Great Mother Nocturne formed these tunnel-systems long ago." She giggled satisfied.

"Nocturne? Isn't that the very first Great Spirit of Darkness?" Zeyir asked curious. "She once was a demon-queen before turning her life into pure Mana! That was when she became Midgard's very first Darkness-Spirit!" Proud of his knowledge, the demon patted himself on the chest.

"The... very first Spirit? So... there were more than just one of them!?" Allen was surprised by that fact.

"Exactly. Sometimes even the Great Spirits die. Either through fights, or curses... After their death a new Great Spirit is elected. Either they chose a very mighty Spirit of the certain element or a dead demon or god that represents this certain element." Callo looked at his necklace for a second. "Sol was a god before sacrificing his life and turning into Light-Mana. He is the oldest of all Great Spirits as he is the only remaining Great Spirit of Midgard's birth." He shot a deathglare at Allen. "As summoner you are supposed to know such things!" He barked.

"Uhm... well..." Poor Allen did not know what to answer anymore... "Uhm... you said you met Shade down here the first time, right? How came you walked through these caves anyway?" 'Allen you are a genius! Awesome change of subject!' He mentally chuckled.

"..." Callo shot him another deathglare.

"Okay, forget I asked..." 'Stupid dork...' Allen shook his head and rubbed his arm... "Oh, by the way. How are your injuries?" He gave Callo a concerned glare. A little surprised about the sudden question Callo had to smile.

"I will be alright." He looked at Shade. "How far until we reach the exit?"

"Only a few minutes!" The spirit giggled and flapped with her little arms.

"A few minutes? GREAT!" Zeyir chirped before fastening his pace. It took them only a few minutes to reach a giant room with a stairway on its sides, leading upward on the walls. Naturally grown crystals sparkled in the soft light coming from above.

"Isn't that..." Allen looked up in awe. A small waterfall was dripping cold water on the ground causing an echoing sound through all the room.

"Yes. This is where we first met!" Callo replied calmly before entering the stairs and walking upwards.

"Amazing..." Zeyir glared up. It had been a much shorter way through the cave than taking the long way over the surface. It took them only one day to reach this cave, in return it had taken over two night-marshes to travel over the sandy dunes...

"Don't let yourself get fooled. The stairway is really long..." Callo sighed from already thirty meters above their heads. Allen and Zeyir gulped but followed the desert-elf up the stairs.

Exhausted, hungry and tired they reached the top. A small way hidden behind some crystals lead them towards the small platform they had first met on.

"I won't move an inch anymore..." Zeyir gasped and jumped right into the small spring, refreshing himself. It had been too long for his taste since he took a bath last time...

"Yeah, I need a loooooong long rest now too!" Allen complained and sat down next to the water, taking a few nibs from the refreshing liquid. Callo watched them silently while leaning on the stone-wall far away from the two of them.

"Hey, Callo. What are we going to do now?" Shade leaned on his master's shoulder.

"I don't know... I'm sorry to drag you into this, Shade..." Callo sighed and closed his eyes. "We can't stay in the desert anymore, but... I've never been outside of Yora..."

"Why don't you come with us then?" Callo opened his eyes at the sound of Allen's voice right in front of him.

"What did you just say?" Perplex, Callo was not sure what the human had just tried to ask him...

"You can't return to your tribe because you helped us and you don't look as if you are used to the life of a nomade. Besides..." Allen grinned. "We need someone with your fighting-abilities!"

"Yeah, you are a really awesome fighter! You are nearly as good as I am!" Zeyir

shouted chuckling from the spring.

"Repeat that again, unworthy fry!" Callo could not hold back a smile though. "Guess... we have a deal then!"

"Great! As newest member of our party, it is your task to cook for us, okay?" Zeyir hopped out of the water, shaking the water off a little before walking towards their newest companion.

"Hmpf!" Callo shot him a death-glare.

"You have no clue what you have just done..." Shade giggled evilly and disappeared into darkness.

Kapitel 11:

Chapter 11

„...“ The three men stood in front of the gate leading to Nihil...

“What now?” Allen had a worried expression on his face while looking from Zeyir towards Callo and back to Zeyir.

“I have no clue... We can’t just... walk in there and the gates are closed. We can’t use the invisible-seal...” Zeyir scratched the back of his head.

“And I doubt you will be able to keep up the seal long enough anyway...” Allen sighed frustrated...

“Can’t we just... walk in there and hope no one notices?” Zeyir looked at Callo and back to Allen.

“Nope, I doubt that’d work.” Allen patted Callo’s shoulder. “And we can’t just leave him out here...”

“Would you mind stop talking about me as if I was a dog!? Okay, I am a desert-elf and Nihil is an enemy of our tribe but... Can’t we just explain them that I don’t belong to the tribe anymore?” Callo shot a deathglare at Allen who was looking with a weird gleam in his eyes at his precious long golden hair... “Don’t you even dare thinking about it!”

“Huh?” Allen tried his best to look as innocent as possible... but with his messy hair and the goatee he looked more like a little devil...

“Guess we have to hide him as good as possible then...” Zeyir sighed, offering Callo his short green vest. Allen took off his scarf and threw it towards Callo as well.

Five minutes and many stylistic suggestions later... Zeyir and Allen looked at Callo with a suppressed expression of pure amusement...

Callo used Allen’s scarf as cape now, hiding his long ears. The green vest of Zeyir was hidden under the soft fabric but the colors... just didn’t match at all with the tan man...

“You look... unique...” Zeyir tried his hardest to hold back his laughter. Allen did way better than the demon though. He suppressed his giggled very well while trying to prevent looking into Callo’s dangerous sparkling eyes...

“Guess... we can enter... now...” Allen bit his lips while walking past Callo towards the gate. He knocked on it and waited for a few seconds.

"Who is there!?" A knight opened a small window in the door to look outside.

"We are done with business in Yora and would like to return back to Nihil!" Allen replied formally. The door swung open and two guards welcomed them in town. Callo rushed inside, trying not to gain too much attention from the guards.

Allen and Zeyir walked next to Callo, leading him through the weird town.

"This town is... awful... I pity the people living here." Callo looked at the roof with a disgusted face-expression.

"Well, most people here pity your kind for living in the desert, I guess." Zeyir stated flatly before dragging the desert-elf towards the Inn.

"Three rooms please." Allen looked at his wallet and back at the Inn-keeper. "Uhm... maybe one room for three persons is better..." He sweatdropped and sighed frustrated. They were so broke...

"No, we take three single rooms." Callo stepped forward, taking 100 Gar out of a small pocket attached on his belt. Allen and Zeyir shot Callo a hopeful look. The guy was RICH!!! Their money-problems were over!

They followed the Inn-keeper to their rooms.

Callo sighed as he reached his room and closed the door behind him. He threw himself on the bed and stared at the blank roof.

"Callo? We will go to the market-place, buying some supplies. Mind if we get your... money?" Allen's cheerful voice rang through the closed door. Callo shook his head, smiling a little bit before loosening his money-pocket from his belt. He stood up and went to the door. Opening it a slit.

"Here." He said while giving them the wallet. "Can you buy some grid-stones for me?"

"Why can't you open the door a little more?" Zeyir pushed the door open to see their new companion a little better. "Gridstones. Okay, do you need something else?"

"Zeyir! I don't wear the cape!" Callo's ears went up in frustration as he tried to step back a little, just in case if someone came.

"I think it won't be a problem anymore..." Allen smiled. "You wouldn't have been able to enter the town as desert-elf, but if you are already inside town, it shouldn't be such a problem." Smiling, Allen entered the room, taking his scarf from the small table in the room's center. He also picked up Zeyir's vest and smiled. "We will pick you some new cloths, okay? You can't travel around with... well... nothing..." He chuckled and walked out again. Callo nodded before closing the door behind them again.

Shade appeared in front of Callo all of a sudden.

"They are really nice, don't you think so too?" She smiled innocently and waved with a small box in front of the man's face. "Wanna play a game of 'Tactics' with me?" She chuckled and flew towards the table, not awaiting his answer.

"Sure thing!" He walked towards the table and prepared the game together with Shade.

"ZEYIIIIIR!!" A shrill female voice rang through the streets as Morgana spotted the pale demon...

"U-oh..." Zeyir knew that voice way to well. Something-or better someone- knocked him from his feet in the middle of the street, hugging him eagerly.

"Hey, Morgana!" Allen smiled and helped poor Zeyir up from the ground. "We are back~" He grinned and offered the demoness his hand for welcoming.

"Still the same gentleman." Morgana smiled and looked at the two men. "I can't believe you really made it! Did you form a pact with Sol?"

"Not yet..." Zeyir's face formed into a grimace. "We must go to Luna's temple to form pacts with both of them."

"Right, that is logical..." Morgana scratched her chin and smiled innocently.

"Hm? Spit it out, old witch!" Zeyir demanded harshly, trying to imitate Callo's deathglare.

"Just find out yourself why this is the best way." She spoke with a sweet honey-drenched voice while moving her fingers over Zeyir's cheeks. "By the way... What are those cloths? That's not your size, is it?" She grabbed for the bags in Zeyir's hand, snapping them out of it before the demon had even a chance to react.

"Morgana!" Zeyir hissed as Morgana looked through the bags, drawing out red boots, a white shirt, dark grey gloves and trousers in the same color.

"I'm sure this would look awesome on you!" She chuckled and held the shirt on Zeyir's chest.

"This is for a new friend of us." Allen stated before snapping the cloths out of her fingers, returning them into the bag.

"A new friend? You don't mean a desert-elf, do you!?" Morgana shouted surprised. Everyone around them stared at them all of a sudden. "I mean... That was a joke, a joke!" She gulped, glad that the people around them turned away again, concerning about their own business...

"Yeah..." Allen whispered nervously.

"Oh, I gotta meet that elf!! I always wanted to meet one!" She shrieked and hugged Allen playfully. "Thanks for taking me to him!"

"We did not say to bring you to Callo!" Zeyir hissed with a poisoned tone.

"So, his name is Callo? Wonderful name! That means 'hero' in the arcane language!" She giggled and ignored Zeyir's bitter face-expression.

"This time you win, Callo, but next time, I swear..." Shade chuckled and threw her cards in the middle of the table, giving up.

"Then it is 194467 to 194464 for me." Callo grinned. "Seems as if I'm getting better than you!"

"Nya, that won't mean a thing! I just need more training!" She chuckled and put all cards back into the box. "Next time, you are mine! Mwahahahaha!" With a *plop* she disappeared into dark mist again.

"We will see." Callo chuckled and leaned back on his chair. The air was so cool here... almost as if it was night. He shivered a little.

"No, hey!" Callo could hear Allen's voice from far away.

"Wait, Morgana!" Zeyir's voice... Callo blinked a little. What was wrong?! He stood up and took his rapiers in his hands, ready to fight if someone dared attacking his new companions. He was just about to open the door as...

"Hello!" Someone ripped open the door with such a force that it nearly knocked Callo back from his feet as the door slapped against his chest. He coughed and tried to regain his balance and stared at the demoness entering his room.

"Who--?!"

"You must be Callo!" Morgana chirped and hopped forward, taking a closer look at the tan man. "Wow, you are... handsome!" She chuckled innocently.

"Huh?" Callo was confused, but he couldn't sense any danger coming from her, so... "Y... yes, my name is Callo, but how come you know?"

"Callo! Are you alright!?" Zeyir jumped through the door in high-speed, a worried expression on his face.

"Aww... you are so sweet when you are jealous!" Morgana chuckled sweetly and leaned against Callo's chest.

"What... is she talking about!?" Callo was visibly confused about the whole situation... "And who is that demoness!?" He tried to push her off but instead of hugging his chest, she now embraced his arm.

"Oh, right..." Morgana grinned. "My name is Morgana! I'm a spy from Utgard, but don't worry... I won't stand in your way!" She moved her fingers over Callo's cheek, causing him to blush slightly.

"She helped us to get to Yora!" Allen entered Callo's room with a smile. "She is really... unique... but she is really nice as well." He grinned and gave Callo the bag with the new cloths and his wallet.

"Ui! You must be one rich elf!" Morgana chirped as she saw the wallet of Callo, filled with 100-Gar-coins. "A prince? A knight? A Lord?" She hugged his arm tighter.

"Uh..." Callo looked down at her, not sure what to answer. "I guess none of it anymore..."

"Callo, leave the old witch alone! Take our new cloths and let's go celebrate a little!" Zeyir moved his fingers over his knuckle. "I want to have some fun!"

"Oh, awesome idea! I know a wonderful restaurant with Utgardian food! You sure must miss your home-cuisine, right?" Morgana patted Zeyir playfully and moved out the room.

"And... this is a friend of yours...?" Callo shot the two men an unbelieving glare.

Allen, Callo, a very annoyed Zeyir and cheerful Morgana sat around a table in the middle of a restaurant at the plaza of Nihil...

Allen kept shooting the people that dared staring at Callo evil glares while Callo did his best to just ignore them. He liked his new clothes though... Zeyir had a hard time keeping Morgana away from him... a hard task, even though Callo sat between the two of them...

Shade popped out above their heads every now and then amusing herself about the weird situation.

"This must be a nightmare..." Zeyir shook his head in disbelief while trying to get rid of Morgana's hand on his arm. "Can't that stupid cook hurry up, or what!?"

"Patience is—"

"Oh Callo, just shut up..." The demon interrupted the elf with an annoyed hiss.

"Well, well..." Morgana finally let go of poor Zeyir... "Now back to what I wanted to talk about with you guys!" She chirped in her sweet honey-drenched voice. "You said Luna was your next destination?"

"Exactly. Sol wanted us to meet him there... why though I have no clue..." Allen sighed and looked at the demoness in curiosity. What did she know?

"Very well... but I must warn you! Utgard is searching for you guys... a demon has seen you here in Nihil before you entered Yora... They sent message to Galdor right away." Morgana looked at Zeyir. The demon grew paler with every word she said.

"You... you mean they know I'm here!?" He hissed with a shaking voice. "And not only that we are on Midgard but here in Nihil!?"

"What is wrong? Did you do something wrong, Zeyir?" Allen glared at Zeyir in concern.

"N..no... I just..."

"Maybe it is about time you tell them, my dear little—"

"I got you, Morgana!" Zeyir interrupted the demoness just in time. Callo couldn't decide who he should death-glare... Morgana or Zeyir? He decided for the 'old witch' how Zeyir used to call her...

"I don't get what you mean..." Allen looked confused... He felt that it was a delicate subject though. "But you don't have to tell us of course!"

"He doesn't have to!?? Allen are you serious!?" Callo looked at the summoner with a mixture of anger and concern... anger because he wanted to know and concern cause he could not understand how the human could survive all the time if he was that naive in the choice of his companions!

"It is his decision! If he doesn't want to talk about it, he doesn't have to!" Allen barked at Callo with an unusual hard tone in his voice. This made the desert-elf shut up immediately...

"I..." Zeyir hesitated. "I will tell you... one day... okay? I promise!" Allen smiled at the demon.

"It is alright! Anyone has secrets he doesn't want to talk about!" With a grin, Allen leaned back in his chair, enjoying being part of the little group.

"You are weird..." Callo and Morgana said at the very same second.

"Phew~ I'm starving! I wonder what takes them so long to get us some meal..." Allen sighed frustrated to change subject.

"Uhm... we all ordered the special plate... right?" Zeyir scratched his cheek a little embarrassed. "You know what an Udgardian-special plate is... do you?"

Allen and Callo both shook their heads as answer... How were they supposed to know anyway!?

"Haha, I was already surprised they even took the plate!" Morgana chuckled. "Anyway, what I wanted to talk with you about... if Utgard knows that you are here, they will

guard the slikwalker-stations as well as the dragon-ports. It is best you walk by foot so they can't catch you." She grinned eagerly.

"Fine, fine... but... what is the thing with this special plate?!" Allen grew nervous... and Zeyir's evil grin did not really make it any better...

"Oh, you know what demons love to eat? Raw flesh, eyes, bones,... Such things!" The demon's eyes twitched evilly.

"You... are kidding, right?" Callo gulped at the thought... Though he was used to pretty bad meals, this really sounded ugly to him...

"Haha, of course I'm kidding!!" Zeyir started laughing, enjoying his companions face-expressions.

"A special plate is with blue flesh only. Means nearly no vegetables or such things, basically meat. Demons need flesh much more than vitamins or the-like... And we prefer our meat with a nice crust and in the middle half raw." Morgana's eyes had a weird gleam in them...

"I..."

"...see..." Callo completed Allen's sentence for him. "Well... I guess I can live with that..."

"Yupp." Allen stated while waiting for his plate.

"One last thing, then I will drop the subject..." Morgana's eyes grew to little slits. "It is best you get going after meal... It would be best you get out of Nihil as fast as possible. Not only because you are running around with a desert-elf..." She pointed at Callo and leaned on the annoyed elf's shoulder again. "But also so that sweet little Zeyir won't get caught! That'd be such a petty..." She grinned and blinked in a charming way towards the demon.

"Very well..." Callo replied and looked at Allen. "Guess our real journey begins here then!"

"Yupp! Midgard eternal!" Allen rose his glass with sparkling water, receiving weird glares from the other three persons on his table...

"Midgard..."

"...Eternal?!" Morgana and Zeyir couldn't stop laughing anymore at the stupid sentence...

"I thought it sounded cool...." Allen mumbled under his breath while taking a sip of his glass. Callo and Zeyir drank something as well, celebrating the beginning of their journey.

"We already faced gods, evil death-glare-desert-elves..." Zeyir grinned at Callo. "... and even thousands of shadow-spirits and we made it out alive! This journey will be a piece of cake!"

In the evening, the three men had packed all their stuff and prepared for leaving Nihil. Callo ignored the curious glares of the towns-people with ease by now and said good bye to Morgana. Allen hugged the demoness and smiled at her with his usual eager grin.

"I'm sure we will meet again one day!" He moved his fingers over his goatee while looking into Morgana's deep eyes.

"Sure thing!" She replied and waved for good bye as the three companions walked up the stairs that lead out of Nihil.

Morgana blinked for a second and turned back to the Inn. She entered her room with an evil twisted smile on her face.

She searched through a little cupboard on the wall of her room, drawing out a crystal-ball that looked as if it was filled with mist.

She looked inside it, moving her fingers slowly over the crystalline material.

"Master, Prince Zeyir is now moving towards the Temple of Shadows with his group. He has a new companion... this man looks like a good fighter, so if you want to take care of them, make sure you don't go there alone." She chuckled satisfied.

Suddenly the mist inside the crystal-ball turned black. A male, dangerous voice echoed through the chamber.

"Good job, Morgana... I will take over from here on. I will be gratefully paying you your reward next time I see you in Galdor."

"Oh, you are always welcome... I'm looking forward to make business with you again!" Morgana chuckled and hide the crystal in the cupboard again.

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.

Kapitel 13:

Chapter 13

„Lalalalala...” Steel stared into the fire of Zeyir’s sword while the others were slowly waking up from their rest.

Shade rolled herself around on Callo’s lab while her master rubbed his arms. Callo was still not used to the cold weather outside the desert...

“Morning guys...” The elf’s ears went up and down slowly.

“Morning...” Zeyir turned from one side to another but whenever his leg touched the ground he felt the pain of the wound from his fall so he gave up and just stayed where he was. “...Where is Allen?” The demon muttered into his arm he was using as pillow.

“He went hunting about half an hour ago!” Steel smiled and walked towards Zeyir, checking his leg. “Your wounds heal fast! This is incredible...” He smiled from Zeyir to Shade. The darkness-spirit shot him a dangerous look and leaned against Callo. Steel’s mood sank again and he returned to their camp-fire.

“Ugh... I got this stupid ‘morning-after’-feeling... but without drinking the night before this feels even worse...” Zeyir grumbled on the ground, ignoring everyone else around.

“How is your leg?” Callo stood up from the ground causing Shade to float away from him again.

“It’s alright! I should be fine by tomorrow... demon-powers, you know?”

“I see.” Callo smiled relieved. “Guess it was a good thing you were the one falling down there and not one of us!” He added without concern.

“You are just as mean as my father, you know that!?” Zeyir shot the elf an angry glare before getting up from the ground, hobbling from his rest-place to his sword on the ground.

Shade floated over Callo’s shoulder, trying to gain the elf’s attention by sighing heavily every once in a while... After over ten tries without success she balled her fists and shot him an evil glare.

“Uh, Callo? How about we play some Tactics?” She tried to speak as calm as possible.

“Not now, Shade.” The elder replied flatly before turning to Steel and kneeling down next to him. “Uhm... so, Steel... what exactly are your abilities? It is important to know your partner to work with him.”

"I agree! That's why you better use my power instead of his!" Shade replied with a sweet voice while sitting down between Steel and Callo.

"Shade, I will play with you later... now Steel..." Callo pulled aside the small shadow spirit and turned towards the metal spirit again.

"Well, my specialty is chain-magic as I used for Zeyir... but I'm also pretty good in sharpening metal or making it harder!" Steel grinned proudly. He was really glad to finally have someone whose abilities were useful to...

"That's great. I'm sure I can use that very well during fights!" Callo looked into the sky, remembering some of his previous fights... "Yeah, the sharper and harder a blade is, the better I can use it!" He grinned and looked down at Steel. The small spirit smiled back and leaned forward, hugging his knees with his short little arms.

"Hey, you can still use my powers for strengthening your blades, Callo!" Shade hopped up and down next to them, trying to regain her master's attention.

"Of course, but you are a darkness-spirit. And if I'm using Steel's powers I can focus on the blades with him while I summon your might for the shadow-mirror!" Callo put his hand on Shade's head, pressing her down a little to prevent her from hopping around all the time. "What is wrong with you today anyway?! You are so... hyper today!" He shot her an angry glare. Shade lowered her gaze and disappeared into dark mist.

"She seems a little... angry and sad..." Steel looked up at Callo in concern.

"Hmpf. I don't think so... sometimes she is just in a weird mood... but how she was acting today was just plain rude!" Callo barked annoyed. 'I wonder what has gotten into her today!?' He thought to himself.

Zeyir who had watched the whole conversation from the other side of the camp just sat there and shook his head. 'Who is the dumb guy here, huh? Shade is jealous, you dork!' Zeyir bit his lip. He felt sorry for the little spirit.

After a few minutes, Allen returned to the camp, three fishes and restocked bottles with fresh water hanging down his arms.

"Hey! Guess what I found! A river leading from outside of Mirror-mountains inward! So the water is still clear!" Allen ran up to the others excited. He handed over their bottles and searched for something to cook the fish with.

Steel handed him over a piece of metal that looked a little like a bowl. "Is that alright?" The spirit smiled and chuckled happily as Allen nodded cheerfully and took the bowl.

Zeyir remained on the edge of the camp, staring at his leg. He remembered the moment he fell... how the metal cut his leg... how his senses turned all black for a second...

"Damn... what is just wrong with me...?!" He muttered to himself and tried to concentrate his Mana... The longer he had been here on Midgard, the weaker his demonic senses seemed to become...

After breakfast, the group slowly started moving on. Zeyir had ensured the others that he was alright and could walk without problem anymore, but Callo and Allen both had decided to take care of Zeyir's bags for him.

After an hour of walking though... Zeyir's power left him again...

"I... I guess... I need another break..." The demon tripped more than walking as he fell forward towards a dead tree-stump to lean against.

"Wait, I will help—"

"Not necessary!" Zeyir looked at the worried desert-elf before sitting on the ground. "Just leave me alone." He closed his eyes and yawned a little bored to hide that he was in fact shivering from the pain.

"But maybe if you get some more darkness-mana this might help you!" Steel chirped next to Callo and the elf nodded.

"He is right. Hey, Shade!" Callo looked around... No one was coming... "Shade?"

"Why isn't she coming?" Allen looked at Callo in confusion.

"I... don't know..." Callo blinked for a second and looked at Steel. "Guess there is only one way then." He opened his arms and started chanting. "Servant of the Midnightqueen, child of Luna, come forth and lend me your might! I summon you by our pact! Shade!"

...

"You know, this starts getting really embarrassing for you..." Zeyir chuckled and shook his head. "Can't you even control your own spirit?!"

"Shut it!" Callo barked, his eyes gleamed worried. "Hey, Shade!!!!" He shouted into the air, hoping she might hear him.

"This is not good at all..." Allen looked around. "Do you think she might got hurt?"

"I don't know... but I must find her! Steel, come on!" Callo ran off back to where they were coming from.

"Ah, wait! I will help you find her!" Allen started running after Callo, but then stopped again and looked at Zeyir. "Are you going to be alright?"

"Sure thing! Now go and find her already!" Zeyir watched how Allen disappeared behind a couple of trees. He sighed and looked at a tree not far away from where he was sitting. "You are making them really worried, you know?" The demon smiled.

"You... saw me?" A familiar voice came from the spot Zeyir was glaring on and in a cloud of darkness, Shade appeared all of a sudden. "Why didn't you tell them?"

"It is none of my business..." The demon replied flatly and stood up, leaning on the tree. "But what makes me wonder is the fact that you didn't show yourself, even though you saw how worried Callo was." Anger appeared in Zeyir's eyes.

"..." Shade closed her eye and floated in midair while rubbing her arm.

"Alright... if you don't want to tell me..." Zeyir felt his curiosity rising within him... "..." It became worse... "..." And worse... "Okay, okay!" He shook his head and stared at Shade. "You are jealous, right?"

Bull's eye...

"I... I'm not at all!!" The little spirit blushed so much she could have been a fire-spirit. She hopped up and down, waving with her arms eagerly.

"Oh you are SO jealous!" Zeyir grinned evilly. "But hey... I don't think you really have to be..." The demon smiled. He patted his lab, offering Shade a seat just like Callo used to do.

"Hmpf..." Shade scratched her arm before sitting down on the demon's lab. "But this Steel-guy just... ARG! He drives me mad!"

"Hm..." Zeyir closed his eyes, leaning back a little...

"This is just so mean... I'm Callo's partner since over seventy years and... and now he just ignores me..." She sobbed a little... "Stupid Steel... Calo likes him much more just because he can form and strengthen Iron... I wish I was of such use to him too..."

"What!?" Zeyir jumped up from the ground in fury, causing the shadow-spirit to fall forward on the ground. Only a second later, Zeyir regretted his action though... "Ouch!" He held his leg and sat down again...

"You are a real bad-luck-magnet, huh?" Shade stated from the ground while rubbing her elbows.

"Yeah..." Zeyir bit his lip before returning his gaze to the spirit. "But now to you again... You think he dislikes you just because you can't strengthen iron like Steel!? That's ridiculous! Do you know how damn awesome your might is!? The shadow-seal in combination with that mirror-trick... That's plain great! When you were fighting us the first time you kicked our butts with your might! Callo and you didn't even need the help of the other guards at the temple!!"

"Then tell me why he formed a pact with Steel and wants to train with him instead of with me!?" Shade interrupted the demon from the ground, hitting his leg by accident. "Oh, s... sorry!" She hesitated as the demon had to bite his lip again...

"..." He shot her a deathglare that way comparable with Callo's deathglares...

"Sorry..."

"Hmpf! Anyway... How exactly would you have managed to get me out of that hole all alone without Steel's help?" Zeyir looked at her, a cold glance in his eyes.

"I..." Shade tried to think of something... She couldn't think of anything... They had a rope in their bags but... that had been at the camp that time... and... "I don't know..." Shade looked at Zeyir worried.

"Exactly..." The demon leaned back against the tree and looked up at the dull sky. "You and Callo are a perfect team... but of course you can't do everything... sometimes it needs different abilities to accomplish a goal." He looked at the little spirit in front of him. Shade looked at him intensely, listening to every single word he spoke. "Steel is one of the only spirits left in this area and he was looking for a partner... you are not in the desert any longer... the more help we all get, the better we can finish this journey! Callo cares for you... but he needs to learn about Steel's abilities first to use them properly. You are partners since over seventy years! You are a great team already!" Zeyir grinned as he repeated Shade's words from before.

"Maybe you are right..." She sighed frustrated and looked up at Zeyir... "Maybe I should go and show myself to Callo now..."

"Nya, stay here..." Zeyir grinned evilly. "Let him suffer a little more... maybe he sees how much he got on you then." The evil smile on his face grew wider and wider. Even Shade started chuckling now.

"You would make an awesome Shadow-spirit, you know that?" She giggled and hopped up. "You are just like Nocturne... evil, mean but yet so adorable!" She smiled and disappeared in dark mist.

"Tse... Adorable..." Zeyir shook his head, trying to look as mean as possible, but somehow... he couldn't suppress a smile.

After another half an hour, Callo and Allen finally appeared behind the trees again. Allen waved Zeyir happily, signaling him that they had found Shade.

"Hm... Spoilsport..." The demon muttered under his breath as he saw Shade floating next to Callo, smiling at him eagerly while Steel floated next to her, grinning like an idiot...

"She was still at the river I was before. She wanted to fetch us some more fish for the

journey..." Allen smiled and showed the demon a net with fish.

"U-huh..." Zeyir nodded unbelieving, shooting a weird glare at the little darkness spirit.

"Yeah! I couldn't hear Callo calling for some odd reason... Must be because I concentrated on fishing too much..." She chirped innocently.

"Of course..." Zeyir chuckled and got up from the ground. "Well... I'm refreshed. How about we travel on?" He smiled sheepishly.

"No way." Allen protested, looking at the demon. "Don't take your injuries so easy!" He pressed the demon back on the ground. "We will stay here until you are feeling better!"

"..." Callo sat down next to him as well, staring at Zeyir with a glare that said 'Dare standing up before tomorrow and you are dead'... Zeyir didn't dare questioning the truthfulness of this statement...

"Alright, alright... But Allen..." He looked up at his friend.

"Hm?" The human knelt forward, looking at his companion curious.

"You gotta cook me that awesome meat from before again! That was great!" He grinned.

"But it is Callo's turn with cooking... we wanted him to cook from the first day and yet he didn't cook a single time..." Allen nyorned innocently. "Why do always I have to cook for you!?"

"Cause you are an awesome cook! Besides, we have a whole journey ahead of us! We will have plenty of chances to let the desert-guy cooking for us!" Zeyir grinned and looked up at the sky. It started clearing up... and the red color of the sky announced the upcoming night.

"Wow, it's this late already?" Callo looked up in disbelief, ignoring the 'desert-guy'-statement... "Guess we wouldn't be able to travel on anyway..."

"Hm..." Allen looked up as well. Steel and Shade joined their companions, watching how the little stars appeared in the dark sky of the night...

"Once upon a time, Midgard was still young and it's life started to grow in the newborn world, like flowers in springtime..." Shade started all of a sudden. Callo's ears went up at the sound of the familiar tale. "But the life feared the night, it was dark because no one was able to see through the dark embrace of the night around them. The people of Midgard feared the night; helpless, defenseless, lightless." Zeyir closed his eyes, feeling the soft embrace of the night. "The Great Spirit of Darkness, Nocturne, looked at the frightened people and felt sorrow and sadness for their suffering, but neither was she able to roll the Sun over Midgard, just like the Spirit of

Light, Sol, did every day, nor could she ban herself from the world. One night, when the darkness was stronger than ever before, Nocturne decided to come and visit Sol in his holy realm, where he rested from moving the sun for the world." Allen leaned forward, remembering the dark night when he had lost his home... yet he had met Zeyir... "She stole his holy crown and placed it upon the night sky. The giant jewel in the middle of the crown shone gently over the world and embraced the sleeping beings in their soft slumber. Sol sent his lower spirits to watch over the crown, unable to get it back, but at least having guardians next to his precious relict. This is why the night is holy... Light and Darkness meet each other in the center of the sky, guarding all life during their soft slumber." Shade finished her tale and looked at Steel with a soft smile. The metal-spirit looked at her as well with thankful eyes. "Sorry for being so rude before... welcome to our team!" She whispered into his ear.

Callo looked at Sol's crown and a sad feeling entered his chest... He remembered the desert, the Moonguards, Sol's temple, ... Serena...

"Huh, what is that?" Steel asked all of a sudden, pointing at the sky.

Flash

"!!" Allen jumped up from the ground, his heart bouncing against his chest in an incredible speed...

"A shooting star..." Callo looked up, unaware of the danger coming from the shining beauties.

"Don't worry, Allen... it is too far away..." Zeyir watched how the star came down far beyond the mountains... 'Another God entering the game...' He thought to himself before lying down to rest

Kapitel 14:

Chapter 14

It had been five days by now since Steel had joined the team. Shade really started to warm up on him... They trained together all the time, combining their powers to new techniques. Allen kept watching the small spirits in awe all the time. He was always so surprised when they combined Mana to create something completely new!

"Nightsteel!" Both small spirits shouted while concentrating on a small dagger Zeyir had offered them for practice-purposes. The steel of the blade turned black all of a sudden, the daylight mirrored like little stars on the metal surface.

"Wow, that's so great!!" Allen's eyes gleamed fascinated at the new-formed metal. He loved blades...

"Are you done now?" Zeyir and Callo shouted from afar, carrying some bottles with water they had refilled on a nearby river.

"Yupp, we did it!" Steel chirped happily. "Hope we didn't use too much of your Mana..." He added concerned and wanted to help Callo with the bottles.

"No, it's alright. Those techniques don't absorb much of my energy..." He smirked and handed over the bottles. "But in fact we were talking with Allen... Is lunch done now?"

"Yupp, I'm done... But this evening it is your turn to cook! Alright?" He grinned at the dark elf before his eyes wandered off at Zeyir.

"Hey, don't look at me that way! I haven't ever cooked myself in my whole life!" He waved with his arms hesitantly. "But I'm always willing to learn something new if you teach me..." He smiled and leaned forward, smelling on the awesomely looking food.

"Alright!" Allen grinned. "Hey, if I'm not mistaken, we will cross a river today. There is a ferry leading down-stream. That's exactly where we need to head to!" He smiled. "How much money do we have left?" He looked at Callo, a little embarrassed that they were depending on his wallet all the time...

"More than enough, Allen." He took out the pocket and showed them the filled wallet. "I've got an idea..." He said looking from Allen to Zeyir. "How about we open a group-fond?" The dark elf waved with his wallet a little. "We take all our money together and if someone needs something he can pay for it from the group-fond."

"Sounds like a good idea to me..." Zeyir looked at the elf in irritation.

"Then it is settled." He said and threw the wallet towards Allen who caught it with ease. "Here, I trust you more than the demon..."

"Hey!" Zeyir barked, lolling out his tongue.

"Alright!" Allen chuckled and placed the wallet in his bag.

Allen had been right... After around an hour of walking they had reached a giant river running right through the plains beyond Mirror-Mountains.

"Wow..." Callo looked at the giant mass of water in awe. He felt a little sickness rising in his body as he watched the giant stream running down the land...

"Never seen so much water at once, huh?" Zeyir grinned and patted the former desert-inhabitant.

"Right..." Allen looked at Callo who grew a little paler at the thought of crossing this wild stream... "And I guess you are not very familiar with rain either, right?" Allen sweatdropped as the elf nodded slightly...

"Haha! This is going to be so much fun!!" Zeyir couldn't hold back his laughter.

After a few seconds of amusement though, they continued their way towards the ferry. The sun shone bright and the incidence with the shootingstar was almost forgotten by now... Callo had wondered about it and Zeyir and Allen had told him what had happened in Allen's homevillage.

As they reached the ferry and saw the little rafts standing around the little hut of the ferry-man, all three man gulped... Now even Zeyir and Allen had a bad feeling about traveling the wild river downward with those messy little bundles of wood knotted together...

"You are kidding me..." Callo stepped back a little... "I won't ride on those things!" He barked.

"Oh, don't tell me you can't swim!" Zeyir chirped in a honey drenched voice. A deathglare from Callo made him shut up though...

"Of course I can swim! But I'm..." He hesitated for a second. "I'm used to swim in a pool, I never swam in a river before!"

"Logical if you consider that you used to live in a desert all your life..." Allen scratched his goatee and entered the hut, not accepting any more complaining.

"Is he always like this...?" Callo muttered towards Zeyir.

"How should I know!?" The demon looked at the elder in confusion.

"You know him longer than I do!"

"Only about two or three weeks!" Zeyir barked.

"That's longer than I do know him even..." The elf hissed while following their human companion inside.

"Hello---o!" Allen greeted the ferry-man with an unnatural cheerful grin. "We'd like to ride down the river! As fast as possible... if possible..." He grinned and received an odd look from the old man behind the table.

"Three rafts... That makes 75 Gar..." The man, a tall feline in his sixties, stood up and went outside with them. His grey fur hang down his back while his white ears and tail matched awesomely well with the white shirt and trousers he was wearing.

"You are from the Cat-tribe, right?" Zeyir looked at the man with gleaming eyes. He had never seen a feline before...

"I prefer the name feline..." He looked at the demon curiously. "But don't worry about it... Guess we are rather rare in this area." The cat shook his head, waving his tail all around his body. "Just two days ago, a demon asked me the exact same question!" He mused the demon interested. "Well then... Do you want me to explain you how it works?"

"That'd be great..." Callo grew paler and paler...

"You don't have to be nervous at all. Those rafts might not look like it, but they are very solid and transported hundreds of other travelers over this river already." He smiled a little. The fur on his face went up and down with every word he spoke. Zeyir only watched in awe how the ears turned with every little sound of the surroundings...

"Stop acting like a dog!" Callo smacked the curious demon and listened to the feline interested.

"Well then... The stream is rather strong today, so you won't have much work just running down the river. You can steer with those long sticks by pushing them into the river's ground. Just watch out to not run into rocks."

"R..rocks!?" Zeyir and Callo both looked at the cat-man with doubled sized eyes.

"This is going to be fun!" Allen grinned. He and some youths from Ardon had always built little rafts to travel through the stream near their village. It had been his favorite free-time-activity when he was younger.

"You are kidding me..." Zeyir sweatdropped at the amused face of his companion.

"..." Callo gulped and took one of the long sticks. He and the others walked over to their rafts.

"Oh my unholy..." Zeyir stepped on one of the rafts. Even on the ground they looked as if they were going to break every second... Maybe those hundreds of passengers had been just way too much for them?

"Alright. Just ride down the river. You can't miss the goal... There is a long bridge that will catch you on your way. You can't miss it!" The feline smiled as Allen handed him over the 75 Gar. "Thanks. Pleasure to trade with you!" He waved with his tail and went back in to his hut.

"Let's go!!" Allen cheered and took one of the rafts, entering the landing stage. The other two men only looked at each other, nervousness written in their faces.

"..."

"What's wrong guys? This is going to be fun! Come on! Or is one of you too much of a coward to try it?" Allen grinned. Suddenly both men ran up to him, ready to enter the water. 'So I was right... They picked themselves as rivals...' Allen smiled at his companions. 'That's a good thing... That way they will grow on each other...'

"Alright, Allen? Shall we?" Zeyir grinned and placed his raft in the water, fixing it on the jetty until they were ready for take-off. The others did the same.

It was a strange feeling, especially for Callo to have the ground moving under his feet... Zeyir was somewhat used to it from dragon-riding and Allen... well, he was a pro. He stood on the raft as if it was solid ground...

"This... is great training!" Callo couldn't suppress a smile. He started getting a hang on it.

"Well then... if you are prepared, take your sticks and let's start!" Allen hopped up and down on his raft, causing Zeyir and Callo nearly falling off into the water... "Hehe... alright!" Allen pulled on a line that loosened all three rafts from the landing bridge.

They started downward the stream.

Callo and Zeyir both used mainly their sticks to steer but Allen 'surfed' on his raft, gaining double the speed than the others... He only used his stick when he came too close to a rock but more to push him off of the surface and jumping over the rock than riding around it...

"Hey! Allen! Wait for us!" Zeyir shouted from almost 30 meters behind the young human. Callo tried to gain some more speed to catch up with him and chain him to them with the help of Steel, but he was just not good enough in this...

"Come on... It's only a few minutes left until the stream runs quite again! Let me have some fun!" Allen yelled over his shoulder. The water was too loud to speak normally...

"Huh!? What is in a few minutes?!" Callo couldn't hear him between all the splashes... His ears were way too keen for this sort of thing...

"He said the river will run quite in a few minutes. He just wants to have some fun till then." Zeyir shouted towards Callo.

"Okay... How comes you can hear him!?" He looked at the demon in confusion.

"I can differentiate between water and voices!" He grinned evilly and pushed himself forward to gain some more speed, leaving the elf behind.

"Hey!!" Callo tried his best to get after them.

"Aw, man... over already..." Allen sighed as the others came closer in the quite water... The stream grew wider and the plains were even...

"..." Zeyir and Callo looked at each other... During their chase Callo had accidentally hit a rock and had to learn that swimming in a river was much harder than swimming in a pool... and to regain his raft, Zeyir had tried to catch it with his stick which had caused him to fall off of his raft as well... They had been lucky the stream had been rather shallow that spot...

"Hehe, you look so wet... What happened?" Allen asked sheepishly, well aware of what had happened... Shade had appeared next to him and had told him about their accident.

"And you think this was fun... huh?" Zeyir rose an eyebrow and stared at the dry summoner.

"Jupp!" He chuckled and sat down on his raft while pushing himself forward with the stick. Callo and Zeyir did the same. The stream had no more rocks here and even though the water seemed to be very deep here, it was a peaceful part of the stream...

Zeyir sat on his raft... and he grew visibly more and more bored...

Callo only stared at the giant mass of water. He had never seen this much water at once in his life...

Allen only looked up into the sky, watching the clouds as they passed by. Suddenly he caught himself humming a song his father used to sing all the time when they were taking a ride on a boat...

"Row, row, row your boat..." He started singing a little, enjoying the moment.

"Hey, I know that song too!" Zeyir grinned from next to Allen. He looked at the desert-elf who was talking with Shade and Steel. "I got an idea..." He grinned evilly, pushing himself forward to gain some distance between himself and Callo.

"??" Allen watched the demon with interest.

"Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream..." The demon started singing, loud enough so that Callo could very well hear him... The tan man looked up from his conversation. "Throw the desert-elf over board and listen to his screams!"

"Roar! Just so you wait!" Callo shouted, pushing his stick harder into the ground to gain more speed. Allen held his belly laughing while Zeyir kept singing and speeding up at the same time...

It was night already as the small group of travelers arrived at their goal... The station was built near a small town on the river-side. Allen and Callo grinned at Zeyir the whole time cause... he was swimming... Callo had kept centering his raft with his stick every time he had re-entered his raft... and somehow he had given up and just swam after them while leaning on the raft only. The water felt warmer for him right now anyway considering that the air became cooler due to the night and he was all soaked...

"Come on, you were a worthy opponent." Callo offered him a hand grinning as he stood on the bridge already. He pulled the poor demon out of the water and gave him his dry shirt. Allen only chuckled and handed over his scarf.

"Tse..." Zeyir only hissed, but a small smile appeared on his lips...

"Take it easy, Zeyir... He's got over hundred years more experience than you!" Allen grinned and dodged a flying knife. "But hey, Callo! You are really lucky! Seems as if we are going to stay in an Inn tonight... guess you won't have to cook this evening." Allen smiled.

"Tse, you are the lucky ones..." Shade appeared and muttered under her breath so no one else was able to understand her...

"Let's go already, I'm tired..." Zeyir yawned from under Allen's scarf. "Swimmin'all the way is so haaard..." He tried to sound like a little kid and received a chuckle from Allen as reward.

"Alright, let's go..." Callo scratched the back of his head. Zeyir was using his shirt for warmth, so he gained the attention of many women around... but he didn't even notice... Allen shook his head and walked towards the marketplace for the search of an Inn.

Followed by his companions, the human entered a neat-looking Inn with restaurant. While he booked the rooms, Callo and Zeyir brought their bags to their new rooms already. They shared a giant room with three divided parts, one bed in each part. Zeyir took the bed closest to the door while Callo decided for the one on the end of the room with a window above it. He looked outside as it slowly started to rain. Small drips fell against the pure glass.

"..." Zeyir watched the elf. "The rains in Yora were different, right?" He leaned his

head aside and mused his companion. He was still wearing Callo's shirt.

"Yes... I've never seen such a weak rain... when it rained in Yora it was only for very short but then so strong it destroyed all our crops..." Callo threw himself on the bed, enjoying his first soft mattress since over a week...

"Galdor used to be a desert-land as well, but the capital doesn't face this problem... Three streams that run all over Utgard cross each other in the center of the dark capital and form a large river that leads right into the ocean. Our people plant their crops all around this stream and send it to the poorer areas of our country! My family used to..." Suddenly Zeyir cut it off... "Uhm, I mean we helped to send the crops all over Galdor too. But I never ever crossed that stream with a raft..." He chuckled at the memory... somehow he enjoyed doing these kinds of things...

"I see. So you must have a lot of bridges leading over it." Allen stood in the opened door and looked at his companions curious. No one had noticed him entering...

"Yeah." Zeyir nodded and hopped up. "I need something to eat... let's go to the restaurant as long as they are still open!" He grinned and wanted to run towards the kitchen.

"Stop!" Callo barked from his bed.

"Hm?" Zeyir returned a little confused.

"Dress yourself something dry and leave my shirt here!" He pointed at the white fabric.

"Oh, right!" Zeyir smiled and took it off. He also returned Allen's scarf and changed his top.

"Alright, are you coming too?" Allen looked at Callo who only shook his head. Shade was already floating next to him, her game-box in hands.

"I promised her a game." Callo grinned and waved as they left the room.

Down in the restaurant, Allen and Zeyir had enjoyed an awesome meal... Grilled chicken with fresh salad, pineapple, roasted hazelnuts and as desert vanilla ice-cream with hot raspberries.

"I'm so full..." Zeyir patted his belly, grinning satisfied. "I can't eat anything anymore..."

"Me neither..." Allen sighed heavily and looked outside the window... rain was still falling against the window. He watched as people crossed the street in a haste to go back to their homes... small lights lit the streets... white light... there was one white light... Allen blinked for a second. A woman with a wand had summoned light around her staff and walked down the road along with another woman... Allen shook his

head and looked at the spot again. They were gone.

"You alright?" Zeyir sighed from his seat while staring at the roof.

"Y... yeah... It's nothing. Let's go. Must be hallucinating..." He yawned and went up to their room along with Zeyir.

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 girl's face expression 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 alone... 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-leafs 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.

Kapitel 16:

Chapter 16

„Good morning everyone!“ Raven sat close to the small fire of Zeyir’s blade. She grinned as Allen and Callo slowly woke up from their deep slumber. Allen rubbed his eyes and tried to brush his hair with his fingers, messing it all the more up...

“Here...” Callo yawned and threw his brush towards Allen. It hit him right on the head as he was just too sleepy to realize that something was coming closer... Raven had to laugh at the sight.

“Oh... thank... you...” Allen shook his head and looked over at the other group-members... “Where is Zeyir?”

“Who cares.” Narwa stated from her resting-place. She brushed her long silver hair right now as well. It fell like water around her shoulders, framing her fragile body.

“We do!” Allen grumbled and stood up. He just couldn’t get why those two didn’t went along with each other at all!! Narwa seemed like such a kind-hearted person, but in Zeyir’s presence...

“I went checking out the area.” A familiar voice came out from behind some trees. “Morning Allen! Hey Callo. Milady.” He bowed in front of Raven sheepishly while ignoring Narwa just as if she was mere air.

“Hehehe, you are a real gentleman, aren’t you?” Raven chuckled, not noticing Narwa growing red. “Anyway, we need to travel through this forest... Shall we group up until we—”

“NO WAY!!” Narwa and Zeyir both shouted in the very same second. Everyone glared at them...

“What exactly is your problem, Zeyir!?” Callo barked at his companion.

“I’m a demon! I just can’t get along with a—” He stopped. Narwa looked at him nervous. She started shaking... it was over... Now he was going to tell Raven she was a goddess for sure... “I...” Zeyir closed his eyes, thinking for a second. “I’m a demon, I can’t fight with a light-magician in our team...” He looked over at Narwa who looked at him shocked.

“Oh come on! Don’t be ridiculous!” Raven laughed. “It’s not as if we are going to stand in your way. It’s just that we are safer all together than in small groups.”

“Then it is set! There is a split-road a one day march from here. The one leads to another town, the other one to Luna’s Chapel... So we are going to separate there I guess...” Allen smiled at Raven who grinned back right away. “Great!”

"I think that's a good idea. That way no one will have to stay alone at the camp or go hunting all by himself." Callo nodded and shot a deathglare at Zeyir that promised pain and suffering if he dared rejecting the idea any further.

The small group had been traveling through Alnutra-Forest the whole morning. Zeyir had stayed at the top of the group, using his senses to ensure a safe travel while Narwa stayed at the end of the group, staying out of 'the grumpy demon's way'.

"Is it only me or... are you getting hungry too?" Allen laughed and turned around, looking at Raven, Callo and Narwa.

"Sounds fair enough..." Callo sighed. He felt a little dizzy by all the dark Mana...

"Are you sick or something!?" Zeyir beamed and turned around, staring at the dark elf, yet grinning brightly.

"Shut it." Callo smacked his friend as he passed him by before...

"Say... isn't it time that you cook something finally, Callo?" Allen blinked curious. "I'd love to try some of Yora's typical plates!! I heard it is delicious!"

"Oh well..." Callo turned around, not sure what to say. "Well, I'm not a very good cook so..."

"I am certain that as long as you are trying your hardest, the result can't be that bad." Narwa smiled and folded her hands in front of her chest.

"You always sound as if you jumped out right of a hypocritical priest-academy... Oh wait, right, I forgot..." Zeyir rolled his eyes and turned to the others. "Sounds like a plan to me! Who is going to hunt?"

"I will go of course!" Allen smiled, whirling his hunting-knives around between his fingers.

"I want to go too!" Raven beamed right away, jumping up to Allen. She looked over at the others.

Callo got a bad feeling... Zeyir looked as if he was a little tired from the night... as far as he had seen, the demon haven't slept a single second... He had extended his night-watch even... and Narwa was not the kind of person that'd go on a huntingtrip... and staying alone with those two lovely people... "No way, I'm coming too!"

Zeyir gulped... that meant... "Wait a sec! You can't be serious!" He gasped and stepped forward.

"Just try not to kill each other!" Raven giggled and walked on towards the woods, followed by Allen and Callo. A small whisper from Allen reached Zeyir's keen ears.

"Wise decision..."

"I heard that, Allen..." The demon shouted after them before they disappeared behind some trees. "Oh great..." He grit his teeth before lying down his flamesword, setting some dried leafs on fire.

"..." Narwa stood on the edge of the opening... not sure what to say.

"Stay away from the trees. A werewolf might be attacking you and I'm not certain if I can bring myself up to save you." Zeyir stated to seemingly no one in particular.

"..." Narwa came closer. She was rather nervous in a forest, filled with dark energy like this...

Sigh... Zeyir stood up and looked over at the goddess. "I won't bite you... don't worry..."

"I... I did not thank you yet for what you did before... You didn't tell the others who I really am and..."

"Geez! I don't really hate gods just because they are gods, but I just can't stand light-mana around me, so it has nothing to do with that at all!" Zeyir throw his vest on the ground, making himself comfortable on it.

"You... are not?" Narwa seemed surprised. "I thought all demons hate as Gods just as most Gods hate demons..."

"And that's just it... most." Zeyir looked over at her. "I'm special, don't you know?" He rolled out his tongue, grinning widely. "It's not my fault if you Gods are that simple-minded!"

Narwa had to chuckle at that. She took a look at her bag, searching for something to drink. A shiny amulet fell out of her bag all of a sudden. "Oh no..." She took it up from the ground, cleaning it like the most precious and fragile thing on earth.

"Hm?" Zeyir blinked and looked at the amulet. The crescent-moon shaped amulet looked familiar. "What is that?"

"None of your concern!" Narwa snapped all of a sudden and hid it in her bag again. "Hmpf!" She lowered her head, blushing... she had totally forgot that Zeyir was still around when the amulet had fallen on the ground...

"..." Zeyir bit his lip, anger grew in him again... It was just so much easier to hate this goddess than to try coming along... So why not hating her!? He laid down on the ground, napping a little while his ears still listened to every single sound of the surrounding.

"We are baaaack!" Raven hopped out from some bushes, trying to startle Narwa.

"How has it been?" Allen looked down at Zeyir who was...

"He fell asleep..." Callo blinked and rubbed his hands together, thinking of a nice mean little way to wake him up.

"W...WHAT!?" Narwa jumped up and looked at him. "I thought he was just going to close his eyes for a little!! Does that mean we didn't watch the surroundings at all, all this time!?" She couldn't believe it... Her eyes fell on her want attached on her back...

SMACK

"OUGH!!!" Zeyir jumped up from the ground as something hit him right into the stomach. "What was that for!?" He yelled before turning around, noticing the others were back already.

"Slept well, huh?" Raven tipped her fingers against her elbow while crossing her arms. "You are damn lucky that no monsters were around..."

"Whoops..." Zeyir scratched the back of his head. "S..Sorry... guess I fell asleep... Uhm... How about Callo starts cooking now?" He tried to change subject as fast as possible. The grumbling of Allen's stomach added further necessity to Zeyir's words.

"I will get started..." Callo sighed and took out some knives and a pot from their bags.

"This smells really nice, Callo!" Narwa chirped satisfied as Callo presented his cookery on a fallen tree they used as table. "And it looks very interesting!" She smiled and looked down at their plates. "Uhm.. C.. can anyone make me some... sticks?" She grew nervous...

"Sticks?" Allen seemed confused about the question...

"Yeah, in some very unknown regions of Midgard they only eat with sticks instead of with knives and forks..." Zeyir added innocently...

"Y...yes, that is correct..." Narwa felt how her heart sank... That sadistic little brat dared mocking her!!! Her, a Goddess with at least 10x of his age and experience and yet he brought her in this kind of situation!? This was going to have a play-back...

"Oh right, sorry I totally forgot... You mentioned that before." Raven slapped her forehead. "I will never forget the first time though you tried to eat with knife and fork!! It was so awesome!" She laughed out and looked at the others while a slight blush appeared on Narwa's usually pale cheeks. "She tried to use them with one hand! It was so funny! And she still doesn't get how it works..." Narwa's head grew really red...

"Oh, that sounds like so much fun... I wish I had seen that..." Zeyir's eyes turned all dream-gazed while the mocking tone in his voice vibrated in the poor light-witch's ears.

"I've never heard of an area in which people eat with sticks..." Callo leaned his head aside a little while thinking.

"Why don't you tell us a little about your home?" Zeyir grinned evilly while filling his plate with Callo's food.

"Is that the revenge for the hit before?!" She hissed under her breath towards the demon so only he could hear it.

"Maybe..." The young man laughed and smiled at the others who now filled their plates as well. Everyone was waiting for the first one to start eating...

"By the way... What is that?" Allen poked with his fork against the brown substance that resembled an old carrot... Raven who now had finished carving new sticks for Narwa looked at the pot too.

"Yeah, what is that?" She asked curiously.

"That is the rabbit we hunted down before with sausage and potatoes." Callo smiled. "An old recipe from Yora. But I didn't have all ingredients so it might taste a little weird..."

"Oh well, who cares!" Zeyir grinned and started wolfing down the... the... "Uah!!!" He turned away from the others gulping heavily, as if he had problems keeping the food inside...

"Huh?" Everyone looked at him in confusion and concern.

"Are you alright?" Allen looked at him worried while patting on his back.

"Y... yeah..." Zeyir caught heavily before turning to the others again... His face looked a little... green... "I just wolfed down... a little too fast..." He tried his best to speak calmly, while it seemed as if he was going to faint every second.

"What kind of wimpy demon are you!?" Narwa shook her head. "You have no manners!!!" She looked down at the food... "I'm sorry... I can't eat this, I... I don't eat meat... My apologies... I will eat some bread." She smiled and offered Allen her plate.

"I didn't know you were vegetarian. I'm sorry." Callo scratched his head ashamed. "If you had told me earlier..."

"Oh, please don't worry about it! It was my own fault not to mention it..." She blushed a little and watched the others that were still looking at Zeyir a little worried.

"Alright, time for lunch!!" Allen chirped taking a bite. Raven took a giant portion on

her fork as well...

"Hm, yeah, tastes a little different than it is used to... guys?" Callo looked at the others that were coughing heavily trying not to spit out the food...

"Ugh... You are... so mean..." Allen shot a deathglare at Zeyir who was regaining his usual skin color slowly. In return, Allen and Raven seemed a little green around their noses right now.

"I... am full, sorry, can't eat anymore..." Raven spoke these words in such a speed, it took the others a few seconds to understand what she had been saying.

"Uhm... Same here! I think I... I lost my hunger after hunting! Sorry, Callo!" Allen shook his head hesitantly as if it was about to fall off every second...

"I'm feeling a little sick after wolfing down this... err... after wolfing your food down too fast... I can't eat anything anymore..." Zeyir only lowered his head into his hands... He was never ever going to ask Callo to cook again... Next time he was going to try it... Even if the only thing he was able to cook were boiled eggs or soup, this was a hundred times better than whatever he did to the poor lil rabbit...

"Oh..." Callo seemed a little confused but kept eating whatever he cooked. The others kept staring at him blankly as he even took a second plate... Narwa, a little confused about the whole situation, kept nibbling on her piece of bread.

"Well then... that's it..." Allen stared at the two paths that were going to separate their group again...

"It was a funny little trip!" Raven chuckled and looked from Callo to Zeyir and back to Allen. "It was a real pleasure to meet you guys! And who knows? Maybe we are going to meet again?"

"Sure!" Allen smiled and scratched his goatee.

"Don't take this wrong but... The first thing I'm going to do when I'm back in a real town is, going into a fine good restaurant and eating a nice giant portion of steak!" Raven shook her head in disgusted memory before turning to Zeyir. "Bye~"

"See ya..." The demon yawned and shook her hand in good-bye. Narwa waved with her hand in Good-Bye to the boys and their paths separated again...

"Too bad... It was so much fun with the girls around..." Allen sighed deeply and looked at the other guys. "Don't get me wrong but you are a lot less attracting than those two girls..." He chuckled and received two deathglares from his companions.

"How far till we reach Luna's Chapel?" Callo turned to his demonic friend.

"Not far... If we rest for the night and travel on tomorrow morning we should be there by noon." He replied flatly yet somewhat amused by Allen's joke.

"That's great." Allen smiled. "Woah! Think about this! I'm going to form my very first pact ever!" He grinned like a little kid while thinking about how the whole pact-making-process used to work.

"You are taking this way too easily..." Callo sighed deeply while rubbing his knuckles. "I'm curious though what Sol intended when he said he was going to meet us here..."

"We will find out tomorrow, right?" The demon grinned and fastened his pace. "I can't wait to see Luna's Chapel! It used to be Nocturne's home first, you know?"

"So Luna took over the chapel of Nocturne after her death?" Allen blinked curiously.

"Yupp. And I can't wait to see it!" He grinned excited.

"You are acting weird, you know that?" Callo shot his friend a suspicious glare.

"I... Nocturne used to be a demonic warrior during the Eternal War before she became the Great Spirit of Darkness. And her home was Galdor, so she is linked very closely with my home-country. Besides, the Chapel of the Midnightqueen was built right above the capital city of Utgard!" He looked at the others, homesickness slowly started growing within him...

"That's cool!! I'm sure we are going to have fun there!" Allen smiled encouraging while putting his arm around Zeyir's shoulder.

"I think so too. This is going to be interesting!" Callo smiled softly and patted the demon.

"Alright... then our next destination is the Dark Chapel!"

Kapitel 17:

Chapter 17

„You are!“

„I’m not!“

„Oh yes, you are!!“

„Noooo!! I’m not!!!“

„G... guys???“

Allen tried to walk between the two fighting friends of his... “Come on, this really isn’t a subject we have to argue about now...”

“Yeah, cause I am right!” Callo snapped and deathglared the angry demon.

“I’m not a wimp!” Zeyir growled while moving his fingers slowly over the hilts of some of his knives on the inside of his vest.

“Mind if I quote? ‘I’m so exhausted, I need a break!’” Callo did a really good job in imitating Zeyir there...

“Different from you, I’m not used to traveling or living in the open, okay?!” Zeyir lowered his head a little between his shoulders, trying to hide his face ashamed.

“You are really not fair here, Callo...” Allen tried his best to stop the meaningless fight. How did those two manage to find a reason to argue wherever they were!? Yet somehow, Allen could feel they came along with each other much better than most people might guess by their behavior... It was like... a twisted kind of friendship hidden between their words.

“Hmpf!” Callo crossed his arms in front of his chest. “Not being used to something is no excuse! You came here to help your world, so start acting like you care!”

“Callo, that’s enough!!” Allen yelled all of a sudden. The dark elf and the demon looked at their companion, shocked by the unfamiliar harsh tone in the usually cheerful voice.

“S... sorry...” Callo muttered under his breath while turning towards the path again.

“Though I agree with Callo here. It is not even half an hour until we reach Luna’s temple. We shouldn’t make a break now... Let’s rest in the Chapel later after forming a pact with Luna and Sol.”

"This is going to be really rough, you know?" Callo glared at the summoner, worry in his eyes. "Forming a pact with one single spirit is rather hard already, but with two spirits at the same time? This is going to cost you all your energy!"

"I will bear it." Allen replied flatly.

"Just make sure you will be alright, okay?" Zeyir patted the human and looked through the thick woods ahead of them.

"Is it safe?" Allen asked Zeyir all of a sudden.

"Huh? Oh, you mean the monsters..." Zeyir was a little nervous. "My senses are rather good due to the dark Mana here but... something is blocking them right now. I can't sense much more than usual..." He scratched the back of his head.

"Right... you told us before..." Callo sighed... It was so much easier to travel while Zeyir had been able to sense any single movement in this area...

"I still can sense enough to... wait a second..." Zeyir stopped all of a sudden. "There is someone..." He stepped back. Cold sweat started running down his forehead.

"Zeyir-AH!" Allen suddenly was pushed down to the ground by an invisible force, but the familiar cold, wet feeling of something, holding him down told him that whoever pressed him down used a Shadow-Seal.

"Allen!" Callo drew out his rapiers, rushing forward, trying to hit whatever held his companion down, but whenever he tried to slash down, something was blocking his blows.

"I call upon the power of Utgard! Shadowland! Hear my call!" Zeyir opened his arms while chanting. A glowing white circle appeared all around him. "DARKSPEHERE!!" A sudden wave of Mana rushed through the air, like a strong wind, pushing away all magic. Suddenly, the intruders became visible...

"Demons!" Callo gasped and hopped back a little, blocking a spear-blow from the soldier, blocking his previous attacks. But suddenly... "URG!" A ball with dark energy hit him right in the back, sending him flying forward on the ground. The blades of three demons were pointed on him now, keeping him down on the ground.

"Callo!" Zeyir ran forward, his fireblade in hands. "Stop it! That's an order!" He tried to yell at the demons, but no reaction. "Why..."

"As long as I am around, you have no right to order these demons around, Zeyir!" A deep male voice rang through the cold air. A white haired demon with a scar running over his left eye appeared in the dark.

"F... father!" Zeyir hopped back. Facing the King of Galdor, Kyrin.

"Lay down your weapon, young prince, and your companions won't get hurt." A young

vampire looked at the pale demon, visibly sad about the situation.

"You are here too, Will!?" Zeyir tightened the grip on his sword.

"Zeyir, what are they talking about!? Who are those demons!?" Allen tried to get up, but the demon on his back kept him on the ground.

"I..." Zeyir felt as if something cold grabbed his stomach, he was shivering.

"How about I explain?" Kyrin glared at his son with angry eyes. "My son ran away from our castle to play with you guys and now I'm here to pick him back up!"

"I won't come with you! I must stay. Please understand that!" Zeyir grew visibly frustrated. Just a few minutes ago, the world was alright for him. The only thing he had been worried about had been a break or not before entering the Dark Chapel...

"You have responsibility for your country, Zeyir! You are a member of the Grozen family, no matter if you like it or not! Galdor needs you in Utgard! No one is helped if you stay in this wasted world!" Will stepped forward, trying to reach for the sword in Zeyir's hand.

"Zeyir..." Callo tried to push off the demon-guards around him, but he was in a clear disadvantage. Another demon came to help his mates, pressing his sword against Callo's chest, keeping him down.

"You look like a decent fighter... the only one amongst this little group." Kyrin walked over to Callo, eying him curiously. "You are from the desert-tribe."

"No longer..." Callo hissed. "They closed their eyes from what was real, not concerned about this whole world, preferring their tribe to stay in idle harmony, praying to Sol for Mana and supplies while the whole world around them falls apart! And as it seems, you are just as ignorant as the desert-elves."

"Hmpf!" Kyrin looked down at the warrior in front of him, rising his blade.

"No!" Allen shouted, looking at the King, shocked.

"Father, stop!" Zeyir ran in between his father and his new companion. "If you dare hurting them..." He rose his blade as well, taking a fighting-stance. He had made his decision. "I will fight you right here if necessary!" Eager muttering ran through the demon-groups, unsure why their beloved prince acted this weird...

"Well then!" Kyrin stepped back. "You really think you can beat me!?" He snapped with his fingers. Suddenly, the sword in Zeyir's hands began to fade.

"No!" He tried to hold it but it was too late. The flames surrounded his father's hand, forming into a giant red broadsword with nearly the same size as Zeyir. The demon-prince gulped and stared blankly at the giant sword...

"Did you forget already? The Faith of Asca is my sword as well." Kyrin's face turned into a twisted smile that reminded Allen of the first time he had met Zeyir...

"Dammit..." Zeyir looked over at Will who was lowering his head, avoiding his friend's gaze.

"Zeyir... You didn't tell us you were a prince..." Allen interrupted all of a sudden. "That explains a lot!" He started chuckling, receiving confused glares from the surrounding persons.

"Allen!?" Callo stared over at the young summoner. "This is not the time for—"

"Oh yes it is!" Allen grinned and looked up at the demon that was pressing him down. "Can't you see it? This one might be their King..." Allen pointed with his head towards Kyrin who was listening curiously. "But all those demons here... seem to feel more loyalty for their Prince!"

Kyrin dropped the flamesword all of a sudden, glaring at the young human. Callo shot a confused glare from Zeyir to Kyrin while Zeyir's gaze flew over the surrounding soldiers that seemed to feel awfully nervous in their position.

"Yeah, they would not dare letting their prince get hurt." He chuckled about the weird situation. His gaze met Zeyir's...

"Got it... Get out of my way!" The demon turned all of a sudden, attacking the soldiers that were holding down Callo. They stepped back, panicking. Callo jumped up from the ground, throwing a knife at the demon that was holding down Allen. The demon dodged but let go of Allen in the process. "We must reach Luna's chapel!" Zeyir shouted, running past another couple of soldiers, followed by his companions.

Kyrin and his knights only watched them escape, unable to follow them.

"M... Majesty...?" Will interrupted the silence all of a sudden. Kyrin glared at him with a distant expression in his eyes.

"Follow... Follow them and get Zeyir back no matter the price! Kill his companions!" He shouted all of a sudden, summoning the Faith of Asca back to his hand, running after his son.

"Hurry!" They rushed through the trees, praying the temple was going to appear after every single wall of trees they passed.

"I... can't run anymore..." Allen tried his best to keep up with his friends, but he had a really hard time... Callo turned, grabbing his friend's arm, pulling him with him.

Voices, steps and the sound of metal came to their ears. The demons were coming closer!

"Why didn't you tell us you were the prince of Galdor!?" Callo shouted all of a sudden.

"I thought you might want me to return to Utgard if I told you!" Zeyir pushed some bushes out of the way. "I can see the temple!" Relief entered Zeyir's voice and his heart grew lighter with every step they came closer to the temple.

"How are we supposed to get rid of them in there!?" Allen questioned while running up the giant temple-stairs.

"You will see!" Zeyir smiled evilly and stopped all of a sudden. They had reached the Chapel-entrance.

Suddenly, Kyrin and his demon-army rushed through the woods, spotting the three companions.

"Hurry!" Zeyir shouted, pushing open the doors. They ran through it into the dark temple, blocking the door from inside.

The temple-inside was dark... the black walls resembled the night-sky. Small crystals spread all over the walls gave an impression of stars in the sky and the floor... a black floor, so dark as if they were walking over a never ending abyss.

"Shade!" Callo shouted to summon his small spirit. The little creature appeared in front of them, rubbing her eye.

"What's wrong?" She yawned, symbolizing that she had been asleep up until Callo had summoned her.

"Would you mind!?" The elf hissed. Shade looked around, realizing that this was not the best of situation to annoy her master...

"Whoops, yeah, of course!" She listened to the sound of someone hammering with weapons against wood... "Ran into trouble? Okay, I'll shut up..." She waved with her hands, lighting up the room.

Statues of former Great Spirits of Darkness ornamented the surreal hall. And the two most giant one amongst them... were the statue of Luna –current Great Spirit of Darkness- and a familiar-looking woman with long hair and an even more familiar sign on her forehead.

"Nocturne Grozen..." Zeyir ran forward towards the statue.

"GROZEN!?" Allen and Callo both shouted at the very same moment.

"You must be kidding!" Callo shook his head. "Nocturne was the very first Great Spirit of Darkness on Midgard! How is she supposed to be—"

"Come to think about it, Callo..." Zeyir interrupted. "The Eternal War ended with the sacrificed lives of 4 demons and 4 gods. Do you really think they had no family before?"

"..." Callo lowered his head.

"My family is one of the oldest ones of Utgard... After the end of the Eternal War, the demons decided to split the land into countries, giving the biggest countries to the remaining families of the demons that gave their lives and turned into the Great Spirits. The remaining land was split between their former companions. Galdor is the land that has been given to the Grozen-family." The demon-prince turned around, facing his companions. "You were right, Allen. The soldiers really didn't want to hurt me... My father is not a member of the Grozen-clan... He married my mother and after her death, the demons of Galdor wait for me to enter the throne. They wish for a Grozen to be their king."

"I see..." Callo sighed. "His head was aching from all the happening of this past hour..."

"Now that you mention it... I heard stories about that too..." Shade flew up and down.

"I never knew Utgard honored the Great Spirits..." Allen sat down, leaning against a statue exhausted. "How exactly are we going to get out of here? It won't take long anymore until they enter this temple..."

"I pray my plan works..." Zeyir sighed, sitting down to Nocturne's feet, leaning back. "I need to collect some energy first..."

"You won't have much time for that..." Callo looked over at the entrance. The door moved more and more with every single low of the demons outside. He looked back at Zeyir. A dark aura surrounded him... He was collecting Mana...

"Let's pray it will work..." Allen sighed. He knew he had no time to summon Luna and Sol now... A pact was not just formed within a few minutes... I needed much more than that...

"It will... I'm certain of it... or my name is no longer Zeyir Grozen!"

Kapitel 18:

Chapter 18

Clang.
Clang.
Clang.

Allen and Callo stared at the giant entrance-door, awaiting the door to crush open with every single time their foes slashed against it.

Clang.

"I doubt it is going to hold much longer..." Allen sighed and leaned backwards against the statue of a former spirit of darkness. His gaze wandered off to Zeyir who was still concentrating his Mana. "Guess we can only wait now..."

"This is really bad..." Shade, Callo's small spirit of darkness, protested, hands at her hips. "How dare they damaging the Dark Chapel!?" She grid her teeth angrily. "I swear by Luna... If they dare-"

"It's alright, Shade..." Callo, eyes closed, moved his fingers through his long hair, trying to relax a little. He needed to collect his senses if it came to a fight again...

"I'm sorry... It just makes me so mad!" She hit the floor with her fist before shaking her hand in pain. "Ouch..."

"They are coming..." Zeyir suddenly opened his eyes and stood up. With another loud crack, the door crushed open. Demon-soldiers ran into the Chapel, waiting at the side-walls as their king entered Luna's temple.

"A very dramatic place for a showdown, don't you think so too, Zeyir?" Kyrin grit his teeth and looked right into his son's crimson eyes.

"Indeed... The birthplace of our country... Let us see if the legends are true." Zeyir replied and signalized Callo and Allen to stay back. Callo shot him a worried yet angry glare while attaching his rapiers on his belt again.

"Legends?" Kyrin summoned the mighty flamesword. In his hands it looked much more like a fearsome weapon than in the form it had in Zeyir's hands... "Do you really think you can beat me? Especially without the Faith of Asca on your side?"

"I can try at least." Zeyir smirked. "As demons of Galdor, we both have to follow some very useful rules... I'd like to take advantage of one of them. The right of prevention."

"You have no clue what you are—"

"Oh, I do know very well, father..." Zeyir closed his eyes for a second. "The rules are so easy... The generals of two armies are to fight against each other to prevent innocent victims amongst their troops. One of these generals has to be of royal blood and... oh wow, look, I'm a royal demon!" Zeyir laughed and pointed at his forehead. His father couldn't suppress a chuckle.

"I guess you got your stubborn side from me, so I won't blame you for that..." Kyrin's face switched into a warm smile for a second before returning to his cold gaze again.

"Zeyir! That is too risky!" Callo interrupted from aside. "You can't beat him!"

"I know..." Zeyir sighed... "But I have to do my best and maybe... if the spirits of darkness help me... I even might stand a chance!"

"That's-" Allen wanted to say something but Zeyir's eyes made him shut up again.

"The worst thing that might happen is that they take me back to Galdor. The rules say that they are not allowed to harm my followers. I know this might sound very weird to Midgardians, but for us Utgardians those rules are sacred. They won't harm you."

"..." Kyrin looked at his son in disbelief. He had never realized he had grown so much already... For him his son had always been a lazy spoiled kid that loved training his dark skills, but never had shown any interest in the old vowels of Utgard...

"Alright..." Zeyir entered his fighting stance, knives in his left hand, ready to fight with his claws with his right hand.

"You can't win this, so why even trying to fight?" Kyrin moved the giant sword in his hand with ease, even though it had nearly the same size as his son...

"We will see..." Zeyir smirked, running towards his father, throwing a knife right at his father's chest. The demon-king blocked the assault with ease and stepped aside. He slashed down the flame-sword, causing a wave of fire shooting towards the young prince.

Zeyir had a hard time dodging the shots of his father, but yet no shot had hit him even though the Chapel-walls had a rougher time in that... Shade bit her fist and closed her eye each time a pillar or statue was destroyed by King Kyrin's brute force...

With a side-roll, Zeyir managed to get behind his father while he was still stunned from bringing down his sword. He tried using a claw-slash but right before he managed to land a hit, Kyrin turned around with such an incredible speed, that Zeyir had no chance of blocking the upcoming hit anymore...

"AH!" The young demon was sent back flying by the immense power behind Kyrin's slash. He crushed right against Nocturne's statue.

"ZEYIR!" Callo jumped up, pulling out his rapiers. Suddenly, 3 archers amongst the demon-soldiers targeted the dark elf.

"Put... down your weapons..." Zeyir coughed and tried to get up again. A strain of

blood was running down his forehead and over his face. "I'm not done yet..."

"I don't want to hurt you, Zeyir..." Kyrin lowered his head a little and looked at the flat side of his blade with which he had just hit his very son.

"I know..." Zeyir sighed and stood up, leaning on Nocturne's statue. "It is time, I guess."

"Time for what? Your big surprise?" Kyrin smirked.

"You will see..." Zeyir shut his eyes and opened his arms.

"Are you going to summon upon Utgard's might? That won't work. I can summon upon it as well, remember?"

"Servants of darkness..." Zeyir didn't chant or release his Mana as Callo had expected, nor did he summon any weird might as Allen had thought... He did not even prepare a dark sphere as his father had expected him to do... "My name is Zeyir Grozen, I am a descendant of darkness, one of the heirs of Nocturne... please lend me your strength! For Galdor and for Midgard's sake! May the bonds between us grow strong again!"

Kyrin stared at his son with opened mouth. Allen and Callo were just as shocked.

"We will listen to your call, young prince of Galdor..." A distant voice echoed in the destroyed Chapel-Hall. The only one it sounded familiar to... was Allen. "For the memorial of our dark mother, we shall lend you our strength in this one fight." Dark mist collected in the area between Kyrin and Zeyir, forming into a young woman with curly white hair. The crimson horns that framed her face glowed in a weird light while her silver-white eyes focused Zeyir. "I, Luna, 12th Great Spirit of Darkness, shall be your might for this one fight." Zeyir nodded and lowered his head in respect. The darkness in the room grew heavier with every single second. Callo and Allen had a hard time, seeing what was going on. The Midnight-Queen closed her eyes and opened her arms. Dark Mana floated from her towards the dark prince...

"No..." Kyrin gasped and hesitated for a second before charging at his son. He knew he wasn't going to stand a chance if Luna opened him the complete potential of darkness. But he was too late... before he was able to bring down the Faith of Asca... it disappeared from his hands, returning to Zeyir. He stared at his son in awe who was holding a giant red flaming sword now that resembled a turned cross. The shaft gleamed like liquid magma, flowing in waves around the hilt.

"Seems as if tables turned now..." The crimson eyes of Zeyir were much more intense than usual, glowing unnaturally bright in the dark surroundings. Kyrin gulped and took out his second sword that was attached on his belt.

"Now it is might against experience I guess?" Kyrin tried to keep his temper while stepping back slowly.

"This is incredible... The sword reacts on the Mana-potential of its wielder!" Allen's

eyes sparkled with a weird light as he glared with love-dazed eyes at the flamesword. But he knew that Kyrin was right... It was not over yet. Zeyir had an advantage now due to Luna's might, but Kyrin had proved already that he was a skilled fighter and from the fact that he looked as if he was in his forties already, Allen guessed that he was several thousand years old in which he had more than enough time to collect all kind of experiences...

Zeyir rushed forward, sending waves of darkness towards his father again and again. Kyrin side-stepped each of his son's blows though. His sword swung around with such an ease that Zeyir in return had to watch every single movement of his opponent to not get caught off-guard. It was a farce. Kyrin didn't manage to land a hit and so did Zeyir. The demons watching the fight gulped at the hard fight of their leaders.

Will stood in a corner, his heart beating against his chest wildly... He followed Zeyir with his eyes while his thoughts kept spinning in his head. He felt so bad for the whole situation... If he hadn't told Zeyir about Midgard, none of this had happened...

"Zeyir, watch out! Phew, that was close... Now go get him! You can do it! GOGOGO!!" Allen cheered his friend from the side, receiving weird glares from the other persons around, including Callo...

Zeyir was exhausted already, so the chances for Kyrin to win grew better and better. He stepped aside while bringing down his flamesword again, sending another couple of energy-balls towards his father. As he lifted his sword again, he lost his balance for a short second and in this very second...

Slash

"ARG!" Zeyir lay on the ground, breathing heavily as the sword of his father pressed him down against the black floor.

"..." Kyrin closed his eyes for a second... "A very good fight, my son... but not good enough." He tightened the pressure of his blade. Even though it was only the flat side, Zeyir could feel an aching pain on his shoulder.

"Dammit..." Zeyir lowered his head, hiding his face with his long bangs. His sword disappeared and Luna's power seemed to leave him again, flowing all over the ground.

"Zeyir..." Allen gasped but remained where he was... If he got Zeyir right before, the rules of his land demanded him to stay off the fight. Callo closed his eyes and sat down, leaning against Luna's statue.

"M... Majesty..." Will suddenly stepped forward, his eyes fixed on Zeyir.

"What is it now again!?" Kyrin barked, glaring angrily at the servant.

"I... I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt..." Will hesitated and lowered his head again,

stepping back ashamed.

"Hmpf!" Kyrin glared at Allen and Callo before drawing back his sword, fastening it on his belt. He took the arm of his son, pulling him up from the ground. Zeyir avoided the gaze of his companions and his father... It was the end of this journey for him... Kyrin sighed and looked at the friends of his beloved son. "My apologies for the trouble. I wish you good luck with your journey, but Zeyir is too important to our country to risk his life in a cause of Midgard."

"I wish you good luck, guys... Seems as if I can't come along anymore..." Zeyir still avoided eye-contact with his friends. His heart grew heavy and as his father walked towards the exit of the chapel, he followed without further resistance.

"..." Callo and Allen both stared at their former companion, unable to find words. Their faces showed regret but also anger... They were unable to understand why Kyrin was so obsessed by the thought of keeping Zeyir in Galdor against his free will.

The demon-soldiers followed their leaders, but their mood was just as bad as Allen's and Callo's... They were torn between loyalty towards their king or their prince...

The only demon left in the chapel-hall now was Will who still stood in a corner, staring blankly into the deep darkness...

"Tell me this is not happening, please..." Allen shut his eyes, hoping, praying he was just waking up from this nightmare. Callo bit his lip as well, having a hard time to resist the wish of just storming after the demons, trying to fight Zeyir free... but he knew he was not going to stand a single chance...

"I'm sorry..." Will suddenly turned towards the two men, stepping forward towards Nocturne's statue. "It is all my fault... I didn't know Zeyir wanted to stay so badly... but please understand... we need him!"

"You!" Callo couldn't suppress his anger any longer. He grabbed the vampire's vest, pulling him towards himself. "What do you know!?"

"Please..." Will caught and gasped for air.

"Callo, let him down!" Allen interrupted, patting his friend's shoulder. "We can't change what happened..."

"But you are right... I am to blame..." Will closed his eyes. "If Zeyir was not the last member of the Grozen-family, I wouldn't have told King Kyrin about your next destination..."

"How did you know we were heading for this temple anyway?" Allen blinked, eyeing the demon curiously.

"One of my spies told me... Her name is Morgana. She-"

"This damn little..." Callo hit Nocturne's statue with his fist in anger.

"You must understand! The laws of Utgard accept only a member of the Grozen-family on the throne of Galdor. After Queen Mellin's death, Galdor had a really hard time accepting Kyrin, her husband, on the throne, but Zeyir was just not ready to become king back then! If he is going to die, Galdor will fall apart as nation and fall to the hands of the surrounding countries! We can't let this happen! Please don't judge over our acts without considering this..." Will felt Callo's grip opening slowly. "Thank you..." Sighing he walked towards the exit, leaving behind Allen and Callo.

"You know, I only do this for our country..." Kyrin sighed as he tried to meet his son's eyes who turned away his gaze angrily every time. "Don't act like a little kid... you will be a king soon, you should start acting like one... As royal demon you can't just run away. As hard as it sounds, but your life belongs to Galdor."

"My life belongs to myself and no one else..." Zeyir muttered angrily. He bit his lip so hard, it started bleeding. One side of his face was still covered with blood and his arms were aching from the hard fight.

"You are never going to learn it..." Kyrin shook his head frustrated.

As they walked on through the thick woods, Zeyir already missed the fights with Callo and Allen's tries to stop them from annoying each other... He was going to miss Allen's cookery for sure, and even though he was sure he was not going to miss Callo's food, he regretted that he had only been able to tease Callo with it that one time back with Narwa and Raven... Heck, he even missed Narwa!

He shook his head as his thoughts drifted off to the Goddess... She had been searching for someone... Alena Vanthrith or something...

"Wait..." Zeyir stopped all of a sudden... Kyrin looked at him confused. The guards rose their weapons just in case, but no one dared attacking or hitting their prince for just stopping... "Alena van Tirith... No... It is Allen! She was looking for Allen!" He suddenly blinked and looked up at his father.

"What are you talking about!?" Kyrin grew really worried about his son there...

"It... it is nothing..." Zeyir looked up at his father. "Do... do you know a goddess with the name Narwa?"

Kyrin, surprised by the sudden change of subject, nodded hesitantly. "Yes, she is the daughter of Bel'Zath AINU, one of the Master-Members of the holy Senate in Asgard. Why are you asking?"

"I see... and... how is she?"

"Uh... She is very kind. She likes old books and magic... She once even saved..." Kyrin

stopped, looking at his son's chest. The three scars of his were visible slightly on the edge of Zeyir's shirt.

"So, not the type of God that'd just try to start a war?" Zeyir smiled relieved.

"Not at all..." Kyrin really didn't know what to say or do anymore... Why was his son interested in such things all of a sudden!?

"Good..." He sighed... "Father... would you mind... allowing me writing one last letter before we return to Utgard? I need to tell someone something!"

"S... sure..." Kyrin shook his head and looked at his soldiers. "We set up camp here for an hour..."

"But your majesty..." A female soldier stepped forward. "We are only a few minutes away from the Otherworld-Gate that brings us back to Utgard!"

"You wouldn't dare questioning my orders, right?" Kyrin shot her a burning glare and she shut up, bowing in apology.

"Thanks!" Zeyir smiled, running towards a tree-stump, pulling out a pen and a piece of paper from his bag. The other demons sat down and started their camp. Only Kyrin stayed away from them, leaning against a tree while watching his son writing something.

Zeyir was not sure how to start his letter... He had never been good in such things...

"Uhm... Hey, Narwa. I know you remember me. It is me, Zeyir, the demon you met before." Zeyir shook his head at what he was just writing there amused about his own inability to write proper messages... But as he kept writing on, he knew she was going to understand and as he finished and sealed the letter with the royal emblem of Galdor, a small smile lit his face.

"Will?" He stood up, turning towards the demon-soldiers. Will was sitting a little away from the group, eating a piece of fresh meat. "Can you deliver this for me?"

Kapitel 19:

Chapter 19

„Narwa?“ Raven leaned in her chair, polishing one of her daggers while watching her friend practicing a new spell she had seen in an old rune-book. “Your hat burns...”

“Huh?” The white-haired woman looked up and noticed shocked that the mercenary was right! “Oh no!” She took it off and tried to get rid of the fire. “Oh my... such a shame it did not work as intended...” She sighed heavily and looked into her book. “But... it is supposed to be a flame-spell so I guess I’m improving!” A soft smile appeared on her lips.

“Hehe, good for you!” Raven grinned and leaned back a little more. She looked outside the window into the blank night. “I wonder if Allen and the others already reached the Dark Chapel...”

“I’m certain they did. Zeyir is a demon. He should be able to guide them through the forest rather well.” She blinked for a second, staring at her hat. “Otherwise...” She started giggling. “He doesn’t seem to be the kind of person that travels a lot... I bet they got lost somewhere in the woods on their way thanks to him!”

Raven had to chuckle on that as well. “Riiight, sure thing.”

Suddenly a scratching noise on the window interrupted the chatter. Raven turned around, looking at something small and dark hanging on the window... What was that!?

“Is that a bird?” Raven slowly poked against the glass. Suddenly the thing spread its wings, sending a shrill noise through the glass, making Raven fall back on the floor. “Ouch, that’s a bat!” She hopped up again, visibly mad of being shrieked at like that.

“Look, there is something attached on its leg.” Narwa ran to the window, opening it carefully. The bat hopped in and flapped all around Narwa’s head. “This is a familiar...” She held her hand up a little, so the bat could land on it.

“A familiar?” Raven eyed the little animal curiously.

“Yes, this is what the anima-servant of a demon is called... Vampires often have bats as familiars, that is why many myths of Midgard combine the abilities of vampires with those of a bat.” Narwa smiled and patted the small animal. Her eyes wandered off to the small roll it was carrying. “That’s a message.” She loosened it from the bat’s small leg and looked at it closely. As she saw the royal emblem of Galdor attached to it she nearly dropped the paper, causing the bat to shriek wildly.

“Hm? What is it?” Raven took the bat and cuddled it playfully. The animal seemed to really enjoy it...

"N... nothing! Uhm, just..." Narwa expected the letter to contain subjects that were not for her friend to know... If Zeyir wrote her a letter something must have happened! "This is a letter of Zeyir for me." She finally decided to tell the truth though... "Is it alright if... I read it alone?" Her face showed a sad expression. She felt bad for not being able to just tell her friend that she was a goddess from Asgard... She was afraid she might be rejected if someone found out...

"Oh, I KNEW it!!" Raven laughed out loud. "You two guys came out much better than you wanted to admit!" She grinned evilly. "But it's alright... I won't read your love-letter there..."

"I... it is not!" Narwa blushed deeply but was yet relieved that Raven didn't really mind.

"Hehe, whatever... I will go to the kitchen and ask for some food for the lil familiar here. In the meantime you can read it all you want!" Raven left the room chuckling while still cuddling the bat.

"Phew..." Narwa sighed and sat back on her bed. She slowly opened the letter and started reading.

Hey, Narwa.

I'm sure you remember me... I have rather bad news, or maybe it is good news for you but... anyway:

I have to return to Galdor and I'm already on my way. You were looking for someone called Alena Vanthrith and I think you got a wrong name there. I guess you were looking for Allen. His full name is Allen van Tirith. You might wonder why I tell you this, we hate each other... yet I think you might be a pretty good person and as long as I can't take care of Allen and Callo anymore I hope at least you can help them. We both don't want a second war between our worlds and even though we dislike each other we must stick along together in this cause to prevent victims. I hope you understand that.

Please greet the others from me if you see them again. They are at Luna's Chapel right now.

Thank you, and regards,

Zeyir

As Narwa finished reading this, she had to breath heavily first... Zeyir was right... She had the wrong name... "Ariia must have misunderstood something..." She grid her teeth, reading the letter over and over again. "If they are at Luna's temple already, I might come too late!" She jumped up, grabbing her hat and running down to Raven.

"Lalala..." Raven hummed while giving the little bat some fresh meat. It was really

enjoying her presence and Raven started to love that little bat. "I really envy your master, you know that? You are such a sweet little familiar..." She patted it satisfied and looked over to the stairs. Someone came running down...

"Raven!!" Narwa jumped down the stairs with such incredible speed, Raven had to step back for a second...

"Woa! Hey, calm down, what is it?" Raven grinned and stepped back a little more as Narwa ran up to her.

"I... I must tell you something!" Narwa closed her eyes. Now she had no other choice anymore.... The time was too short! "I'm not human! And I'm not from Midgard! My name is Narwa Ainu and I am a goddess from Asgard!" The words came out with such incredible speed that Raven needed a few seconds to fully understand what her friend was just telling her... "I am looking for a summoner, not a friend, and as it seems, Allen is that summoner! And if we don't hurry he will make a giant mistake! He will lose his life in vain!" Tears ran down the pale cheeks of the goddess while her hands were shivering.

"Wh... what?! You... you are kidding me, right?" Raven blinked, considering this a very bad joke, but Narwa's behavior and her sad expression told her that she spoke the truth. "What are we supposed to do!?"

"I must go to the Dark Chapel and prevent them from doing something stupid! I must fly or we don't have a chance to reach them in time!"

"Alright, I will take our bags and follow you..." Raven gulped at the thought of Allen dying in the Dark Chapel and ran up the stairs. Narwa watched her for a second, sending a glare down at the letter in her hand.

"I'm sorry I didn't know before..." She closed her eyes and ran towards the door. As she passed the exit, and ran into the dark, a silver gleam lightened her. Two beautiful white wings spread out of her back, glowing in the dark night as she flew off towards the Midnightqueen's temple.

Callo leaned against the wall, sleeping a little... the previous fight had exhausted him... and the fact that Zeyir was gone now didn't really lighten his mood at all...

Allen only stared at his daggers... Why didn't he help his friend!? How could he even call himself his friend if he did not interrupt the fight!?

"Dammit..." He hit his fist against the floor, hoping the pain would make him feel a little more comfortable...

"That won't help... Allen, we couldn't do anything, it was just too many of them." Callo opened his eyes, looking at his companion with a saddened face.

"But..."

"No buts. What would have happened if we interrupted? They would have killed us and taken Zeyir back anyway." The elf sighed and walked towards his friend, offering him a hand. "Come on... Now it is up to us to save his world as well."

"Maybe you are right..." Allen sighed and took Callo's hand, standing up slowly. "Guess then... should we go and summon Luna and Sol now?"

Callo nodded and looked towards a giant door behind Nocturne's and Luna's statues. "Let's go."

The altar-room of the Chapel was not as giant as Sol's altar, but the thousands of crystals, silver ornaments, dark spheres and glowing flowers that lit the room, made it an even more impressive altar than the spirit of light's one...

"This looks amazing!" Allen stepped in, careful to not touch anything.

"Are you ready?" Callo looked a little nervous...

"Yeah! Alright, let's start!" Allen walked up to the altar, opening his arms, unleashing his Mana. "Midnightqueen. Great Spirit of Darkness. Keeper of the shining moon! Show yourself and fulfill your divine duty!"

A dark spiral formed on the altar, releasing the black mist, Allen knew way too well...

"You called for my might..." Luna's empty eyes glared down at the young summoner. She sighed for a second then flew a little sideward, as if she awaited someone else to appear.

"Do you really want to do this, Luna?" A smaller shadow-spirit appeared on her side all of a sudden. The white hair with one black strain running down his forehead shone softly in the light of the gleaming flowers.

"Shadow, please stay away. You know, I am awaiting Sol." Luna showed with her hand towards the exit, telling the spirit to please leave the place. Shadow grit his teeth and disappeared in another cloud of dark mist.

Allen and Callo watched the show a little confused. What was going on there?

"Please excuse his manners." Luna nodded and looked at the empty spot again. A flashing light appeared all of a sudden, forming into the Great Spirit of Light, Sol. "Welcome, to my realm..."

Callo bowed down immediately as he saw the holy spirit, showing his respect in the manner his tribe had taught him to.

"You have come." Sol looked down at Allen and Callo, curiously. "Are you prepared to

take on our combined might, young descendant of the van Tirith-tribe?"

"I am." Allen stepped forward, ready to form his very first pact.

"Very well. This process will cost you most of your energy, but you should be alright if you carry Ameran's blessing with you." Sol smiled warmly and flew closer to the young summoner.

Allen looked up at Sol a little confused... Ameran's blessing? Callo seemed a little confused as well...

"Maybe he is talking about your lineage..." Callo whispered towards Allen who nodded agreeing.

"Probably..." The human spread his arms, ready to unleash all his Mana. "But why did you want to form a pact with me at the very same time? Wouldn't it be easier if we had formed one pact after another?" Curiosity rose in Allen.

"Darkness and light reject each other. We can only enter your Mana at once. Forming a pact with you after you already formed a pact with Sol would be my and your death." Luna smiled softly. "I am glad to become your partner, just as I was your mother's..."

"Let us start then!" Sol opened his arms, unleashing his might. So did Luna. The dark and light Mana of both of them whirled around in the room, filling the air with an immense energy. Callo had the feeling as if all of his Mana was pushed out of the room. He covered his face with his arm and leaned against the pressure to not fall back.

Allen in contrary stood in the middle of the stream, arms wide open. His eyes seemed so empty as the Mana of Luna and Sol entered his body. Every human part of him seemed erased...

"STOP!!" Suddenly the door to the altar-room swung open. A woman with long silver hair and a pair of white wings stood in the doorframe.

"Narwa! What are you doing here!?" Callo turned around, falling back a few steps by the Manaflow. "Wait... you are a—"

"We must stop him!!" She ran towards Allen, a small amulet in her hand. It had the shape of a crescent moon and a round ball in its middle. A small arrow was attached on the end of the amulet.

Narwa tried to get through the Manaflow, but was too weak to get through. "Callo! You must give Allen the amulet or he can't take on their Mana!!" She threw the amulet at Callo who caught it with ease. "He is going to die otherwise!!"

Callo gasped and tried his best to get through the stream. He had to give his hardest to move forward but after a few seconds he finally reached his friend, attaching the amulet around his neck.

All of a sudden the Manaflow changed, floating right into the amulet instead of into Allen. After a few seconds, it was over...

"Allen?" Callo tried to shake his friend, but no reaction. The summoner just stood there, without any movement. He looked more dead than alive. "Allen! Talk to me!" Callo shook him harder and harder, but still no reaction.

"I was too late..." Narwa fell back on the ground... "No..."

"Allen!! Wake up!! Come on!!" Suddenly, energy seemed to float out of the young human's body. He collapsed right into Callo's arms. "What... what is wrong!? What happened!? What have you done!?" Callo deathglared Narwa, demanding answers.

"No human can take on such an immense amount of Mana..."

"But there are people that make pacts with so many other spirits and it never—" Callo was interrupted by Narwa's sad face. Tears curled down her cheeks. "I... I'm sorry, I didn't mean to make you cry..."

"That... that's not it... If I just would have realized my fault earlier... if I just would have known before that Allen was the person I was looking for... none of this would have happened!" Narwa stood up and walked over to Allen. "He... is still alive!"

"What!?" Callo looked down at his friend and tried to find his pulse. His hand was shaking too much to feel anything, but the soft breath he could feel from Allen's mouth were proof enough that he was in fact not dead yet.

"He needs rest! Here, you can take this as pillow!" Narwa rolled her hat into a bundle and laid it on the ground. Callo carefully placed the weak man on it.

"And what are we supposed to do now?"

"We can only hope that he will be able to regain his strength..." Narwa looked down at the young man... It bugged her that she was one of the best healers of Asgard, yet she was unable to help...

"..." Callo leaned back against the altar. "If just Zeyir was here..." He sighed heavily...

"I received a letter from him... He wanted me to tell you that he will be alright... You must continue your quest! It is too important to all worlds to just stop it!" Narwa bit her lip.

"He wrote you a letter? But... you are an angel!" Callo seemed confused about that... Didn't Zeyir hate Narwa?

"No, I'm a goddess, not an angel... but, yes he did. Zeyir knew my true face from the very beginning... I'm just glad he realized that I was searching for Allen. My partner had told me a wrong name. She must have misunderstood something through her

magic crystal and thought I had to look for a girl named Alena..." Narwa felt as if a heavy burden was taken off her shoulders. "As it seems, I can't hide my true face very well..."

Callo didn't know what to answer on this... If Zeyir really trusted her, even though she was from Asgard, then he didn't know a reason why he shouldn't trust her as well...

"I will set up camp in the entrance-hall. Maybe a little fire and something to eat will wake him up again..." Callo smiled softly. He knew it wasn't going to work, but just staying here and doing nothing would make him go insane...

"Alright. I will try my best to keep him stabile." Narwa nodded and watched Callo leaving the room.

"This is it." Kyrin and the other demons stopped in front of a giant stone-gate in the middle of the forest.

"..." Zeyir bit his lip... An otherworld-gate... It'd bring him right back home, and that was the last place he wanted to go to right now...

"Don't make such a face." The demon-king patted his son's shoulder, trying his best to cheer him up, but it was no use. "Zeyir, what exactly makes you believe you would be able to help those Midgardians!? You are inexperienced in traveling, you don't know anything about Midgard, you don't even know how to cook for yourself!"

"That's not true!" Zeyir snapped, receiving a weird glare from his father. "Allen taught me a few things. I can make soup for example!" It was a meaningless fight but Zeyir wanted to show his father at least that he was not absolutely right.

"Soup, huh?" Kyrin had to laugh at that one.

"Yes, soup!" Zeyir growled angrily, balling his hands into fists.

"Soup..." His father shook his head, now laughing even louder.

"..." Zeyir crossed his arms in front of his chest. The demon-soldiers around him had a hard time not to laugh as well, but he couldn't care less...

"You really like it here, huh?" Kyrin patted his son but then turned towards the gate again. He pushed a small rune on the side and suddenly the carvings in the gate started glowing in a blue light. The giant stone-doors opened, releasing the sight at the wide planes of Galdor.

Kapitel 20:

Chapter 20

Nocturne... She seemed to stare down at him with her cold, lifeless eyes... Callo couldn't resist but to glare up at the spirit-statue every once in a while. The cold face-expression, the creepy eyes on her wings that reminded him of the shape of butterfly-wings,... It was hard to resist looking up to her every once in a while. The darkness in the hall gave an additional weight to her appearance.

The dark elf took a look around. No other spirit-statue made him feel as uncomfortable as this one... They all looked like young maidens. Some of them had horns like Luna, others demonic wings or fangs, but none of them seemed as unreal as Nocturne.

"She is creepy, isn't she?" A female voice suddenly came from Callo's right side. He turned around, facing Narwa.

"..."

"She used to be the mightiest warrior of the demons back in the Eternal War..." The goddess sighed and knelt down in front of her statue. "Yet, she sacrificed her life to restore peace. I admire her for what she did even though she was a demoness." She folded her hands in silent prayer. A white light seemed to surround her as she sat in the dark surrounding, sending her wishes to the dead soul of the first Spirit of Darkness.

"Still... She has something cold on her." Callo rubbed his arms. Only a few weeks ago he was a follower of Sol. A guardian of the Sun and a protector of his tribe during the night... Now he was here in the very temple of what his people had taught him to hate and fear. "It makes her different from the others somehow..."

"She is not cold. She is just the one most fitting for the Dark Mana. As creatures of the day humans and elves fear darkness." Narwa smiled softly towards the desert-elf. "There never was a more matching person to turn into the Great Spirit of Darkness than her. This is also the reason why the Grozen-family is one of the most respected and honored families in all of Utgard. Even most of the Asgardians know their name."

"..." Callo looked up at Nocturne again. The Grozen-family...

"I wonder how Raven is doing." The goddess stood up all of a sudden. "She wanted to come after me but it has been a day already since I left... I hope she is alright..."

"She seems like a decent fighter... I'm sure she will be alright." Callo suddenly turned towards the altar-room. "I will get Allen. Would you mind taking some of our packs? I think it is best if we get out of here..."

"Right..." Narwa nodded and walked towards their bags. "But where should we head to?"

"I'd say it would be best to bring him to someone that knows a little about the spirits and seemed to know about this before us..." Callo growled. "Morgana..."

"Who?" Narwa shot him a confused glare.

"A demoness we met in Nihil. I'm sure she is the one who told Galdor about our next destination. She was the only one knowing we went there."

"But wouldn't it be dangerous to go to her then? What happened here anyway?" Narwa looked at some of the destroyed statues and the deep cracks in the walls and floor from Kyrin's and Zeyir's fight.

"The king of Galdor wanted to get back his son..." Callo grid his teeth. He blamed himself for not stepping in the battle... "Anyway... Morgana said something strange when we told her that Sol wanted to meet us at Luna's Chapel. She said something about we will find out if we are here... I'm certain she knew about what was happening!"

Suddenly the damaged doors of the chapel swung open. A young woman stepped inside, totally exhausted. A little bat flew around her head, flapping with its wings eagerly.

"Ugh, that was hard..." Raven fell down on the ground, catching her breath for a second.

"Raven!" Narwa cheered and ran up to her friend. "I was worried already!" She flapped happily with her wings.

"Man, you make me really jealous, you know that?" Raven muttered from the ground, looking up at the beautiful wings.

"Huh? I'm sorry, I don't understand..."

"First your long silver hair, now wings..." The mercenary giggled. "I wonder why you don't have a boyfriend yet!"

"Wh—what?" Narwa's face turned crimson.

"Are you done with your chatter?" Callo walked up to the girls carrying Allen on his back.

"Oh my! What happened!? Is he alright!?" Raven jumped up, checking the summoner worried.

"Long story short, he got too much Mana from Sol and Luna..." Sighing the elf moved towards the entrance. "Guess we will have to walk all the way back to Nihil..."

"Nihil? You mean that underground-pseudo-desert-town?"

"Something like that..." Callo grinned. He never liked Nihil and Raven's name for it sounded really good in his ears somehow...

"You can't be serious... walking all the way!? No! Why don't we take a dragon-flight from the town I and Narwa were in before? There is a dragon-station that is linked with Nihil." Raven bit her lip... All the hard way through the forest... the heavy bags... it all was in vain... They had to walk all the way back again...

"There we are!" Raven waved eagerly with her hands as she hopped off the dragon's back without waiting for the ramp to walk down. Narwa, her wings hidden in her usual manner, helped Callo carrying Allen. They received some weird glares from other travelers, but they couldn't care less right now... Raven had been right about the dragon-station. It was so much faster than walking all the way... It had only been a two-day-trip instead of 3 weeks walking... Yet, it was also much more dangerous for them. They had heard rumors about winged people attacking the dragons and checking the passengers only to leave again without taking anything with them... Narwa and Callo both were sure it weren't bird-men...

Asgardians...

"Raven, wait for us, please." Narwa took out her staff and packed her and Raven's bag on her back while Raven already walked off with the packs of Callo, Allen and even Zeyir's bag around her shoulders.

"Sorry~" She chuckled and hopped back again. From here on it was an hour of walking to Nihil's entrance...

The sun burned down on the land with cruel intensity. Callo seemed to be the only one not affected by the heat...

"Are... you sure you are okay?" Raven tried to wave some air into her face by flapping with her hands eagerly, but it made her even more exhausted...

"I'm fine. I'm used to the heat." Callo looked over at the human, smiling softly.

"Oh right... you are from the desert-elf-tribe... I totally forgot about that... Lucky you..." Raven leaned against the older man, breathing heavily. Narwa hang on Callo's other side, she was sleepy from the long flight... She hadn't been able to sleep the whole time.

"Are you fine?" Callo blinked nervously as both girls leaned on him... Allen was still on his back, and travelers that seemed at least as fatigue as Narwa and Raven kept staring at the weird team... Callo could have sworn he heard some passing men muttering 'Lucky guy' between their gasps for air...

"I think we are there..." Raven pointed at a giant entrance-door that lead down under the earth's surface.

"Right... This is it." A cold feeling came up in Callo as he saw Nihil's entrance-gates... "I hope Morgana is still here somewhere..."

Inside Nihil, the air grew thicker with every step they took. Narwa had a hard time, holding her hand in front of her mouth... She felt sick in this cage-like town.

"This town is horrible... Even though they try lightening the atmosphere with potted plants, this makes me want to cry..." The goddess shivered slightly at the unnatural atmosphere down here. "I miss the warm light of the sun from outside..."

"I would feel much more comfortable outside right now too..." Callo looked around... people kept staring at him He could hear their whispering about a desert-elf and heir guesses what happened to the unconscious man on his shoulders...

"If I were you, I'd get off of the streets with Allen... Nihil and your clan aren't friends at all if I remember correctly..." Raven bit her lip while glaring angrily at the people staring at her companion. "They might think you were the one causing his unconsciousness..."

"Maybe you are right..." Callo sighed and turned to a side-street. Narwa went ahead of the small group, lightening their path with her gleaming staff. After a few minutes of walking they reached a very messy looking Inn. Callo and Raven shot Narwa a frustrated glare.

"Come on! You can't be serious!" The young mercenary grabbed the hilt of her saber, comforting herself. "This is a barrack! We can find a better Inn!"

"I have to agree with Raven... This is no save place!" Callo looked from Allen to Raven. "We are decent fighters, but..."

"I'm sorry..." Narwa sighed. "I didn't want to worry you... I can feel a weird presence in this town. It is best for us to stay as far away from crowds as possible..."

"What do you mean?" Raven blinked confused.

"I guess she is talking about Asgardians..." A female voice rang through the street. Callo recognized the shrill tone immediately.

"Morgana!" Callo grit his teeth. If Allen wasn't on his back he would have unleashed is rapiers to fight her down for what she did... "You betrayed us!"

"Oh, my, my... you are looking a lot less handsome when you are so... moody..." The demoness chuckled and leaned forward, looking at the unconscious summoner and then towards Narwa. Her eyes turned into small slits. She looked as if she wanted to

slice the goddess right where she stood. "What is the meaning of that!? What is a goddess doing among you!? Haven't you learned of the past!?"

"This is none of your business." Callo stepped in front of Narwa to protect her from Morgana's angry stares.

"Tse!" Morgana stepped back angrily. "So this is the filthy rat I smelled through the streets..."

"Maybe..." Narwa stepped forward all of a sudden. "Listen, young demoness... I have no grudge against your kind! And I don't seek for war either, so just lend us your knowledge about the Great Spirits so we can help this young human! Allen needs your aid." The goddess placed her hands on her lab and bowed forward slightly. "I beg for your aid, respective descendant of Utgard."

"Hey!" Raven ripped her friend away from Morgana. "You can't be serious! You are a goddess! You can't just drop your entire honor for this... this..." The mercenary struggled for words.

"Demoness." Morgana completed her. "I like your way of thinking, goddess... Mind if I ask for your name?"

"They call me Narwa. Narwa Ainu." The goddess smiled and offered her hand.

"You... you are kidding, right? Don't try to fool me! Who are you really?" Morgana chuckled and took her hand. "My name is Morgana, just Morgana. I'm a spy of Galdor, so better watch your back."

"I knew it was you who---" Callo stepped forward again, yet was stopped by his companions.

"Callo! If that helps us getting to know something about Allen's conditions, we should at least try it!" Raven hissed who slowly got Narwa's point.

"Haha, you are such a funny group!" Morgana started cheering up and now even Callo got what they were about to accomplish. "Now, honestly woman... who are you really?"

Narwa shot her a strange glance as if she didn't get the demoness' point. "I already told you. My name is Narwa Ainu. I'm the daughter of Bel'Zath Ainu, one of the former members of the Master Senate of Menel." She smiled slightly and folded her hands in front of her belly.

"Wowowowowow!" Morgana stepped back and suddenly turned all crimson. "The Silver Orchid of Asgard!?" The demoness blinked embarrassed and knelt down all of a sudden. "I didn't know it was you... my apologies..."

"I don't get what is going on..." Raven looked up at Callo who seemed just as confused as her...

"Well then... let me rent you a room. I will help you as much as I can." Morgana took Narwa's hand all of a sudden and lead her inside the Inn. Callo and Raven still stared at each other, but finally decided to follow.

"This was the fastest change of mood I have ever heard of..." Raven laughed. Even Callo seemed amused in a weird way. His arms started hurting from carrying his friend all the time.

Inside the Inn, it was just as messy as on the outside. Weird plants hang from the roof and the ground was covered with mud and dirty water.

"This is an ugly place to stay at..." Narwa made a disgusted face before turning towards her companions. "I have to apologize again... but we really should stay here..."

"Would anyone mind telling me what is going on here?!" Raven balled her hands into fists. "All of a sudden this demon-girl treats you like a saint, you want to stay in this... rat-hole, and you don't even tell us why!?"

"My apologizes..."

"Ugh, forget about it..." Raven slapped her forehead and walked up to the reception. "Hey, someone here?" The doors to the kitchen... just another mud-hole... swung open and a grumpy looking orc stepped outside.

"What do you want?" The unfriendly Inn-keeper yawned and scratched the back of his head.

"Uhm... a room for four... or five?" Raven blushed and grabbed her sword again just in case.

"Four... I won't stay here, I have my own private room at the towns-center." Morgana laughed and paid for the rooms. "Let's go up and talk a little about your unconscious friend here!" Pointing at Allen, she turned towards the stairs. Raven and Narwa followed her slowly but Callo gulped at the cracking sounds of the stairs...

"Are you sure... it will take mine and Allen's weight?" Callo looked up the straight stairs.

"Oh, don't be a frog! Come up already!" Raven laughed and clapped her hands. As Callo took the first step on the stairs though...

Crack

The first stair broke into halves, causing the dark elf to land right on his face while Allen's weight pressed against his chest.

"Ouch..."

"Ha... Hahahahaha!" Raven couldn't stop laughing anymore. "That is... that is just too ridiculously funny! Hahaha!"

"Hr..." The Inn-keeper walked up to Callo, helping him back up on his feet. "There is a stone-stairway down that corridor... Use that one." The orc snorted and went back into the kitchen.

After climbing the stone-stairs, Callo met up with the girls again. They had already put their packs into the cupboard and lay on the old beds. Callo placed his unconscious friend on a free bed before throwing himself on the last remaining one...

"Ugh... My muscles ache..." The tan man turned his head a little to see Morgana talking with Narwa in a weird language. He was too tired though to even try understanding what they said... His eyes closed slowly before the world around him turned black slowly. Only the foul smell of his blankets remained in his nose as he fell asleep.

"Huh?" Hey, Narwa, look!" Raven whispered and pointed at the sleeping elder. "Doesn't he look sweet like this?" She chuckled and walked up to the desert-elf, stroking his long hair out of his face. "I totally forgot that he had been carrying poor Allen ever since Luna's temple..."

"Yes, you are right..." Narwa stared from Callo to Allen. "Humans and elves are such strange beings... their bonds grow so strong even in such a short time! In Asgard... everything seems so... eternal... Time has forgotten about us in such an endless world." The goddess seemed upset but tried to catch her mood again. "My apologies, I didn't mean to-"

"No, it is the same in Utgard!" Morgana interrupted all of a sudden. "The days pass by day by day and nothing stops the flow of time. Since I live here in Midgard though... Time seems so much more precious. I wonder if the struggle for life makes the Midgardians fighting for every single second they got..."

Raven looked from one woman to the other. "Honestly... you sound like old women! Stop talking like that!"

"Haha, in your eyes we probably are! You, Allen and Callo are the youngest amongst us!" Morgana chuckled and leaned back. "So... Let me see... Your friend has a wonderful amulet there!" She pointed at the crescent-moon-shaped amulet that Narwa had given Allen in the chapel.

"..." Narwa closed her eyes. "I was too late... I should have given it to him earlier so he wouldn't have to suffer now..."

"Oh come on! You didn't know, that's all!" Raven grid her teeth and sat down next to Allen, playing with her fingers over his amulet. "But do you know how we can help him? He has been like this for several days by now..."

"Hm..." Morgana walked up to the summoner, checking his pulse and then closing her eyes, feeling his Mana. "I think I know something, but... I don't know how we are supposed to do that..."

"Please tell us, Morgana." Narwa bit her lip, hoping it wasn't completely impossible... She would do anything to save the last summoner of the van Tirith-Clan...

"Well... If light and darkness is concentrated too much in your blood, it paralyzes your body... I don't know exactly how it works, but when a light-force and a dark-force of equal strength come together they can't erase each other anymore. Usually the stronger force destroys the weaker one... That is why Allen had to take on Luna and Sol at once and not one after another... it would have destroyed the Spirits' Mana..."

"I know that, but how to help him?" Narwa grew desperate.

"Well... Someone has to weaken the Mana within Allen. But you have to weaken light and darkness at the same time and at a same level..." Morgana made a worried face. "Which God beside you would actually decide to help a human!? And I can't hold up to your intensive light."

"That really is a problem..." Narwa sighed.

"I don't get it at all... I never really showed much interest in the rules of Mana..." Raven leaned back against Allen's bed, holding his amulet still tight in her hand.

"Hm... how to explain it best..." Narwa folded her hands, unsure how to put it in simpler words.

"You have two glasses with juice." Morgana stated all of a sudden. "You have to drink them out in the very same time. So you need two persons that can drink at the same speed!" The demoness received weird glares from Raven and Narwa. "Well, at least it was worth a try..."

"Anyway... I think I know someone that might be mighty enough to handle my light..." The goddess suddenly stood up. "But he is gone..."

"Huh? Who are you talking about?" Raven wondered and hopped up.

"Isn't Zeyir a direct descendant of Nocturne's bloodline? He should be mighty enough to take on my might!" Narwa smiled warmly.

"But didn't you say he had to return to Utgard?" Raven blinked confused. "So this is not an option either..."

"Oh, it is... but a very dangerous one..." Morgana suddenly stated from aside. "Galdor owes the Silver Orchid of Asgard a giant favor... I think if you ask for King Kyrin's aid, he won't be able to deny it after what you did."

"Heeeellooooo... I'm still here too, so would you mind telling me what you are talking about?" The young human placed her hands on her hips in protest, stepping up a little.

"It is a long story... but you are right... Lord Kyrin promised me his aid in the case of an emergency. He won't deny my request." The white which walked over towards Allen. "If he really is the only hope for peace for Asgard and Utgard, I will do my very best to keep him save. Our next destination is the capital of Galdor and the Black Palace!"

Kapitel 21:

Chapter 21

Raven stared at the unconscious human on the bed while leaning against the wall. She kept staring down at him with an intense glare...

"It won't wake him up if you keep staring like this." Callo yawned on his bed while looking over at the mercenary.

"Hmpf." Raven bit her lip. "How long is it going to take until Morgana finally finishes this stupid potion!?"

"They said it is going to need about one week... Suppressing a goddesses' holy aura in a world like Utgard is not exactly easy, you know?" The elf rubbed his chest and stared blankly at the roof. "Besides... Allen is stabile. It won't matter if they take a day, a week or a month... as long as we get him back on his feet anyway..."

"You are in such a great mood since we are here? How come?" The young human asked sarcastically.

"Just leave me alone..." Callo stood up all of a sudden and left the room.

"Ouch, what was that?" Raven asked herself before walking towards Allen, placing a hand on his forehead.

"Hey, Callo!" Shade floated in front of her master with glee in her voice. "You look so grumpy, what is wrong?"

"Do you really have to ask?" Callo muttered while deathglaring citizens that dared pointing at him.

"Well... Uhm..." Shade felt rather bad for the question all of a sudden. "Come on... you managed to stay here six days already! Tomorrow Morgana will be done with the potion for Narwa! Then we can leave this cursed town!" She hopped on her master's shoulder and leaned against his head playfully.

"Shade, stop that..." Callo sighed and looked up at his friend. "It is not this town but..."

"Alright, alright! You don't have to say a word." Shade shut him down with an unusual harsh tone. "You miss the desert, but that's just natural! How about we take a look outside?" She chuckled and took her master's arm.

"I better don't-"

"You better don't what? Don't take a look at the land again you used to live in over 80 years of your long, long life, where you met your very, very, very best spirit-friend ever?" Shade grinned evilly, not leaving much space for complains of her friend.

"Alright... one little look won't hurt, right?"

"Where is he headed to!?" Raven hissed to her friend while following a tan elf through town. Spying the blonde man she tried to hide between the people passing the streets but towards the edge of town the mobs turned lighter and lighter so the hiding-spots grew rare.

"This feels so wrong, Raven... shouldn't we-"

"Narwa! Callo acts weird ever since we entered this town! As his companions it is our duty to find out what is wrong with him!" The mercenary grinned sheepishly.

"You are just curious, are you?" Narwa stared unimpressed at her friend, sighing at her replying grin.

"Hehehe..."

"Come on, I just want to go and get some fresh air!" Callo grunted as the knight guarding the gate towards the desert didn't want to let him pass.

"I can't let you outside without an adventurer-pass." The knight stepped back a little.

"Do I look to you as if I need something like this!? I'm a well-experienced warrior and if you don't believe me we can just fight this out right here and now!" The elf drew out his rapiers, ready to face the frightened guard.

"N... no doubt about that, Milord, but... I have orders I must follow..." The human knight grew more and more nervous. "B... besides... I can't let a desert-elf just freely leave and enter Nihil like this. N- not that I don't trust you. I just can't risk it!" He added hesitantly as a rapier sudden pointed at his chest.

"I'm not a desert-elf. I'm a... uhm..." Callo thought for a second, thinking of a different word for his kind...

"He is a dark elf!" Shade suddenly appeared next to her master, smiling innocently.

"A darkelf? Aren't they supposed to have... grey skin?" The guard eyed Callo curiously.

"Not a darkelf! A dark elf!" Shade had to suppress a chuckle. "Look, unworthy filth... the desert-elves are worshippers of Sol, the Great Spirit of Light! Dark elves in return prefer dark spirits like me! See? Isn't that proof enough that he is none of that desert-elves of yours?" She made a teacher-like face had showed an expression of 'How comes you don't know something as simple as that!?' on it... Callo tried his hardest

not to laugh at his friends explanations... Yet they had a true core...

"I won't go out for long. I just want to take some fresh air. I will be back in an hour or so..." Callo added to angry Shade's explanations.

"Alright, alright, you are allowed to exit..." The knight stepped aside, opening the door with a small golden key. Callo pushed the door open. He could feel the heat of the desert entering his lungs as he stepped towards his former home.

"It feels as if it has been ages already..." Callo closed his eyes as the first beams of light touched his tan skin. Sand flew around his legs and a soft wind, barely able to feel, made his golden hair wave in the air.

"Come on! Let's go in a little more!" Shade took her friend's hand, leading him up some of the dunes.

"Callo, wait!" A familiar female voice rushed through the sandy land. The desert-elf turned around all of a sudden, facing the silver-haired goddess and her raven-haired friend...

"What are you two girls doing here?" The man asked annoyed.

"Hey! Same goes for you! Why are you out here in the desert!? It is forbidden to come here!" Raven snapped while trying her best not to fall due to the soft ground.

"Hmpf! Look who is talking!" The elf crossed his arms in front of his chest, deathglaring the annoying human.

"Weeeeeee just followed you cause we were worried." She chuckled innocently.

"You mean because you were curious." Narwa corrected her friend chuckling.

"Whatever... Now, what are you doing out here?" Raven leaned against Callo's chest, puppy-eying him while biting her lip in an innocent manner.

"Ugh... I..." Callo tried to look away, but those intense, clean eyes... and this sad expression... Where did she learn that from!? "I... I used to live here before I joined Allen's team." Callo sighed, beaten by a puppy-eying girl... He just hoped none of the others would ever find out about this...

"Oh..." Raven suddenly felt bad for teasing the elf for this... "I... Sorry, I didn't mean to..."

"Don't worry about it." Callo sighed and looked towards the open desert, towards where he knew the Temple of Light had to be...

"..." Minutes passed without anyone saying something. Until suddenly...

"Wait a second..." Callo suddenly took the girls, hiding them behind him, drawing out his daggers in fighting-stance. Someone was coming, he could feel it.

"Huh? What's wrong, Callo?" Raven took out her saber just in case and so did Narwa with her wand.

After a few seconds though, Callo could see who was coming closer, and at the sight of the woman, his daggers fell to the ground.

"?" Narwa stepped aside a little, seeing the person coming closer. It was a female elf with dark skin and silver hair... was she one of Callo's kind?

"Would... would you mind leaving...?" Callo didn't even look at the girls anymore. His eyes were fixed on the woman coming closer and closer. Narwa grabbed Raven without a word and dragged her back to the town.

"Huh?! Hey! Narwa! But I wanna see that!" She shouted while being dragged off the place.

"Callo!" Serena waved with her slender arms while running towards her old friend. Shade flew right next to her. As she reached him she jumped right into his arms, throwing the man back against a sandy dune.

"S... Serena, why... how...?"

"Shade told me you were in Nihil. So I came to see you!" She smiled softly while hugging him tightly. "I'm so sorry about what happened at Sol's temple..." She sighed and leaned back.

"..." Callo stared blankly at the ground, feeling ashamed as well.

"You stupid idiot..." She chuckled softly and pressed her head against his chest, breathing in the familiar scent.

"Aren't... aren't you supposed to... you know... uhm... Kill me or something? I'm a traitor after all." Callo swung his arms around the slim body of the princess, unable to suppress his happiness about her visit.

"You should know me better than that..." She sighed looking at the man smiling, knocking his head softly as punishment for the stupid question. "You are my best friend, my closest companion, ... If I wasn't the princess of our tribe I would have come with you without hesitating! I just... can't leave our people like this... but as long as they are not around, you will always be my dear Callo..." She chuckled and gave him a soft kiss on the cheek before standing up. She offered him a hand.

"Want to take a walk?" He asked, taking a look around. Shade was gone again... This little beast... she had planned this all out!

"Those cloths look great on you." Serena giggled while eying Callo's new set of 'Non-desert'-cloths Allen and Zeyir had bought him when they had first left Yora.

"They are rather comfortable, but they come in the way easily during fights..." Callo complained with a smile on his face.

"Haha. I see." Serena looked up into the sky. It was rather hot, but they were used to the heat... They had taken a break on a high dune where they could spot the wide land without problem, enjoying the wild beauty of the desert.

Shade suddenly popped out above their heads, smiling eagerly.

"I wondered when you were about to show up again." Callo smiled softly at his spirit. She only chuckled and sat down on his lap, receiving a smudging pat from Serena like in old times.

"This feels like back in the old days, huh?" Shade smiled and rubbed her hands, proud of herself to bring the old team back together again.

"Do you remember the day when we were going to the forbidden part of Yora? The day you met Shade? Those were really the good old days..." Serena smiled at the little spirit with satisfaction in her eyes. The memory rose within her as did in Callo.

A long time ago...

"Serena! We shouldn't be here!" A young boy, about eight years old, ran after the princess of desert-elves. The little girl just turned and lolled her tongue out.

"Come on, Callo! Don't be so broing!" She chuckled.

"I think you mean 'boring'..." The boy sighed, fastening his pace to catch up with the little princess. She wore a white dress with short sleeves, yet little ribbons hang all around her. She looked really cute in that dress.

"Ough, you are just as bad as Dad..." She bit her lip and took her friend's hand. He wore his typical moon-guard-uniform. The golden rings and bracelets, dark fingerless gloves, sandals and short black trousers. His golden hair shone in the light of the sun.

"He ordered me to take care of you, Serena... He is going to be mad at both of us!" Callo sighed and followed her deeper and deeper into the desert.

"Aw, but he doesn't have to know!" She chuckled eagerly while hugging her guardian's arm tightly, happy that he came along none the less... "Besides, aren't you curious what lies in the forbidden zone of Yora?"

"My father taught me that curiosity is not one of the adornments of a knight, especially not one of the Moon-guards!" Callo replied flatly, yet he felt how the curiosity within him was very well present all the time. "And I need to follow my father

as leader of the Moon-guards one day!"

"Aw, come on... Uncle Temra is always so strict... Just as Father..." Serena dragged him forwards, not allowing resistance.

"Might be because they are brothers, right?" Callo chuckled and bit his lip. He WAS curious what this forbidden area was all about! "Alright, alright, let's hurry so we will be back before dawn!"

"Callo, you are best!" She kissed him on the cheek and hurried up a little.

"So... this is it?" Serena was visibly disappointed by the sight... "I thought there was... something special to this area... but this looks just like any other part of the desert as well!" She placed her hands on her hips, staring at the open fields.

"Hmm... I'm not so certain about that..." Callo stepped forward, taking a look around. "Do you see those dunes? They look unnatural... Something is not right with this place..."

"Now you really sound like your father..." Serena sighed annoyed... She hated it when Callo tried to see something bad in everything... "There is nothing wrong with this area at all!" She started running towards the open field.

"Serena! Wait!" Callo ran after her but she was already on top of the next dune, keeping up her fast pace. How did she manage to run that fast with a dress like this!?

"Catch me if you can!" She chuckled and ran on towards the next dune.

"Serena! No! Please wait!" Callo had such a bad feeling about this area... All the dunes, the ruins,... it seemed so unnatural here! Something was definitely not right! "Serena! The dunes don't match with the direction of the wind! They are formed by nature!"

"Oh, won't you shut up already!? You sound like a grown-up all the time..." She lolled out her tongue again and kept running.

They were already in the middle of the field as Callo finally managed to catch the princess.

"This is no fun anymore, princess! Please, let's go home already!" Callo felt his legs shaking. Was he really that nervous already?

"Uh... Callo..." Serena leaned against her friend. "I feel so weak... it is as if my feet are shaking..."

"Huh!?" Callo grabbed her, looking at the ground. Those wasn't his legs! The ground was shaking!!

"What is going on here?!" Serena suddenly screamed and pointed towards a dune. Callo stopped breathing as he saw a giant wall of sand coming towards them. It was as if something was moving under the sand, pushing the ground away.

"Run!" Callo grabbed the girl's slender arm and pulled her after him as he ran towards some ruins.

"What is that!?" Serena was crying by now. Tears ran down her cheeks freely as her voice shivered afraid.

"A sand-dragon! We must get out of here!!" Her guardian shouted while pulling her forward. There were some ruins not too far ahead... if he just managed to...

"I'm so sorry, Callo!" Serena sobbed behind him, desperate. "I didn't mean to put us into danger..."

"Stop crying and start running! I have a plan!" Callo turned his head and felt back for shouting at her right away... her eyes were red due to her tears already, and the trembling fear was visible all over her face.

The sandwall came closer and closer and every once in a while, the snake-like head of the dragon was visible as it dived through the sands like a dolphin in the sea.

"There it is!!" Callo pushed Serena on some of the rocks as they reached the ruins they were running to. "As soon as it is gone, run back to the castle! Get some help!!"

"B-but—!! CALLO!!" She screamed as her friend ran back out into the open desert.

'It feels our footsteps on the sand... if Serena stays at the rock, it won't feel her any longer and she is out of danger!' Callo kept repeating this to himself while he kept running as fast as he had never ever run in his whole life. His chest felt as if his heart was about to break out of it at any moment. The beating was so intense, Callo could feel it in his whole body.

The dragon came closer and closer and from time to time, Callo turned around, checking the distance between him and the beast... He was chanceless! Serena was never going to make it in time! He was lost... But his pride as desert-elf forbid him to give up! He was not done yet and maybe he would be able to find a way out anyway!!

"No!" Callo jumped aside as he felt the ground underneath him break as the dragon pushed himself through the ground. The young boy was flying through the air while he pressed his eyes shut in fear. He felt himself landing on the sandy ground again, ripping his eyes open just to see, the dragon had missed him by a few inches. Callo stood up right away again, running on. The dragon needed a few seconds to regain its orientation so Callo managed to regain some distance between the two of them.

The young elf left the forbidden area behind him, still hunted by the mighty dragon but now the dunes were natural again, so he had at least some orientation and confidence about the surroundings. Forbidden... yeah, now he knew why that area

was forbidden... But why didn't ever anyone tell them about this!? They wouldn't have dared entering the zone if someone had just told them!

The dragon came closer again. Callo knew that this time he wouldn't have so much luck for sure... His hair flew wildly around his shoulders as he turned his head again. The dragon changed its tactic by now. It dived through the sand, trying to catch Callo from above instead of beneath.

"Sol... I need help!" Callo gasped desperately as he felt the dragon right behind him, missing him only by two meters.

The dragon jumped out of the ground again. Callo turned around, unable to run any longer. He faced his fate, his destiny, ... his death... Closing his eyes, he felt how the ground underneath him started to shake. The sand around him seemed to whirl up and suddenly... He felt like falling.

"What the-!?" Callo looked around. The whole ground was breaking. Sand fell into giant cracks on the ground and the dragon was held away from Callo by the sudden weight of the ground lasting on him as it fell on its body, giving in to gravity.

A terrible growl was heard from the beast, almost like a scream of agony as it was dragged down the ground. The little desert-elf was unsure what was just happening but he was stuck as well! Not only the ground around him was falling apart, his feet were stuck in the moving sands.

"Uah!" Suddenly the earth broke down and he fell... fell into a deep abyss. And the world around him grew black.

"U..ugh... Ah... My arm!" Callo slowly opened his eyes. He was shivering all over his body. He looked down at his right arm and a painful gasp left his lips. He was lying on the dragon's dead body, but his arm was almost pierced through a sharp broken horn of the dragon. As he slowly ripped the horn off, blood ran down his hand, painting his skin crimson. The cut was deeper than he had thought... He must have land on the dragon's soft body after the fall... Wait... how far did he fall anyway!?

"How-!?" Callo looked up, gasping at the sight. The giant crack he had been falling down was a mere small slit from down here... He couldn't believe he had actually survived this... This must be the tunnel-systems underneath Yora his father had told him about... "Thank Sol..." He gasped more than talking but yet, his desperation grew even heavier on him. How was he supposed to get back up there!? The exit was too far away to reach even if he had two healthy arms... The onlyway was into the deep darkness of the tunnels leading away from the giant abyss into the darkness of a lightless cave...

Shivering but without another choice, Callo made his way towards one of the tunnels, hoping for an exit somewhere within.

After a few hours of stumbling through the pure darkness, falling every few steps,

Callo had given up... He was lost... His arm ached and he was hungry, thirsty... He was never going to find out of these tunnels again... He could feel tears running down his cheeks. Slowly, the young boy tried to push them away with his glove, but they came running down his cheeks again and again...

"Serena, Father,..." He sobbed, giving up on suppressing his desperation, crying for his friend and family. He was never ever going to see them again... How was Serena going to explain this to his father? How would he react on the message of his son's death? Would he cry as well? Would he just live on with his duties? Or would he remember him?

"Why are you so sad, boy?" A female, shrill voice suddenly appeared next to him. Callo nearly had a heart-attack at the sudden interruption of silence. "Does it hurt so badly?"

"Wh... what?" Callo rushed to dry the tears on his face. No one was supposed to see him like this, even though it was impossible to see anything in this darkness...

"Your arm! That looks bad. Must hurt really much, huh?" The voice came closer. Callo shivered as a red eye suddenly appeared in front of him, staring at him in curiosity.

"I..." Callo tried to push himself back a little, but the stonewall prevented this.

"My name is Shade! I'm a small spirit of darkness, and my duty is to defend a treasure of Nocturne." How about you?" She chuckled playfully and sat down on Callo's legs.

"I... My name is Callo Moerbin.... I'm the son of the Moon-guard-leader of the desert-elves!" The boy's voice shivered, even though he wasn't exactly afraid of that little creature in front of him anymore, now that he knew what exactly he was facing there...

"The desert-elves, huh? That's cool! You like light much more than darkness, huh?" Callo couldn't see it, but somehow he knew she was smiling warmly at him.

"Y... yes..."

"Alright! Then let me lighten this place for you a little!" A giggle was heard before suddenly the darkness seemed to fade around them. Callo stared in disbelief at the small kid-like creature on his lap. Now that he looked at her... she wasn't creepy at all, even though her red eyes really gave her a dangerous look... She was somewhat... cute even... "Is it better this way?"

"Yes, thank you very much..." Callo rubbed his eyes to get used to the light again. He was so thankful...

"That wound looks bad... You really should hurry back to your tribe..." Shade looked at the boy's arm, helping him up.

"I'm lost... I can't find the way out of here!" Callo looked down at the small shadow-

creature. His tribe had always taught him that only light was good... darkness was evil... But somehow this little spirit didn't seem bad at all! After those hours of desperation and darkness, she was the first one he was able to rely on and even more: She lightened the darkness for him!

"I can lead you out of here if you want. It is a long way, but... Oh well... forget about it... Let's go!" Shade smiled and took the boy's healthy hand, leading him.

It had been two days by now that they walked through the dark tunnels... Shade had brought him something to drink and plants growing in the cave every once in a while. To keep him cheered she had told him all kinds of stories about the Great Spirit of Darkness Nocturne and about Sol... How Nocturne stole Sol's crown to lighten up the night for Midgard and how the stupid little light-spirits turned into stars to protect this crown. Callo had to chuckle at that one. Yet after a while... Shade somehow seemed to dim the light in purpose so only the ground was barely visible. Additional to that she had told him to be silent now... Callo didn't really know what was wrong, but he trusted the small spirit!

"Uah!" Suddenly Callo tripped over a rock on the ground, falling against the wall. But different from what he had expected, it was not a hard landing. He could hear a crack, like the sound of fragile breaking bones and a pained scream. "Sorry!" Callo hopped back and looked up at Shade. The small spirit's eye grew wide in fear. She suddenly grabbed the boys hand and dragged him on.

"Run!!!" She screamed and lightened the cave up again. Callo gasped at the sight. Hundreds, no thousands of small white, batlike creatures flapped angrily on the roof of the tunnel, ready to attack. "They are going to attack any second!"

"What!?" Callo gasped and ran faster. Suddenly he could feel the first shadow-spirits rushing through the air, crashing right against him, cutting him with their little claws.

"Stay away from him!" Shade shouted and formed her scarf into something that looked like rapiers. She pushed away some of the spirits, keeping them off of the elf as good as possible. Callo had only one single thought left within him: Running! "It's not far anymore! Up that stairs!" Shade pushed him up a stairway. Callo could see small slits of light shining through the roof. He hurried and pushed away whatever was blocking the way out. Callo put all his remaining strength into opening the way while Shade blocked the attacking spirits.

"Shade!!" As Callo finally managed to push the door open, he jumped out of the hole, dragging the spirit behind him. The small shadow-creatures followed them out the hole, like a swarm of wasps, but all of a sudden, a shining light casted them away. Callo turned around, just to face a familiar face...

"Sol!" Callo gasped, unable to stand up anymore. The Great Spirit of Light smiled down at him warmly, disappearing in soft light.

"Ouch..." Shade shivered and tried to stand up, but she was too weakened by the

light. Callo laid next to her, exhausted, in pain, yet happy to recognize the surroundings... This was Sol's temple... The altar-room even! He could feel the warm sun shining down on his skin. He closed his eyes.

"Shade... Thank you..." He turned his head a little. "If there is anything I can ever do to pay this back to you..."

"..." The small spirit smiled warmly, taking Callo's hand. "Do you want to be my partner?" She asked weakly. Callo nodded sleepily.

"Let us form a pact on this promise: We will stay partners no matter what ever might happen! We will go through it together..." With these words he fell asleep.

"Tse, I don't mind what you are saying! I formed a pact with him! I will stay at his side! Bleh!" Callo could hear Shade's voice from next to him... Everything felt so soft... He must have been lying in a bed... His arm didn't hurt that badly anymore either,... Someone must have treated it by now.

"Brother, this might be... very exotic for a desert-elf, but... if this small creature really saved my son, maybe we should allow her to stay here."

"Father..." A soft whisper escaped Callo's lips at the sound of the familiar voice. He opened his eyes slowly, seeing his father standing next to King Geera and Serena who was cuddling Shade playfully like a wool-pet.

"Callo!" Serena suddenly dropped the poor spirit, jumping on his bed, hugging the boy tightly. "You stupid idiot! I was so worried! We thought you died!!"

"Well then, Temra... I guess I will make this one exception..." King Geera patted the small spirit and looked down at Callo, smiling proudly. "Come on, Serena. Callo needs his rest now." He took his daughter's hand and led her out.

"I will go as well, Callo... If you need something, just tell me, alright?" The tall elf with the long silver hair stroke over his boy's golden mane and left, smiling relieved.

Shade looked towards the closing door while flying on her new partner's bed.

"When did..."

"They found us shortly after Sol defeated the shadow spirits. They wanted to check out what had happened in the altar-room as they saw the beam of light and found you unconscious on the ground." Shade looked at the exhausted boy smiling. "There is one thing I must still tell you..." She looked a little ashamed.

"What is it?" Callo smiled softly.

"I told you about that treasure I'm guarding, right? Well... I promised Nocturne I would give it to my master one day when I formed a pact, so I want to give this to

you." Two rapiers formed in her hands with red crystals attached on them.

Back in real time

"I have them up until today..." Callo patted his rapiers and looked over at Shade and Serena.

"We always were such a great team ever since that day." Serena chuckled and cuddled Shade softly. "What are you guys doing right now?"

"We formed a pact with Luna and Sol... But Allen didn't wake up afterwards anymore, so we will have to find a way to return him back to normal... We will head to Utgard tomorrow.

"Wow, Utgard..." Serena looked up into the sky. "Somehow... this is funny... You have always been the one of us that wanted to stay at the palace or the temple where it was save and now you head to another world even..."

"Yeah..." Callo sighed and looked at his friend. "I guess it is time again..."

"Yes, I know... You won't be coming back anymore, right?" Serena sighed.

"Probably not... but maybe one day when our journey is completed, I will return and pick you up, alright?" Callo smiled warmly and stood up.

"Deal!" Serena smiled and looked at him. "I will think about you wherever you are..." She suddenly leaned forward, embracing her friend, giving him one last kiss of good-bye.

"How was your date?" Raven chuckled as Callo entered the Inn. She seemed to await him.

"What is it Raven?" Ignoring the question, Callo deathglared the mercenary.

"Ah well... Morgana is done with the potion faster than expected so we packed already, only waiting for Romeo to return." Her evil grin reminded him awfully much of Shade's at the moment...

"That's great news... I'm going to get Allen."

"Yupp! We will be waiting with your packs at the dragon-station!" Raven waved and left the Inn, smiling.

In the boys' room, Callo looked down at Allen, a small smile appearing on his lips. "Alright my friend... Time to get to Utgard!"

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 chuckle 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.

"Yeaaaah, 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 grid 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.

Kapitel 23:

Chapter 23

„Which way, Morgana?“ Raven looked over from the demoness to her fatigue companion. Callo was on the edge of his powers... „We gotta hurry!“

“I know, I know! But it's not that easy with all the demons around!“ She grid her teeth, looking at the tan elf in frustration. “Can you go on?”

“We have no other choice...” Callo breathed heavily. The use of his powers all the time while still carrying Allen the whole way really got harder than he had expected.

“That's not an answer!“ Raven snapped, looking around another corner to check if it was safe.

“I...” Callo shook his head. “I can't... sorry...” With a sigh, he placed Allen on the ground behind a bush to cover him a little. “Sorry, I need five minutes... then we can go on...”

“Alright.” Morgana nervously patted the wall with her fingers, keeping an eye on the surroundings constantly. “I just hope the goddess is alright...”

“what makes you so sure, Kyrin is going to help us?“ Callo suddenly interrupted the silence. This question was burning in him ever since they had left for Galdor...

“It is you little Asgardian friend...” Morgana smiled evilly. “King Kyrin will not deny a wish of the Silver Orchid.”

“And why-“ Callo started.

“Didn't you say you need a break!? If you can use your mouth this freely, then you can walk on as well!“ Morgana snapped annoyed, shutting the baffled elf up. As reward she received one of Callo's most finest deathglares he could effort.

“Oh no...” Narwa ran around a corner, trying to get rid of the demons following her. She doubted the flame-devils that were trying to get her knew that she was a goddess, but her silver long hair still gave her a noble appearance... They came closer and closer. She could already feel the heat of their attacks surrounding her. Fireballs shot from everywhere towards her and she had a hard time dodging them. “What can I do!?” The outer circle of the castle was like a labyrinth made out of bushes, statues, walls and misleading paths... She crossed another corner as...

“We got her!“ A flame-devil shouted amused as Narwa ran directly into another row of demons. They looked like tribes from the mountains... what were they doing in Galdor!?

"..." Narwa grit her teeth as she loosened her staff from her belt, ready to smack anyone who dared coming too close. The only advantage she had now was the fact that with the highlander-demons on the other side, the flame-devils weren't able to use their flames if they didn't want to hurt their allies.

"Come on, Hunny, drop your staff and we will make it easy for you." One of the demons stepped closer, reaching for the staff in Narwa's hand as suddenly...

SMACK

With a well-placed hit, Narwa brought her staff down right on the head of the demon, knocking him out cold.

"Alright... Who is next!?" She shouted with a demanding voice. A few flame-devils seemed rather hurt by the fact that one single woman dared standing against their whole troop. They rushed forward, attacking Narwa with their sharp claws. The goddess had a hard time dodging all of their blows. The flame-devils were much stronger than she had expected, but giving up was no option either... in worst case she just had to fly away! On the other side... how was she supposed to get away from all the other demons then? If anyone found out who she really was, the demons would ignore their fights and kill her off at first before attacking each other again.

One of the highlander-demons suddenly stepped in, bringing down his giant sword towards Narwa. She stumbled back, falling on the ground. The flame-devil attacking her before, grabbed her dress and pulled her down to the ground, placing his sharp claws on her neck.

"Any last words?" He laughed evilly before lifting his hand higher and higher, ready to hit.

"Yeah, rest in peace, pitiful creature!" A familiar voice suddenly broke through the thick air and ball of dark energy blasted away the enemy above the helpless goddess.

"Who-" Narwa tried to get up, but another demon rushed forward, pressing her down.

"Where are you!? Show yourself!" The highlander seemed nervous, looking around eagerly, but unable to find anything he concentrated on the woman again. "Was that you, witch!?"

"No, that was me!" Suddenly a shadow-figure appeared next to the startled demon, ripping with its claws through the enemy's chest. Blood streamed down over the mere shadow, revealing the shape of his arm. An evil grin formed on his face, as Zeyir slowly turned visible. "No one dares attacking my castle and just gets away with it!"

"Zeyir!" Narwa shouted. "What are you doing!? Get out! They are here because of you!"

"Finally we meet eye to eye..." A demon, about double the size of Zeyir, stepped

forward, broadsword in hand. "Give up, Prince of Galdor, and I will spare your life."

"Nya, I'd rather date that old grumpy witch on the ground than giving up." He pointed at the blushing Narwa.

"Oh you just wait you little..." She shouted in annoyance, causing Zeyir to chuckle. "Alright! Fine! Get yourself killed by those bastards, but don't come running to me crying if you get hurt, snob!"

"Say, how many times do I have to save your neck before you start watching out which enemies you dare insulting? I mean, come on! First those monsters back in the Dark Forest, now this..." He laughed, patting some dust off of his shirt.

"That was just a coincidence!" Narwa felt her cheeks turning red. She grabbed her staff and hit the dead demon lying on her away with a smack.

"Would you mind discussing your relation-problems after giving me your throne, Prince of Galdor?" The highlander seemed annoyed and it didn't get any better as Narwa totally ignored him, continuing their fight.

"I can watch over myself! Got that!?"

"No you can't! Otherwise you would have stayed away from this place!! What are you doing here in Galdor anyway!?" The annoyed young demon started shouting now as well. Oh how he hated that woman!

"I thought I might be able to use some of your powers as I thought you were a rather mighty demon, but as it seems you are nothing but talk!" She balled her fists, twitching her eyes angrily.

"Listen, old woman, I-" Suddenly, Narwa's staff landed right on Zeyir's head. "Ouch..."

"You know, I like your hair... the way it is I just have to hit right between your bangs to know I hit bull's eye..." Narwa chuckled.

"That's enough!!" The highlander suddenly started attacking the two team-mates, swinging his sword wildly.

"Gotta talk about that later!" Zeyir shouted as he pushed Narwa out of the way to prevent her from being sliced into two halves.

"Agreed!" Narwa shouted as she hit another demon with her staff.

"We could use some of your supporting powers!" The young prince gasped as he dodged some more blows of a row of flame-devils attacking him.

"But then they will know that I'm a—"

"Alright, alright!" Zeyir interrupted.

"We don't want your life! Only your throne, so give up already!" The giant demon sliced through some of his companions by accident as Zeyir jumped up, dodging another hit of him.

"And what exactly would be the use of this!?" He grid his teeth while piercing through the chests of some more enemies with his claws.

"We must unite Utgard to stand the upcoming war against Asgard!" He shouted before bringing down another blow. Zeyir wasn't able to dodge that one. He summoned his sword to barely block the hit, but he had to go to his knees to stand the brute force.

"That's ridiculous! Asgard and Utgard can't lead a second war as long as Midgard stands in between us!" Zeyir felt his arms turning numb at the pressure of his enemy.

"Zeyir!" Narwa was too far away by now to help her companion, but maybe... "I call upon the holy powers within me... help me regaining my strength... LIGHT OF ASGARD!"

Callo was ready to walk on. Packing Allen back on his back was hard work though. He still felt a little weak, but the sooner they found Zeyir, the sooner they were able to wake Allen up and return to Midgard!

"Alright, let's go." Raven smiled and walked on carelessly.

"Wait, not that way!" Morgana shouted, trying to reach the young human before she turned around the corner. Too late...

"U-Oh..." Was the only sound Callo heard from his companion before the sound of metal rang through the air.

"Raven!" He shouted, running around the corner along with Morgana. Kyrin and his elite-guards, -Will was along with them as well- stood ready to attack the mercenary.

"Wait!" Callo shouted, jumping in front of Raven, hoping Kyrin would recognize him and NOT killing him on the spot for being one of Zeyir's companions from Midgard...

"What in Nocturne's name are you doing here on Utgard!? This is not your world!"

"Neither is it my wish to be here, but we have to speak with Zeyir!" Callo laid Allen on the ground, to kneel down in front of the king. He knew how to act in the presence of a king way too well, so he tried to show his respect. "King Kyrin, I know you are worried about your country and especially about your son, but we need his help just this once again, to awake our friend. He formed a pact with Luna and Sol and the energy was too much for him to take... Please, we will never ever return to this world again if you grant this one wish to us!"

"My king." Morgana stepped forward all of a sudden. "I brought those Midgardians here because they are not only former companions of our prince, but also friends of the Silver Orchid of Asgard. She is here with them, and it is her wish as well, to bring this human back to life, to prevent another war between our worlds."

"..." Kyrin looked from Morgana over to Callo and the unconscious man on the ground. "This is no reason to—"

Suddenly the air was filled with a weird energy, interrupting the demon-king. Callo and Raven stared at each other in shock. They jumped up, running towards the source of the holy energy, knowing who just had revealed her true self.

Kyrin hesitated for a second before he decided to follow them, leaving Allen and Morgana behind with the guards.

"Guardian Shell!" Narwa kept supporting Zeyir with more and more spells that strengthened him, yet didn't weaken his powers with holy energy.

"And now... THIS ONE!!" Zeyir slashed through another highlander, ripping off the arm of the unfortunate victim.

"This... this is impossible..." The highlanders and flame-devils slowly stepped back in fear of Zeyir and Narwa. "Traitor! How dare you teaming up with an Asgardian!?" The leader of the highlanders seemed rather nervous, seeing how well the two of them worked together.

"Well..." Zeyir chuckled evilly, nabbing on the blood on his hands a little. "I've learned that we can't decide as what we are born, but who we turn to be. I don't care if she is a goddess as long as we follow the same goal... and right now, this goal is to defeat you unfortunate pack!" He rushed forward, trying to slash the demon, but his claws had nearly no effect on the strong armor and sin of the demon. Yet, if he managed to slash the softer parts, it would be his end!

"Better luck next time!" The highlander groared as he brought down his sword on Zeyir.

"Holy shell!" Narwa blocked the blow for her companion, but her might was running thinner and thinner with each time she had to do this... Utgard was just no place for her!

The flame-demons shot balls of fire towards the young demon, trying to keep him in place. Zeyir couldn't leave Narwa's shield surrounded by flames... He grit his teeth and broke through the shell, summoning his dark might to get out of the flare-center without getting burned to ashes.

Galdor's young prince was a decent fighter for sure, but alone against this whole bunch of foes was hard work... even his powers started running out slowly. He knew if he didn't manage to kill them off fast, not even Narwa's spells would help him

anymore. At the same time, he had to concentrate on the goddess the whole time. She flew above their heads, out of reach for the demons down here, but if Galdor's guards reached the bridges and towers, their arrows would hunt her to the ground again in no time.

"Zeyir, watch out!" Narwa screamed as the leader of the row attacked the young man with his fists this time, while fireballs made an escape for him impossible again. "Guardian Seal!"

A thin glass-like wall appeared between the demon and Zeyir, shielding him against the hit. But the highlander crushed his fists against the shield again and again in madness and fury. Cracks started forming, slowly breaking through the shield.

"Get out of there!" Narwa tried to hold up the shield but it was too weak already. Yet she saw the situation in which Zeyir was in. It was no use! He was trapped this time. The flames around him were too strong to be pushed away by darkness anymore!

"Thanks for the advice!! I have some problems here as you can see!" The prince grumped under his breath while collecting dark energy as fast as possible to get out of the fire-trap.

With a cracking sound, the fist of the highlander-leader broke through the seal, crushing down right on Zeyir. With a gasp, the young man was sent back flying into a burning bush.

"No! Zeyir!" Narwa wanted to get on the ground again, but the demons waited for her already. She had no choice but to hope he was alright.

"Ouch, that hurts..." A groan was heard from the burnt plant as Zeyir arose behind it slowly, half of his shirt burnt away, revealing the scars on his chest freely.

"Thank goodness..." Narwa sighed and prepared for her next supporting-spell.

"Next time, you won't get away this easily!" The demon shouted, attacking Zeyir again, this time with his sword again. Narwa didn't even manage to summon a shield, this time the demon-prince was on his own, blocking the sword with his flame-saber. Shivering slightly, Zeyir did his best to hold against the pressure of the well-trained demon.

"Zeyir!" The voice of King Kyrin echoed through the air. The sound of swords slashing through flesh came closer. Zeyir didn't dare looking away from his opponent now, but help was just about to come! He needed... to stay strong... for just... a few more... seconds...

With a loud clang, Zeyir's sword was sent away, landing on the soft ground. Breathing heavily, Zeyir held his arm, it was too late. Kyrin broke through the row of demons, spotting his wounded son, cornered by a highlander-demon.

"Well then, King Kyrin. With this, the bloodline of the royal Grozen-family is

obliterated!" He lifted his sword again, rushing it down towards Zeyir.

The prince closed his eyes. This was truly the end of his journey... But at least he died fighting... not as aristocrat or sick and old in a bed... No, young and in the bloom of his life. Destiny was so weird...

He waited for the final strike... but it didn't come! Opening his eyes, slowly, a familiar figure floated in front of him, blocking the sword. A small creature with light-grey skin and a dark head-scarf. Shade used the ends of her head-scarf like two twin-rapiers just as Callo used to do, blocking the hit of the enemy with all her force.

"Watch out!" Callo's voice rang in Zeyir's ears as a silver rapier bursted through the neck of the highlander, killing him on the spot.

"Callo! Shade! What... what are you doing here!?" Zeyir leaned back against the wall he was standing on. Now that he thought about it... "And what is the old witch doing with you!? And where is Allen and... and you are... Raven was the name, right?" He pointed at the human girl that just killed off the last remaining flame-devils that had managed to escape King Kyrin's rage so long.

"Uff... that was tiring..." Narwa whipped away the sweat from her forehead. Her white appearance gave her an even more glorious look, surrounded by all the ashes, flames and darkness.

"Are you alright?" Callo cleaned his rapier on the highlander's trousers, fixing it on his belt again.

"Yes... a little fatigue but all in all I'm alright..." Zeyir sighed.

"I wasn't talking with you." Callo patted Shade with a serious look on his face. Zeyir couldn't hold back a chuckle and now even Callo had to start laughing as he smacked his long lost friend. "Man, I missed being annoyed by you..."

"And I missed your deathglares!" Zeyir smiled and rubbed his arm.

"I hate to disturb your little chit-chat..." Kyrin coughed a little, to gain their attention. "But there are still flame-devils and highlanders running through Galdor's fields. It is safest for you, to go back in and talk about it there." The demon-king didn't really seem pleased by the thought of a human, an elf and a goddess as guests in his throne-room, but he had no other choice.

"Alright." Zeyir nodded. "Let's hurry back!"

Narwa received nervous glares from every guard they met. Zeyir had to order them each time they met a new troop, to put their weapons down. It was annoying... but after picking up Allen and Morgana, they made their way into the throne-room where, beside Lean and her parents, no one else was able to disturb them.

Zeyir fell on his throne exhausted, letting himself sink into the soft silk-chair. Callo was so free to place Allen on the giant throne in the middle while he sat down on the smaller throne to the left.

"Man, I'm beaten..." Raven sighed and lay down on the floor, using her cape as pillow. She received weird glances from the vampire-family but she couldn't care less. Narwa flew up and lay herself down on a roof-rug of black silk, hanging between two giant pillars.

"M... My prince, what are those... things... doing here?!" Lean stepped forward, unsure what this whole situation was about. By now, her face had turned back to normal, to her sweet and innocent face...

"Just ignore them... Oh wait... I have a better idea..." Zeyir got up a little. "Can you ask some maidens to prepare some rooms for my guests? Thanks..." He yawned and fell back into his chair again.

Lean, unsure if she should be mad or honored that Zeyir asked her so bluntly of a favor, walked outside, followed by her parents.

"I feel like I could sleep for a week now..." Callo muttered from his chair, Shade and Steel both floating above his head, worried.

"I feel like sleeping for a year..." Narwa yawned from above their heads, swinging playfully with her arm from her little 'bed'.

"Time is too precious to oversleep a whole year..." Raven sighed. "On the other hand... Why am I the only friggin'mortal among you guys!? I want to live over thousand years as well!!"

"Don't forget about Allen..." Zeyir turned a little from his throne, lifting his legs p, rolling himself to a ball.

"Being immortal sucks... honestly..." Narwa looked down from the roof, towards her human friend. "Time becomes so... meaningless! You just can't enjoy your life as you would if you knew you have only fifty more years to live..." A heavy sigh was heard above their heads. "When I turned thousand last decade, no one even remembered cause it is just nothing special... Not even my own father or son remembered it!"

"Wow, sounds like you have a really nice family up in Asgard, huh?" Raven chuckled innocently. Maybe being mortal wasn't that bad after all... but... Wow, thousand years old... "I never guessed you were that OLD!"

"I- I'm not old!" The goddess shrieked from above. Zeyir could swear he saw her blushing through the roof-rug.

"Why do you even care, Narwa!?" The demon-prince muttered from his seat. "A thousand years compared to the life-span of a god or demon is like... like... 2 or 3 years in human life! So stop caring about age..."

"Maybe you are right..." The last words of the goddess echoes still through the throne-room as a soft breath was heard from above. She was asleep. And from what he could hear, Callo was off already too. Raven seemed to sleep as well, and Allen? He was still out cold... So why bothering... Zeyir yawned one last time before drifting off into deep slumber.

"Mmm... mmmmmm... Shade, stop poking me..." Callo turned round and round, trying to find a nice position to sleep on in. He couldn't remember his bed was so short...

"Uhm, Callo..." Shade seemed a little nervous.

"Who cares if I oversleep... I'm the leader of the moonguards, so—!" Suddenly Callo remembered: He wasn't a moonguard anymore! "Where-!?" He hopped up just to see the annoyed face of king Kyrin hanging over him.

"Do you enjoy my throne?" He asked with anger in his voice.

"M... my apologies!" Damn he sounded like Narwa already. He shook his head to get refreshed just to see Narwa and Raven chuckling over his sleep-dazed face while Kyrin nearly bursted out in anger. Will was desperately trying to poke Zeyir awake on his throne, but the young prince was still rolled to a ball, taking a nap. Allen was carried by one of the confused guards. A demon-maiden looked nervously from Narwa to Zeyir and back, not sure what to think of the goddess. Morgana on the other hand was nowhere to be seen. Had she even returned with them? He couldn't recall...

"Mmmmm...." Zeyir grumped on his 'bed' as Will started violently poking him even faster now.

"Where does this boy get his sleep from!? He is like a stone!" Kyrin shook his head frustrated.

"If you mind..." Callo stood up, walking over to the sleepy demon. He packed him by the remaining of his shirt and his trousers and threw him off the seat.

"Ouch!! Hey, what was that for!?" He shouted in annoyance while his face still lay flatly on the ground.

"We finished your rooms." Kyrin helped his son up.

"You are so sweet when you are sleep-dazed!" Raven had to hold her belly about her two companions. They were just so awesomely funny without even noticing it!

"Well, let's talk about the rest tomorrow, alright? My guards are fatigue from the fights and so seem you are as well. After a little rest, we will all be in a better mood, hopefully." It was pretty obvious that Kyrin was mainly talking about himself concerning the mood... he seemed really furious.

"Let me lead you to your rooms, please." Will smiled warmly and offered the companions a way towards the exit of the throne-room. Zeyir yawned a little more before following his companions.

They went through multiple corridors. The walls in the dark palace seemed to be either black or silver. But the ornamentations were breath-taking. Sparkling gems, diamonds, silver and gold,... Galdor was the richest country amongst Utgard's kingdoms. And it showed this wealth with precious beauty.

"Alright, this corridor leads up to my tower." Zeyir interrupted the silence all of a sudden. "I gotta get something new to dress. But I will pick you guys up later. Which room are they going to stay in?" He turned to Will.

"The guest-rooms of the silver-wing. We decided that it is best to keep them together in double-rooms. You never know how the guards react on... well..." Will hesitated for a second, throwing a nervous glare over to the Midgardians and the goddess.

"No question about that." Narwa smiled. "I owe you my thanks for even letting me rest in your castle. It means really much to me. Please tell King Kyrin about my gratitude."

"Wowowow!" Zeyir had to laugh at that one. "Stop being so formal! Neither my father nor I are snobs, alright? Just talk like any other normal living being, alright? Thanks..." He sighed and went into the corridor leading to his chambers.

"I agree with Zeyir, Milady. Galdor owes you its gratitude, even if only few know about what you did for us. You are always a welcomed guest to our country." Will lowered his head in respect a little. This was enough...

"Just what did you do to gain the respect of a whole country?!" Raven interrupted her companions. The curiosity was just way too immense.

"Didn't she tell you?" Will looked at them in confusion. "Well, I guess it is the best not to talk about it in front of Zeyir but..." He looked around to make sure no one else was listening. "Is it alright if I tell them?" He blinked a little unsure towards Narwa.

"Yes, I... I will tell them..." The goddess smiled softly. "About eighteen years back, a little demon-boy came to Asgard to see the holy world with his own eyes. He got caught by angels of course. They wanted to use him against Galdor, demanding of the queen to give over her throne to one of the Gods of Asgard. She refused back then and as a warning to never mess with Asgard, they wanted to kill the boy. I asked the holy senate to leave this quest to me and they agreed, but instead of killing him, I brought him back to Galdor and to his family. This is why the queen said, whenever I need any help, I should come to her and ask for whatever it is." Her smiled turned into a saddened face. "She is dead by now... Poor Mellin... She was a really good queen..." Narwa sighed heavily before turning to her friends again.

"Wow, that sure was risky." Raven seemed concerned. She took the hand of her friend, cheering her up a little. "But now this will help us getting Allen back to normal!"

"I have to wonder though..." Callo interrupted their chatter. "How comes Asgard tries to threaten a country like Galdor with a boy..."

"If it is the last remaining heir of Galdor's throne..." Will complemented while walking on ahead.

"You mean... ZEYIR!?" Raven looked from Will to Narwa and back. "You gotta be kidding! So... so... Zeyir was saved by Narwa when he was a little kid!? Haha! That's awesome!"

"Please, let's not talk about it..." Narwa blushed a little... Not to mention how many times Zeyir had helped her in the past few weeks... She would have never guessed back then, that this little boy could help her in so many ways...

As Will, Narwa, Raven and the guard who had carried Allen all the way left the room, Callo closed it carefully, glad to finally get some decent rest. Allen laid on a bed on the right side of the room, the bed to the left was taken by Shade and Steel...

"Come on guys. Get out of there. That's my bed!" He chuckled while putting off his shirt and boots to go to bed.

"Awww... but we want a nice little bed for ourselves as well!" Steel chuckled innocently.

"Then go and ask the maids." Callo grinned and threw himself on the bed, causing the two spirits to fly away. It felt so good to rest in a bed again...

Suddenly someone knocked on the door.

"Hm?" Callo didn't stand up to open the door. Probably only a maiden asking if anything was alright, but he couldn't care less... The door opened slowly without anyone announcing their entering.

"Hey... Is it okay if I sleep in your room as well?" Zeyir stepped inside the room. A pillow and blanket hang over his right shoulder while he carried his formal 'prince suit' in his left hand. He wore a long black shirt and baggy dark trousers.

"S... sure..." Callo looked at the young prince in surprise. "After all it's your castle! Uhm, do you want my bed?"

"If you dare treating me like a princess now, I swear by the cold blood of Nocturne, I will throw you into a hole with hungry hell-hounds!" He grinned. "I'm still the same person, 'kay?"

"Alright." Callo wanted to smile but it turned into a deathglare by accident. Damn

habbits!

Zeyir made himself comfortable on the ground, rolling into a little demon-ball again.

“What happened anyway since I’ve been gone?” He muttered sleepily.

“In the temple, Allen formed a pact with Luna and Sol, but the energy was too much for him to take. Since then he is like this. Narwa gave him this weird amulet that enables him to form pacts through the amulet, so that it won’t cost Allen’s whole energy to form pacts with the Great Spirits but guess that was a little too late... Anyway, we came to see Morgana to find a solution for this problem and came to the-” Suddenly a soft snore interrupted the dark elf. He looked down. Zeyir was asleep already. Callo shook his head, smiling softly, hitting the sleeping demon with his pillow in amused frustration.

Kapitel 24:

Chapter 24

It was a really nice dream... Zeyir turned around in his bed again and again. He didn't want to wake up... He had dreamed his Midgardian friends had come to Utgard and even Raven and that stupid goddess Narwa was there...

Eyes still closed, Zeyir hugged his pillow. The mattress was a little cold today... and he heard silent steps around him... Did the maid or Will dare entering his room again while he was still asleep!? What a nuisance... They knew he hated that...

"Ugh, I told you to—" Suddenly he stopped and looked around. He wasn't in his room... Not even in a bed! He slept on the floor! "Where..." As his gaze drifted off to one of the beds on the side, he saw a familiar person lying on the bed. It hadn't been a dream: Allen and Callo WERE in Utgard!

A bright grin formed on the demon-prince's face. He looked around to search for Callo. The tan elf stood in the doorway, that lead towards the bath, trying to pull on some cloths that the maid had brought them before.

"Too small for you?" Zeyir chuckled and slowly got up. Callo took off the jacket he had been trying on and looked at Zeyir.

"You awake already? That's not like you at all... I thought you were going to oversleep half of the day again!" He grinned playfully, mocking on the young demon.

"You have to open the buttons on the inside to get in." An evil smile as response formed on Zeyir's lips. He lolled his tongue out and helped his friend with the long robe. Zeyir had to chuckle at the sight of Callo in a demonic tunic... it looked really great, but as he was used to Callo in more loosen clothes, the skin-tight shirt and robe seemed a little weird to him... The long black robe Callo was wearing over a tight sleeveless white shirt and the black trousers gave him the appearance of a noble. It was not the same kind of atmosphere around him as in his moon-guard-robos, but yet, he could have really been one of the knight-lords of Galdor.

"They gave me this for you. Seems as if your father already guessed you were going to stay in our room instead of your own chambers." Callo handed over Zeyir's usual prince-robos. The black tunic with silver ornaments, the long gloves and boots and the dark-blue cape.

"Oh man... don't you want to trade?" Zeyir laughed and took the cloths, disappearing in the bath-room.

Callo leaned on the wall, looking over at Allen. "Not long anymore, my friend... then you can join the fun again."

A knocking sound on the door made the two men looking up from their game of 'Tactics' which Callo desperately tried to teach Zeyir who –much to Callo's amusement though- seemed to be totally untalented for the complex game...

"Come in!" Zeyir curiously blinked as the door opened. A white figure entered the room. Narwa wore a long white dress and her silver hair was knotted into two long pony-tails, giving her a childish appearance, yet, she looked incredibly cute this way...

"Good morning everyone!" She entered the room, followed by Raven. The young human had seemingly refused to wear one of the demonic dresses and stayed with her dirty mercenary clothes.

"Good morning." Callo replied, standing up from the bed, ordering Shade to take away the tactic-cards again. Nodding, with a clap, she let the cards disappear. Zeyir still stayed on the bed, staring at Narwa in awe. "What is wrong? Does it look weird? I knew I should had just left my hair open..." The goddess nervously brushed through her hair with her fingers, blushing lightly.

"N-no-no... uhm, I mean..." Zeyir flushed and hopped up. "It's fine. You just look like... uh... a... kid?" With a loud smack, Narwa's staff landed right on Zeyir's head as reward for the kid-comment. "Ouch... Hey! I'm just stating the tru—" With another smack he shut up...

"Hehe, alright guys!" Raven chuckled and helped the dizzy demon back on his feet. "Shouldn't we go, see the king now? We need to wake Allen up!" The team looked over at their still unconscious friend... silence fell like a curtain in the room...

"Riiight..." Zeyir suddenly broke through the unpleasant muteness in the chamber. "Would you mind filling me in how you intend to wake him up?"

"Right, you are the only one who doesn't know yet..." Callo scratched the back of his head and looked over at Narwa for aid.

"The surplus of Mana that entered Allen's body during the pact must be eliminated." The goddess looked deep into Zeyir's eyes, biting her lip nervously.

"And how are we supposed to do that?"

"You and Narwa have to eliminate the light and darkness within him." Raven took Zeyir's arm. "It is the only chance!"

"B-but..." Zeyir suddenly realized why they were in Utgard after all. "My father will never agree with that! He won't help Allen a bit! Galdor isn't allowed to influence Midgard! Nor is Asgard!"

"Still, we both are here." Narwa stepped forward. "And I wasn't talking about your father, Zeyir. We need your might."

"Hey! Woa, time out!" The prince stepped back, blushing more and more. "You know, I'd love to help Allen! I'd give my life for it! But I haven't even discovered one quarter of my might! I won't be able to stand against you for a minute, even here in Utgard!"

"As much as I love the fact that you recognize how weak you are compared to me..." Narwa paused for a second, enjoying the moment. "You have the power... I felt your might through all of Midgard when you combined your might with Luna, I saw your abilities back in the garden yesterday. You are mightier than you guess... and as you said before: For us Gods and Demons, age doesn't matter anymore. I could be 500 years younger or you could be 800 years older, we both would still be the same!"

"..." Zeyir seemed really nervous. "You know, if we make one single mistake there... we are going to kill not only ourselves but Allen too!" A hand suddenly rested on his shoulder. He looked over into Callo's serious face.

"We trust you in this."

"Sigh... I almost guessed so..." The demon-prince shook his head and left the room, heading towards the throne-chambers.

"You are late... but I should have guessed that, concerning I didn't throw you out of your bed..." Kyrin shot an evil glare over to his son, yet a grin was placed on his lips as the prince and his friends entered the throne-room.

"I had a little chit-chat... I wasn't asleep! I swear!" Zeyir grinned and sat down on his throne. "So, you wanted to talk with us?"

"Yes. I wanted to talk with you about... her." Kyrin looked over towards Narwa, his eyes turned soft.

"Oh please... I know she's an annoying, good for nothing goddess, but hey, can't we just make this one excuse!?" The young prince looked over at his father, but received the smack of a flying shoe. "Damn... and she's good in targeting..."

"Wow, I didn't guess I was going to actually hit!" Narwa chuckled and looked innocently over towards King Kyrin.

"Of course I won't imprison you, Silver Orchid." Kyrin smiled at her. He seemed to enjoy Narwa's behaviors towards his son. "However, you attacked demons in Utgrad, you've been seen by so many of our guards,... And you know what this means for the armistice-treaty between our worlds... it is a clear break. And the consequence is written down in this contract: Death."

"Father! No!" Zeyir stood up, growing even paler than he usually was.

"Sit down, Zeyir. I said I wasn't going to execute her!" Kyrin rose his voice. "But we have to think of something to excuse this behavior. Our rules are strict and the people of Galdor that have felt her presence will long for her head, and as she even used her

powers, this is about all of Galdor!"

"I'm sorry..." Narwa lowered her head. She was aware of this just way too well...

"But as I said: I won't let you die. I owe you too much... How about..." Kyrin thought for a second. Zeyir was the only one in the room that seemed confused by the fact that Kyrin said he owed her something... "Maybe we can take this flame-devil-attack to our advantage!" He smirked and stood up. "How about you came down here for the search of new medical herbs, with the allowance of the royal family of Galdor of course. During an attack of the flame-devils you had no other choice but to defend yourself. You were an official guest of mine, so there is nothing to it!"

"You are kinda the trickster, right?" Raven grinned and looked over from Kyrin to Zeyir and then to Narwa.

"This sounds like a very good plan to me." The goddess smiled satisfied

"Now back to the topic with your 'friend'..." Kyrin sighed and rubbed the back of his head while staring at his son. "How exactly—"

"Father, I know you will not agree with this, but I have to go back with them to Midgard." Suddenly, the room grew silent. Callo looked at his friend nervously. Couldn't he have tried to tell it to him a little... more thoughtful? Coming up with that just like this...

"Zeyir. You are—" Kyrin bit his lip nervously.

"You are trying to protect me and you are trying to protect our country, but if our world dies, Galdor will be gone as well." Zeyir stood up and walked over to his companions. "Tell the others I'm... at Will's place, or at my former teacher's house or whatever. But I belong to them now."

"..." Kyrin leaned back in his throne again. "Will, send message to your family's house that Prince Zeyir of Galdor will pay you a visit for a certain time." Zeyir couldn't believe his own ears. His jaw dropped open, he could have just jumped up to his father and hug him right away.

"Thank you!" Callo finally disturbed the silence and patted his friend. "Then let's go. We have to save three worlds!"

In the evening, Zeyir lay in his room, ready with the preparations for his return to Midgard. He stared at the roof blankly, thinking about how he was supposed to help his friend reawakening back in Midgard...

Suddenly, someone knocked on his door. "Come in!" He got up slowly, facing the person entering his private chambers.

"It is rather far to walk up here to your room." A woman with white hair smiled softly

as she closed the door behind her.

"That is to keep unwelcome visitors away..." Zeyir smirked and offered Narwa a place next to him on the bed. "What is it?" He slowly buried his head in his hands.

"I wanted to see if you are alright..."

"Alright? I will have to test my might against you, and that not even in Utgard but on Midgard. And if I fail, not only I will be dead, but my friend as well! So, yeah, all in all I'm alright!" The demon bit his lip and lay back on the bed, stretching his arms away from him.

"You can do it. I know you will be alright." Narwa now lay back as well, looking at the prince of Galdor. "We have to do this on Midgard to have an equal amount of light and darkness in the surroundings. Otherwise we won't be able to control the process..."

"Yeah... sure..." Zeyir shook his head in disbelief. "I'm 1000 years away from your experience, how am I supposed to show the same might as you!?"

"700!" Narwa smacked the young man and grinned bemused. "You should sleep now."

"Tse, stop talking to me as if I am a eight-year-old!" Zeyir yawned and looked over to the goddess. "I can't sleep..."

"Awww... do you want me to sing you a good-night-song?" Narwa grinned innocently but with a mocking tone in her voice.

"I bet you can't even sing. I bet it sounds worse than a crow!" Zeyir smirked.

"Oh, now I'm really hurt." She giggled and leaned over the demon, leaving him no space to escape. "Now you will have to suffer a whole song of my crow-voice!"

"Oh great powers of Utgard! Help me! I'm going to die!" Zeyir started to laugh, rolling aside.

"Hmpf! As if those powers are a match against my hyper-echoing-turbo-voice!" The goddess smiled but then started singing with a wonderful clear voice.

For Asgard is good, it shines with light.
The God's light is life.
Yet came they to the palace of light calling:
'There is no life in light alone.'
Time passes by and for the sun it was
That came down from heaven's sky.
The Gods have died,
But with the night, came back to life.
All through the night,
The worlds are singing, praising the skies,
Thanking for day and for night.

Silence settled between Zeyir and Narwa as the last words of the beautiful song faded into the darkness of the demon prince's room.

"That was really beautiful..." Zeyir turned his head, facing Narwa. "What is this song called? I have never heard it before..."

"It is the 'Requiem of Time' by Ameran." Narwa smiled and stood up. "An ancient song my parents taught me when I was still a little girl."

"Ameran..." Zeyir rolled over in his bed, lying on his belly now, letting his arm hanging down loosely from the side. "Anyway... I guess it is best we get some rest now..." The demon yawned and rubbed his hands.

"Yes... I guess you are right. Good night, Zeyir." She leaned forward and kissed his forehead firmly. "I trust you. You can do it!" She left the room and closed the door.

"Yeah... I just wish I would trust myself..." The young prince touched his forehead slightly before falling asleep.

The next morning, Callo stood in the Great Hall, unconscious Allen on his back. He still wore the black suite the maid had brought him the day before. Raven slowly entered the hall as well, still mumbling on her breakfast.

"I can't believe those demons have nearly only meat for breakfast!" She yawned and looked at Allen. "Lucky him..." Smirking, she gave Callo her puppy-eyes in response to his death-glare.

"Seems as if you found an equal glare-rival!" Zeyir chuckled and entered the hall from the entrance, followed by his father and Will. "Will will go to his parent's castle and stay there. They will be my alibi. How about we leave now?"

"We still have to wait for Nar-"

"I'm here!" Narwa interrupted, flapping down the stairs on the side with high-speed. "I'm sorry... I somehow overslept this morning!"

"Don't worry about it. Are we ready?" Raven smiled and hopped up and down in excitement.

"If you are ready, we can head off now." Zeyir's grin grew wider and wider. His father patted the prince on the shoulder, wishing him a safe journey as they left the castle towards the dragon-port in the city.

As they took some dragons towards an Otherworld-Gate that led to a gate close to the elven forest on Midgard, they took a last glance down on the demonic world. It had been so different from Midgard, yet so much the same...

"Alright guys!" Raven laughed on the back of her dragon, patting the animal gently.
"Back to Midgard!"

Kapitel 25:

Chapter 25

„I’m so tired!! Can’t we make a break?“ Zeyir’s whining kept annoying Callo the whole morning already... They had just entered Midgard again and he was really glad about that, but...

“Zeyir, just shut up already!” The tan elf barked. “There is a village close to the gate concerning this map.” He pointed at a brown piece of paper in Narwa’s hand. “We won’t stop until we are there!!”

“You sound as if you were his father, you know?” Raven laughed and looked at the frustrated elder.

“That’s only cause he needs a baby-sitter!!” Callo growled searching for aid from Narwa who just ignored their fighting.

“But we are searching for this stupid village since hours already!! And ten minutes ago you said it was only five more minutes! Half an hour ago it was just five more minutes as well!!” The demon hang himself on Callo’s arm.

“Well, where he is right he is right...” Narwa sighed heavily. “We should have been there since ages already...”

Callo shook off Zeyir with an annoyed death-glare. “Let me see, Narwa...” He took the map from Narwa’s hands, looking at it. His usual tan skin grew rather pale all of a sudden. “N... Narwa, which direction is up on a map and which is down?”

“W is Weria, so that’s up, Oram is O, down and Nudra and Selim are right and left. Why are you asking?” Narwa sounded hurt that Callo was actually asking such a stupid question.

“Wait a second!!” Zeyir ran up to them, looking at the map frustrated. “Weria, Oram, Nudra and Selim are the four suns of Asgard!! Does that mean you held the map the wrong way the whole time!?”

“I...I...” Narwa blushed into a deep crimson just like Zeyir’s eyes. “I was sure it was right!” She tried to defend herself.

Zeyir walked up to her, smacking her head softly. “Does that mean we walked into the deepest forest of whole Midgard just because you can’t read a map?” He grinned. “Alright! Time for a break!!! Besides, it is time to wake Allen up!”

“But I thought you wanted to do that in a village...” Raven looked at her companions confused.

"Yeah, but thanks to the Goddess, we won't reach one in the next few weeks cause we are lost in an ocean of woods with no more orientation left." Zeyir sat down on the spot, deciding that this was exactly the place where he was going to set up camp!

"Oh boy..." Callo sighed and placed Allen on the ground. "Alright, then I guess it is time."

Narwa nodded still red on her face and knelt down next to the unconscious human. "Zeyir... are you prepared?"

"Not really..." The demon sighed and leaned forward over Allen.

"I'm neither." Narwa chuckled and placed her hands on the summoner's chest. "Sooo... we have to try to regulate the Mana on the exact same rate."

"..." Callo coughed nervously. "Do you really think... you two can actually do that?" He received a weird glare from the rest of the team. "I... I just mean you two... don't really get along with each other and having a perfect synchronization in Mana-usage... sounds a little unrealistic to me..."

"Maybe you are right..." Zeyir hopped back from the human as if he could break him if he came too close. "How about some practice?"

Narwa smiled and stood up. "How about we shoot light- and dark-spheres towards a tree, and if the power is equal, the tree won't get damaged as the energy will neutralize each other."

"Sounds good!" Raven smiled and placed herself on a tree-stump, awaiting the show.

"Okay..." Zeyir prepared a sphere in his hands and so did Narwa.

"I can't wait to see that!" Steel and Shade popped out of nothing above Callo's head, placing themselves on Callo's shoulders. The small spirits giggled eagerly while their master just crossed his arms in front of his chest, guessing this was going to end up much worse than the goddess and demon expected.

"Alright, let's do it!" Zeyir shouted and shot the ball of dark energy towards a nearby tree.

"Lightsphere!" Narwa's sphere resembled an arrow of light as she shot the lightenergy towards the same tree as the demon.

With a giant explosion, the tree disappeared in darkness...

"I guess... that was too much darkness..." Steel held his belly laughing eagerly along with Shade. Callo on the other hand just gulped nervously. But Raven was faster in giving words to his thoughts than himself...

"And you wanted to try that on Allen!?" The mercenary rubbed her chest as if she felt

the pain of the poor little tree...

"Okay, let's try again... I will try to hold back this time!" Zeyir nodded towards Narwa preparing another sphere.

With another explosion a nearby tree fell to ashes with a beam of light.

"Aaaaalright, maybe I should power up again..." The demon clapped his hands together nervously. "Another one?"

"Okay." Narwa gulped and shot another sphere.

20 trees and a couple of explosions later, Callo and Raven couldn't hold back their laughter anymore either. They joined the two little spirits in amusing themselves over the inequality of the two desperate companions to find a way to regulate their Mana.

"That's not funny!" Zeyir snapped as Callo had to hold his belly laughing.

"But it is!" The desert-elf leaned against a tree sinking to the ground. "And if it goes on like this, we will find a way out of this forest sooner or later as there won't be any trees left here anymore!"

"At least one positive aspect!" Raven howled out in laughter giving high-five to Callo.

"Yeah! And that will make the way to the forest-temple much easier!" Shade fell from Callo's shoulder, rolling in the air. Steel held himself on his master's hair.

"Great that you amuse yourself so fabulously about our situation!" Narwa's head was crimson by now. She had never guessed it was this difficult to equalize with Zeyir...

"Right now it is 8 shots for Narwa and 13 for Zeyir!" Shade laughed. "I thought you were the more powerful one, Narwa!" She giggled evilly, mocking the goddess.

"Yeah, right~" Zeyir joined the mocking.

"Okay, enough is enough! You!" She pointed angrily towards Zeyir who hopped back in self-defense. "I need a silent spot to train with you without those guys attached on our backs!" She grabbed Zeyir's hand and dragged him off.

"Will they be alright?" Raven whipped the tears that started running down her cheeks from all the laughter off from her face with the back of her hand.

"I'm more worried about Allen right now. He will be an old gramps when they are finally able to wake him up!" Callo bit his lip to not laugh out loud and patted Steel on his shoulder.

After a few minutes of walking, Narwa and Zeyir finally stopped.

"This is far enough." She sighed and sat down on the ground, embracing her tender legs with her arms, resting her chin on her knees.

"So..." Zeyir sat down next to her, crossing his arms in front of his chest, sighing heavily. "What next?"

"This is not going to work..." Narwa lowered her head, sadness clearly noticeable in her voice.

"..." Zeyir breathed in heavily. He sat a little closer to the goddess and swung his arm around her, giving her a little comfort. "We can do it because we must do it..."

"But..."

"No, Narwa. Allen tried his best to save this world and right now he is the one that needs to be saved! He is my best friend. One of the only ones I ever had, and I won't let him down just like this!" Zeyir's chin leaned on Narwa's forehead now, moving her silver hair out of her face slowly.

"You are right..." She sighed and buried her face between the demon's neck and shoulder, holding his hand tight. She didn't want him to notice she had tears in her eyes...

"I wonder what they are doing..." Callo sighed as he was done setting up a campfire. "Somehow this is easier with Zeyir's sword around..." He chuckled and sat down next to Raven, watching her polishing her weapons.

"Zeyir is probably annoying Narwa, so Narwa smacks Zeyir with her staff what causes Zeyir to annoy her even more..." She rubbed over the blade with her grindstone, removing every single scratch on the fine saber.

"Are you fighting with the saber or the floret?" Callo looked from the saber, Raven was polishing, over to a fine floret attached on her belt.

"Depends on what I intend to kill..."

Callo rose an eyebrow at the weird response but only shook his head and started polishing his own rapiers.

As Narwa opened her eyes again she looked up. Zeyir was still holding her, yet he stared off into the blank space before him, his thoughts as distant as can be...

"Did I nap off?" She suddenly broke through the silence and tried to get up, feeling a little dizzy.

"Hm?" The demon suddenly seemed to snap back into reality. "Huh? Oh, uhm, yeah, you kinda... fell asleep, so I didn't want to wake you..." His cheeks turned red as he

saw Narwa smiling on him with a soft smile. He could feel his heart beating against his chest as if it was going to jump out any second.

"Are you alright?"

"Y... yeah, I just thought I had a heart-attack..." Zeyir shook his head and got up.

"Heart-attack? Are you sure you are alright?" Narwa put her hand on the forehead of the demon, trying to feel his temperature.

"I'm okay, I'm okay!" Zeyir's face turned just as red as his eyes and he whipped away Narwa's hand. "But what are we going to do with Allen? We are still far away from equality!"

"True..." The goddess hands rested on Zeyir's chest as she sighed deeply. Her fingers moved slowly over the three scars that ran over the demon's body. Suddenly he grabbed her hand and moved it away slightly.

"That tickles." Zeyir smiled and blinked playfully.

"Sorry." Narwa smiled and kissed softly the marl on Zeyir's forehead just as she had done it before in Utgard. "I'm sure we can do it! We just need to practice a little!" With a smile, Narwa turned towards a tree again, preparing a lightsphere.

"Caaaallo!!" Raven leaned over her saber, desperately trying to gain the elf's attention.

"I won't give you my grindstone, Raven." The coldness in the elder's voice gave Raven a chill, but she wasn't the kind of person to give up this easily!

"Pretty please... It'd mean sooooo much to me!" Tears started filling her eyes while her cheeks turned a soft pink, giving her an incredible innocent appearance, especially with her face framed by her long bangs...

"..." Callo only shook his head and handed over the grindstone... He hated it when Raven tried to manipulate him with her puppy-eyes, but she was just too good in it!!!

"Huh? Did you guys hear that?" Steel suddenly interrupted.

"What is it, Sweetie?" Raven smiled. She loved the little spirit. It was so cute!

"The explosions started again." He listened carefully to the surroundings. Now, Raven and Callo heard it too!

"Yeah but either they went away really far from here, or the explosions are getting weaker." A grin appeared on Callo's face. They did it! They found a way to come along!

"Darksphere!"

"Lightsphere!"

The explosions grew weaker with every time they tried it.

"Woah... I'm so beaten..." Zeyir had to laugh and leaned forward, breathing heavily. Narwa was rather exhausted as well, brushing her silver hair off her face while leaning against a tree. "We are rather close already, but still far from perfection..."

"I agree..." She sighed and patted off the dust. Somehow it seemed as if dust couldn't affect Narwa.. she always seemed surrounded by light, pure and clean. Zeyir had to giggle at the thought.

"Alright, time for the next try..." The demon sighed heavily, shivering slightly by the giant loss of Mana by now...

A soft melody reached Zeyir's ears all of a sudden and he turned towards Narwa again. She was humming the song she had been singing back in his room in Galdor. It was a soft yet sad melody... Zeyir really loved the sound of it... He joined in the humming and prepared another sphere.

"Lightsphere!"

"Darksphere!"

Zeyir blinked surprised and so did Narwa... Nothing had happened!

"Huh? We... we did it!!" Narwa felt her heart beating inside her body in such intensity she hadn't felt in decades... In a rush of happiness about their success, she glomped the demon eagerly. "We finally did it!!! That's so awesome, Zeyir!!!"

"Woah, yeah... b... but would you mind getting off of me?" The demon's face turned red as he pushed the eager goddess away. "Let's try some more, then we can get Allen back!"

"Hey~" Raven waved eagerly as the exhausted light-witch and the fatigue demon-prince entered the camp. "Did you do it?"

Zeyir looked over at Narwa, smiling weakly. "Yeah... guess we did it..."

"And it is time for Allen to join back the team!" Narwa completed while kneeling down in front of the unconscious summoner. Zeyir joined her side and laid his hands on Allen's chest. His nervousness grew within him again... Now this was serious. If they failed, he would be the one responsible for the death of his best friend...

Narwa looked at Zeyir's face, feeling his nervousness... "... " She placed her hand over Zeyir's, smiling softly as he looked at her confused. "Are you ready?" She started

humming again and so did the demon next to her.

Callo, Steel, Shade and Raven didn't dare making a single sound to not interrupt or confuse the two fatigue companions of his.

"..." Zeyir and Narwa both concentrated on the Mana within Allen. The amount was incredible... Zeyir did his best to eliminate any lightmana he felt within his friend... And Narwa tried to neutralize the darkness, but it was a hard job... They both didn't have the might to concentrate on the other anymore... They just prayed it was going to work...

"... Urgh..." Allen pressed his eyes together and his whole body was shivering... "What... happened...?"

"Allen!!" Raven hugged the summoner tightly, giving his face an even more confused look. Callo joined her, patting the back of his friend.

"Welcome back amongst the living!" He grinned and started explaining Allen what had happened at Luna's chapel...

Zeyir and Narwa stared at each other, unable to believe that they actually did it!! Zeyir felt the thoughts in his head spinning around as he fell flatly on his back.

"Zeyir!" Callo ran up to the exhausted demon. Narwa sank on her back now as well, lying on the ground, next to Zeyir, still holding his hand.

"G...Guys?! What is going on!?" Raven let go of Allen, turning towards her friend, brushing her hair out of her face.

"Let them rest... I guess they are exhausted..." Callo sighed as he checked Zeyir's pulse. It was all fine... Only his Mana-level was at a minimum.

"I'm... sorry..." Allen rubbed the back of his head, still not sure what was going on.

It was a long night in which Raven and Callo did their best to tell Allen anything that had happened during his time of unconsciousness...

Kapitel 26:

Chapter 26

„Miso!“

„Nya, I think Gnocchi is better.“

“No way! Then how about chicken with curry and pineapple?”

“And where are we going to take the indigents from?” Callo interrupted the two humans’ discussion.

“Riiiiiight... Let’s check what we have first!” Raven chuckled and took out their bags.

“Aww... I wanted to cook chicken with curry...” Allen sighed and joined her friend searching their bags for supplies.

“Why are you so... uhm...” Callo hesitated. He wasn’t sure how well Allen felt by now... It had been around two hours now since Narwa and Zeyir had reawakened the human summoner... “Why food?”

“First of all... I haven’t had anything to eat since over three weeks by now... And secondly, this is my way to thank Zeyir and Narwa. As soon as they are back awake, they will get a wonderful meal cooked by chef Allen!” He grinned brightly and took out a pan and pot to prepare the meal.

“Yeah, but you don’t know when they will be back awake...” Callo shook his head and sat down. “Do you want me to help?”

“NO!!” Both humans shouted in the very same second.

“Alright, alright... It was just a question...” A little confused, the elf started refining his rapiers. Yet... he didn’t get rid of the feeling as if something kept bothering Allen ever since he had been back to normal...

The smell of salmon and herbs filled the air as Allen and Raven prepared dinner. Callo couldn’t help but taste every once in a while what they were doing. It smelled just too good!

“Callo!” Raven beamed and tried to hide the pot from the elder. A yawn interrupted their little fight though.

“Man, I’m beaten...” Zeyir still lay on the ground while rubbing his belly with his claws.

“Silent, I want to sleep...” Narwa muttered from next to him, grabbing her staff

dangerously.

"Narwa!" Raven chirped, hopping towards her friend as...

SMACK

"I SAID BE QUITE!" She yelled at Zeyir while smacking him with her staff.

"Hey! I didn't do anything!" The poor demon yelled while rolling sideward to get away.

"Old habits die hard..." Callo chuckled while stealing the pot out of Raven's hands.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I though you..." Narwa grew all red over her whole face.

"Yeah, let's all hit the poor demon. It's not as if he's got any feelings!" Zeyir rolled his eyes while looking over at the human summoner standing on the campfire.

"..." Allen grinned so eagerly, his face started hurting. He stepped closer, hugging his demonic friend. "Man, I'm so glad to have you back in our team!"

"Aaaaalright, man. You can count on me!" The demon got up, smiling. "Besides, I have to thank you! If you wouldn't have come all the way to Galdor, I would be stuck there!!"

"Anyway, we should wait with this heartwarming reunion until we are done eating, or Callo won't leave any food left for us!" Raven grit her teeth, sending evil glares over to the not so caring elf.

"Hey, that's my part." Zeyir grinned and ran up to Callo, trying to get something out of the pot as well.

"So... you really want to go?" Allen looked from Narwa to Raven. His usual good mood faded into sadness as they had to say goodbye to their new friends.

"Yes, I must return to Asgard and ask my friend there what to do next. She sent me to bring the amulet to you, and I completed this task." Narwa smiled while folding her hands in front of her chest. "Besides, you already have someone in your team that doesn't belong to this world... Two of us are just too much."

"I know you and Zeyir don't really come along but..." Callo tried to think of a reason to let them stay but it didn't really seem to come to his mind.

"Yeah, if you walk at the end of the group and I walk ahead, we won't get any trouble with each other." The demon-prince grinned, yet he had to admit he was relieved Narwa was about to leave... Somehow he always felt so weird in her presence...

"Haha, I doubt this will work. But maybe I will return to this world soon. I need advice and... some answers... I will return and help you out as soon as I got them." The

goddess looked at Allen's amulet. It had changed ever since he had reawakened... two little arrows had appeared between the golden center and the crescent-moon...

"Yeah, and I will go back to my house in Wehrheim. After all, that is where Narwa appeared when coming down from Asgard... so if she returns to Midgard, I will join her again. I'm sure we will meet again!" She smiled softly and gave Callo and Zeyir her hand in good-bye. Allen looked a little confused as she didn't gave him her hand and instead ignored him...

"So, shall we go?" Narwa smiled.

"Just out of curiosity..." Zeyir interrupted. "We are lost in this forest. How are you supposed to find your way back?"

"I own a seal that will bring me right back to my temple in Asgard. I will drop Raven on the Otherworld-Gate that brought me to Midgard there."

"I... see..." Zeyir looked a little confused but he couldn't care less...

"Alright, Raven. Shall we?" Narwa smiled and stepped back, taking out a white scroll with runes written on it from her bag. She opened it. The words and lines seemed to float from the scroll to the ground, forming a magic circle on the ground.

"One more second." Raven chuckled and gave Allen a kiss on his cheek, before stepping into the magic circle and disappearing in a flash of light.

"..." Allen blinked confused, not sure what had just happened, as someone smacked him from the side.

"Man, you are such a womanizer!" Zeyir couldn't suppress his laughter as he kept punching his friend playfully on the shoulder.

"Wh... why did she..." Allen seemed to be totally off with his mind while placing his hand on his cheek.

"You gotta never wash that cheek until you meet her again!" The demon held his belly by now. Callo only rolled his eyes and smacked Zeyir in his usual manner.

Two days had passed ever since Allen, Callo and Zeyir had separated from the girls. They were still stuck in the giant forest but every once in a while, Callo could have sworn he had seen footprints on the soft ground...

"Hey, look over there!" Shade chirped from above her master as she flew towards an opening between the thick trees. A river ran through the woods, the clear water sparkled in the midday-sun like thousands of little crystals.

"Wow, if we wouldn't have made a break half an hour ago, this would be a perfect spot." Allen grinned and filled his water-bottle with the fresh liquid. The others

restocked their supplies as well. Steel and Shade played hide and seek while the three companions, even with Callo protesting first, enjoyed their second break this day.

"You gotta explain me something there, Callo..." Zeyir looked at his piece of bread he was currently eating while he sat there leaning on a tree.

"Hm?" Callo lay on the ground, enjoying the soft sun. He somewhat missed the burning heat of Yora though...

"How comes you manage to carry all your stuff in such a small bag?" The demon pointed at the small bag hanging around a stone.

"I don't..." Callo yawned while stretching himself a little. "Shade and Steel carry my stuff for me..."

"Hm?" Allen looked confused at the tan man to his right. "And... how do they do that? They are in the spirit-dimension all the time!"

"Sbiwiddimenmion?"

"Zeyir, swallow before you talk!" Callo grid his teeth while he brushed some of Zeyir's bread off his chest.

"The spirit-dimension is something like a parallel dimension to our world. Mana is the link between these dimensions." Allen tried to remember what he had learned back in his home-village about the spirits...

"The spirit-dimension is where you summon your might from. It is where all Mana is stocked. When I summon for example a chain with the help of Steel, it is formed from the materia in the spirit-dimension." Callo sat up and stared at his spirits playing in the air. "Besides, this is how you carry your sword most of the time. You send it into the spirit-dimension and re-summon it when it is needed. In some case you are a summoner as well." He grinned and looked at Zeyir.

"Sooooo... does that mean we carried our bags the whole time while you just summoned yours off!?" The demon prince formed an evil grimace as he stared back at his companion.

"He's got a point there." Allen laughed and patted Callo. "How about you send our bags off too?"

"..." Callo blinked nervously. To be honest he had never ever thought about asking his friends to summon off their bags... "Well... sure thing..."

"Tse, I can't believe it!" Zeyir grinned. "Hey, Allen, why don't you summon Luna and ask her to take our stuff?"

"I.. i..." Allen seemed to grow nervous all of a sudden and lowered his head.

"Did I say something wrong?" Zeyir hopped up, walking towards his friend, ready to apology for whatever he had just done wrong.

"Are you alright?" Callo turned to the summoner, offering him something to drink just in case...

"No, I'm fine. Everything is alright!" Allen smiled and hopped up. "We shouldn't ask the Great Spirits to carry our bags... this seems... so wrong to me." He chuckled and patted the demon playfully.

"Riiiiight..." Zeyir eyed him curiously but decided to drop the subject.

"Shouldn't we travel on now?" Allen grinned and hoped for Shade and Steel to show them how to make their bags disappear. The little spirits just flew to the ground, waiting for an order of their master. Callo nodded agreeing, so the two little summons grabbed Allen's and Zeyir's bags and disappeared in their usual manner. "I somehow had hoped for something more spectacular..."

"We don't have to carry our bags anymore! Isn't that spectacular enough?" Zeyir laughed and looked over at Callo.

"Alright. Which way?" The desert-elf crossed his arms in front of his chest. He had just enjoyed the sun... but Allen was right, it was time to travel on.

"How about we follow the river?" Zeyir chirped cheerfully. "Most towns are built close to water as it has the best conditions concerning the supplies with both, water and fish."

"Wow, someone paid attention to what his father said..." Allen chuckled and looked over at Callo.

"Hm... As long as we are following the water-flow I guess we can't get lost in the forest anymore. Besides, this way we can restock our water-supplies whenever we want..." The elf looked towards Zeyir a little confused at his evil face-expression. "What is it?"

"Is it really that difficult for you?! Just repeat me: 'Yes Zeyir, you are right, this is a good idea.'" Both, Zeyir and Allen bursted out laughing at Callo's goofy face as he blinked confused.

"Let's just go, alright?" The elf muttered and walked ahead.

After a few minutes of walking, Allen slowly fell behind.

"Hey Callo..." Zeyir whispered towards the elder. "Don't you have the feeling as if something is wrong with Allen ever since he is back awake?"

"Yes, but he won't tell me... I already asked him what's wrong..." He muttered under

his breath to make sure, the summoner couldn't eardrop them. "He keeps denying..."

"Hm... maybe I should try it..."

"Do you honestly think he will tell you?"

"After all I know him a little longer than you. Besides you are a really strong warrior and you are a summoner as well... Maybe that is why he doesn't want to tell you what's wrong..." Zeyir sighed. Callo and Allen were friends by now- without any doubt- but just as their kind of friendship was different from the friendship Zeyir and Callo shared, Allen and Zeyir's friendship was different as well...

"Hmm..." Callo closed his eyes. "I guess it is worth a try..."

Zeyir slowed down a little, falling behind now as well.

"Hey Allen." The demon grinned eagerly. "What is that long face?"

"Hm? What long face?" The human grinned and smacked the demon playfully. "I'm just a little fatigue!"

"Yeah, sure..." Zeyir lolled out his tongue and tried his best to be the usual saw on his companions' nerves.

"What is this tone, huh? I said I'm alright!" Allen giggled and crossed his arms in front of his chest.

"And I just said: Yeah, sure..." The grin on Zeyir's face grew wider and wider. It almost seemed to challenge Allen!

"What is your problem?!" Allen couldn't believe he actually fell on the trick... Man, this demon was good...

"My best friend doesn't tell me what's wrong with him. That's my problem."

"..." Allen lowered his head. It was no use trying to hide it from his friends... Callo had noticed it already, and Zeyir wasn't going to give up until he knew what was wrong. "Callo?" Allen rose his voice, so the elf ahead was able to hear him. The golden hair waved around as he turned and stepped towards his two companions.

"What is wrong?" Callo shot a glare at Zeyir, unable to believe that he had actually managed to get Allen to talk with them.

"I think you both know that... something is not right... correct?" Allen sighed. He received a nod from both of his companions. "Well..." The summoner lowered his head a little more...

"Now tell us already! You really aren't the kind of person that is good in drama and su—Ouch!" Zeyir received a firm smack from Callo that told him to just shut up.

"Anyway, ever since I woke up again I have the feeling... something within me changed." Allen sighed. Zeyir was right. It was no use trying to hide or avoid it any longer. "I somehow have the feeling as if something within me is changing. I don't feel... like... being human anymore! I know it sounds weird but..." He moved his hand through his wild brown hair. He didn't really know how to put it best... "If you think I'm strange then... I can understand that..."

"Allen, your body suffered under the surplus of Mana and—"

"Look, Allen!" Zeyir interrupted Callo with a cheerful voice. "It doesn't matter if you are human, demon, elf, troll, orc or even god... Even if you changed into a duck, you still would be the same person and our friend, right? We are sticking together until the very end!"

Allen and Callo both stared at the demon. In his very unique, weird and immature way, Zeyir had hit the subject right to the point. It didn't matter if something within Allen changed due to the pacts, he still remained the very same loveable, cheerful and lively summoner they had decided to help in his task.

"Thanks, guys..." He grinned cheerfully while patting his friends.

"That's what we are here for!" Zeyir smiled and walked ahead into the cool evening followed by his best friends.

Kapitel 27:

Chapter 27

A mild breeze blew through the streets of Menel as Narwa AINU walked slowly through Asgard's capital city. The angels and valkyries on the street greeted her respectfully as she made her way to the Tower of Eternity.

"Mom, you are back!!" A familiar voice reached Narwa's ear as a freckled god with golden hair tripped while running towards her.

"Ifrit!" Narwa chuckled and walked up to him. "Are you alright?" She offered her son a hand, smiling happily.

"Mom, what is wrong? You look so satisfied?" The man grinned sheepishly while patting off the dust. "Dad wanted to talk with you as soon as you are back!"

"Clarion?" Narwa sighed. "Alright... I will visit Ariia then I will go to him afterwards. Can you tell him this?" She smiled friendly and patted her boy.

"Okay!" Ifrit smiled and hugged his mother. "But promise me to tell me next time when you are making vacations! I want to come with you next time!" He grinned and walked ahead towards the Tower of Eternity.

Narwa waited for a few seconds before following him. 'This is, why I can't tell you, dear...' She sighed mentally and flew off towards Ariia's floor.

"Now this is interesting!" A child-like goddess with white-black skin and dark eyes stared into a crystal ball. Her childish body floated in midair in a room filled with giant snow-white crystals.

"Ariia? May I come in?" A female voice rang through the giant silver entrance-door that led to the other rooms of the crystal-goddess's floor.

"Of course." The black hair flew around playfully as Ariia placed her crystal-ball on the ground.

"How are you doing?" Narwa entered the room, a friendly smile on her lips. Ariia's eyes doubled in size as she spotted her friend. She flew over to her hugging her friend tightly.

"Narwa, you are back! You just have to tell me anything from your trip!" The little goddess smiled brightly and led the white goddess to another room.

"How about you tell me first what you saw so I don't have to bore you." Narwa grinned and patted the kid-goddess. Ariia giggled sheepishly.

"My visions are blurred. I can't really tell what is going on on Midgard..." She sat down on a seat, taking a glass of water from a small table in front of her.

"I see." Narwa sat down next to her friend, filling a second glass with water from a can on the table. "Have you seen who is involved in this?"

"No, I wasn't able to find out who is responsible for Midgard's conditions so far... But I know that the seal—"

"I meant who is traveling along with the 'van Tirith-clan-member'." Narwa laughed, taking a nib from her glass while relaxing in her seat.

"Oh... uhm, no I haven't seen anything like this... But the seal that holds down the Spirits is located in the center of Midgard. I hope this will help somehow..." Ariia lowered her head... "I wish I was able to control my visions any better..."

"Well... It seems the Grozen-family has entered the fight over Midgard's future as well." Narwa's eyes turned soft for a short moment. "Zeyir Grozen is amongst the companions of Allen van Tirith. Oh yes..." She grit her teeth and shot Ariia an angry glare. "It was Allen van Tirith... not Alena Vantrith or whatever..."

"Oh..." Ariia chuckled. "But... isn't this a risk? Letting a demon from Utgard join this journey... Maybe we should get rid of him!"

"No I don't think so." Narwa smiled warmly. "Zeyir is a demon, yes, but I think deep inside he is a good person. I trust him."

"Narwa." Ariia rose an eyebrow. "I know you disgust the simple contrasts of Gods being good and Demons evil, but... trusting one?"

"Ariia, in my 700 years of life I learned that sometimes we have to ignore the things we learned just to make our own experiences. I haven't met a single demon so far that didn't have someone they cared for. A demon without friends, companions, goals,... It is easy to lose sight of moral and good intentions if you are lurking in the dark without seeing the light... Besides... We always treat the demons like creatures... maybe, if you are treated long enough like one, you start acting like a monster..."

"..." Ariia bit her lip. "Maybe you are right... so what should we do next?"

"I hoped you were able to tell me... I was a little too late, so Allen already had a lot of Mana from Sol and Luna inside him when he got the amulet... He is too weakened to take on all 8 pacts at the time being..." Narwa's voice became serious at the subject. "I guess it is best if I return to Midgard and see whatever I can do for them. Allen will have to take on the Great Spirits one after another... Otherwise his Mana will collapse and all our hope has turned to dust."

"Just answer me one last question, my friend... Is it true what they say about Midgard? The place where light meets darkness..."

"Yes..." Narwa smiled. "I never felt so alive before." And with these last words, Narwa stood up and left her friend behind.

Yaaaaaaaawn Zayir sat on a tree-stump, watching Callo and Shade playing a game of tactics... He was totally beaten from the long journey on the riverside... It was their fourth day and still no signs of life... Slowly the demon started to question his idea of following the river...

"An old saying on Midgard is that if you yawn without holding a hand in front of your mouth, the dark spirits of Utgard can enter your body..." Allen chuckled, watching the demon getting annoyed by the fact Callo seemed to beat Shade in this game... "But considering the fact you are from Utgard I guess you won't listen to such childish stuff, huh?"

"..." Zeyir rose an eyebrow while glaring at Allen confused.

"Just forget about it. You just will get headaches again, Zeyir..." Callo looked up from his game as he played out the last card, defeating Shade with high flags.

"Haha, how funny..." The demon rolled his eyes, standing up from his 'seat'. "How about we travel on? I desperately need a warm bath... and therefore I need a DAMN town in this DAMN forest!!" Zeyir growled with such a dangerous voice, even Callo got a chill for a short second. "Come on, better we find a monster I can let my frustration out on before I use one of you guys..."

"Now this would be interesting... How about a training-match?" Callo's eyes gleamed with eager at the thought of a worthy opponent...

"Guys, we better don't... fight against each other." Allen grew nervous at the thought though... "We don't have a healer any longer so if you need to get rid of your hormones, go and play tag with some monsters around!"

"..." Callo lowered his head disappointed and hopped up, drawing out his swords. "Alright, then let's go!"

"Here, don't you want to take a cup of tea, dear?"

"I'm not your 'dear' any longer, Clarion." Narwa sighed and looked up from her chair at her former mate. "You wanted to talk with me?"

"Yes..." The brown haired, freckled god sighed deeply at the cold tone of the white goddess. "I wanted to ask where you were all these months? We haven't seen you around Menel for rather long."

"Is this going to be some twisted kind of examination?" Narwa sighed and leaned back. "It is none of your concern but... I searched for new runes and books about

healing plants."

"..." Clarion eyed her curiously. "Narwa... When did I make you angry at me?"

"You are still trying to get me back. We are divorced for over 300 years, and you still act like the jealous boy-friend from when we were children!"

"But-"

"No buts! You have even asked my father about where I am, ain't I correct?" Narwa crossed her arms angrily.

"Well, I thought you were at his place... maybe..."

"I haven't even talked with Bel'Zath since nearly 50 years. Just stop spying on me already!" Narwa hissed, leaving the realm of the firegod.

"Mad?" A deep male voice reached her ears from not too far. As Narwa turned around she faced a tall god with black hair and a violet gem attached on his forehead. Next to him stood another god with just the same cold eyes and white hair. The god wore a white armor that even covered parts of his wings.

"Yarna, Marduck." Narwa whipped some silver hairs out of her face. "Not really... I just don't want others to stalk me all the time..."

"Then you should talk some serious words with your friend Ariia!" Yarna laughed and patted the goddess. "We are going to get ourselves a drink. Do you want to join us?"

"Yeah, we want to celebrate!" Marduck grinned eagerly and rubbed his ankles.

"And what exactly is the reason for you to celebrate?" Narwa bit her lip suspiciously... Marduck and Yarna weren't the kinds of person that just go out and enjoy themselves... They were veterans, used to fight in battles against Utgard... Their whole loyalty belonged to Asgard... Did they manage to capture a famous demon-general or just win a battle...?

"Well, let's just say a wonderful plan seems to work out fluently." Marduck grinned and walked on, taking Narwa's arm in a buddy-like manner. "How about it? I invite you to a drink!"

"T...thanks, Marduck, but I have to reject... I need to prepare another journey of mine." Narwa smiled innocently. She liked Marduck. He was a kindhearted person that always did whatever was necessary to keep the people of Asgard save... Yarna however was a little too radical for Narwa's taste... When she freed their 'demon-prisoner' fifteen years ago, Yarna almost bursted out in fury about the letting a chance of gaining control over Galdor go...

"A journey?" Yarna scratched his arm while staring at the goddess blankly. "Searching for new runes and plants again?"

"Yes, something like this." She smiled and turned around. "I wish you fun with your little party. I will join you another time."

"I take this as promise, Narwa!" Marduck cheered and swung his arm around Yarna.

"That was fun!" Zeyir chirped as he just cleaned his claws from a rather bloody monster-fight... Callo and Allen just gulped at the sight and fastened their unused weapons on their belts again.

"Uh... yeah... sure..." Allen tried to smile but it didn't really turn out the way he wanted. In the meanwhile Zeyir already licked his claws, receiving a weird glare from the summoner and a smack from Callo...

"You are such a girl..." Callo sighed.

"Huh? What makes me a girl if I kill monsters and lick my claws?! That's what demons are doing!" Zeyir rubbed the spot, Callo hit before.

"Well..." Callo thought for a second. "I have no clue, but I couldn't think of anything better at the moment." The tan man started chuckling, unable to suppress the urge to laugh at his own mistake.

"Howev—" Zeyir was interrupted by two nimcats, black catlike monsters with two tails, walking through the bushes close to them. "Alright, the big one is mine!" Zeyir started running after one of the monsters as they started running into two different directions.

"Then the other one is mine!" Callo grinned and rushed after the other one.

Allen stood in the middle of the forest, blinking confused. "Guys, they didn't do anything!!" He talked to no one in particular as his companions were gone already... "I feel like a baby-sitter..." Allen gasped while sprinting after Zeyir.

"Oh come on!" Callo looked around. "This can't be happening!?" He had lost sight of the monster. If Zeyir managed to catch his nimcat, he would tease him with this for the rest of his nearly eternal life... He turned around, looking for the others, but Allen probably followed Zeyir... A wise decision... Somehow the demon acted strange ever since they had separated from Raven and Narwa...

"Shade?"

"Yupp, here I am!" The little spirit appeared on Callo's shoulder leaning against his head playfully.

"Hey, don't forget about me!" Steel appeared, floating above them, grinning wildly. "Anyway, how are we going to get back to the others?"

"Good question..." Callo sighed. It would be best to get back to the river. "Steel, can you try finding Allen and Zeyir for me? I will make my way back to the river we were before." The river seemed like a good idea to Callo... This was the only orientation they had in the deep forest... As the tan elf slowly walked on, voices reached his keen ears... But it wasn't the voices of his companions.

"Maybe these people know where a nearby town is!" Shade whispered eagerly.

"Yes, but as long as we don't know who it is, we better remain quite..." Callo tried his best to not gain the attention of whoever was there on the riverside.

"No! I don't want to!"

"B... but I defeated you! I proved my worth to form a pact with you!"

"But I don't want to form a pact!"

"I can't return without a spirit-pact and I met all the conditions!" A male elf with dark green hair and a bow in hand stood in front of the river talking with someone Callo couldn't see properly. The only thing he could guess out of the conversation was, that the second person was a spirit...

"B...but..." The female voice was almost crying.

"I need this pact!" The elf rose his voice more and more.

"..." The spirit kept sobbing. Now Callo was able to finally catch a view on the female spirit... It was a small waterspirit with golden hair bound to two long ponytails. Her body reminded more of a mermaid than an actual woman and her size was about the same as Shade's and Steel's.

"I demand this pact!" The man seemed outraged by the fact the little spirit denied him her powers...

"She doesn't want to form a pact with you!" Callo stepped out of the bushes, his rapiers in hand just in case... "Why don't you go and hug some trees instead?"

"WHAT!?" The elf blinked first confused then blinded by rage. His blue eyes shimmered dangerously. "Why don't you go back into your desert and count dust-corns!?"

"Hehe..." Shade floated above Callo, amusing herself about the deep hatred between the forest-elf and the desert-elf... "Alright, before you kill each other by throwing flowers and cactuses at each other, maybe we ask the little spirit what she wants!" She smiled and sat down on her master's shoulder, leaning against Callo.

"Good idea indeed!" Callo grinned evilly, tightening the grip on his beloved weapons...

"Hmpf!" The elf bit his lip, not turning his gaze from the stranger. "I wonder what a desert-elf is doing here in the deepest woods... Shouldn't you try to crop dust out in the sands?"

"And you should sit in your tree-house writing poems, but let's not change subject." Callo walked over to the small spirit, smiling softly. "You are free to go."

"Thank you!" The little spirit's eyes sparkled with happiness. She looked at her savior with dream gazed eyes as she disappeared in a splash of water.

"Hey! Stop!!" The elf rushed forward, but the little spirit was already gone. "I need that pact!!"

"A pact with a spirit is formed by sharing each other's Mana. This is a sign of deep trust and respect, so both, pact-maker as well as spirit, should feel comfortable with it." Callo's eyes sparkled dangerously. His faith in the deep bonds between spirits and their masters was the only thing he hadn't left behind in the desert he once called home...

"I don't need a lesson from you, desert-elf!" The green haired man bit his lip angrily.

"My name is Callo Moerbin, not desert-elf!" The tan man turned, weapons still in hands. "And if you ever dare forcing a spirit to form a pact again, I will hunt you down, so better remember this name!"

The young man gulped. He tightened the grip on his bow, ready to defend himself.

"Callo! Hey!! So there you are!" Zeyir's voice echoed through the trees. Both men turned around towards the source of the voice. The young demon rushed through the bushes, followed by Allen and Steel. "My cat got away... those beasts are fast as—" He stopped as he noticed the forest-elf close to Callo. "Hey! What are you doing?!" The demon's claws were ready to fight if the elf dared shooting an arrow at his companion. The elf looked from Callo to Zeyir and back to the tan elf. He decided it wasn't wise to fight 3 travelers at once, so he ran away into the deep woods.

"Wow, that was strange!" Allen blinked while walking towards his companion.

"Don't worry a-- ... Oh wait... Dammed, I wanted to ask him where the next town was!" Callo hit his forehead with his flat hand while realizing he had just let the only hope for a quick journey getting away...

"You are a little slow today... You sure you don't get a cold?" Zeyir grinned widely.

"I used to live in a desert. I can't understand what you like in this cold out here! I'm freezing!" Callo shook his head. "Of course not! I'm a moonguard! I'm out in the desert during night most of the time. I'm used to worse than this!"

"May I correct you? You were a moonguard." Zeyir lolled out his tongue while refreshing himself on the cold water.

"How about another break?" Allen smiled, changing subject before any of his companions got the chance, ripping the other's head off...

"Sounds fair enough!" Shade flew right into Callo's chest, causing him to fall down to the ground. Giggling she sat down on the confused elf's lab.

"Tse, thanks Shade..." Callo rolled his eyes, patting the spirit playfully.

From afar, a small creature kept watching the team, staring at Shade with angry eyes.

"Just so you wait..."

Kapitel 28:

Chapter 28

The sun was shining intensely on the trees, but only few light-beams managed it though the thick leaf-roof of the giant forest the little team was lost in.

"What do we have left as supplies?" Callo yawned and swung his arms around. Zeyir sat on a rock, searching through their bags, but his face-expression already told them the answer...

"Nothing at all..." The demon bit his lip frustrated. "So another day of fruits and meat only... I never guessed I'd ever say this, but I miss noodles, potatoes, good old vegetables..." His whiny voice made him appear even more desperate...

"Oh come on guys... It's not the end of the world!" Allen tried to make the best out of the situation as—

Grumble

"Was that your stomach, Allen?" Callo rose an eyebrow, unable to suppress a grin. "Let's be honest: You can't suppress hunger with fruits and meat alone... It will always feel as if you are not really full yet..."

"Yeah, time to find a town! I can't stand berry-salad another day longer..." Allen laughed and patted his friends, walking on with an apple in his hand.

"Funny... we are in the middle of a forest filled with all kinds of food... and I feel like starving..." Callo rubbed his belly and looked at another apple hanging on a nearby tree.

"Just let's go already." Zeyir chuckled and followed his companion.

"Hello? Is someone home?" Narwa carefully opened the door to a little house in the middle of a forest. It was almost night by now...

She heard the sound of water in the upper floor... so she made her way up to the stairs. She felt a little uncomfortable at the thought of just entering a house like this but... well, she just had to.

"Hello? Father?" Narwa bit her lip while pushing the door to her father's bedroom open.

"Are you looking for me?" A voice from behind her made her turn around hesitantly.

"F... father!"

"Hello Narwa." Bel'Zath Ainu was over 2 meter tall and his skin was covered with ashes and dust. He wore a brown blacksmith-outfit and his giant wings were folded on his back. "It sure has been a while."

"Yes, I know..." The silver-haired goddess looked ashamed aside to not meet her father's eyes... "I need your advice."

"You haven't been talking with me for so long and now you just want some advice? That's not like you at all..." Bel'Zath smiled softly and placed his hand on his daughter's head, brushing some of her hair aside. "What keeps bothering you that you need my aid?"

"I... I wanted to ask for your opinion..."

"Why don't we go down and drink some tea while talking? I was just about to take a bath..." He grinned and patted off some dust from his cloths.

Down in the little kitchen, Narwa nipped on her cup of tea, looking at her father. "You still work as a blacksmith even though you don't provide Menel any longer?"

"Yes... Old habits die hard and I've always been best in crafting... But that never was what you wanted, right? You always did what you liked. But I guess... that is just what I do too." Bel'Zath sighed and looked out of the window.

"Is this why we didn't talk with each other for ages? Because we both just do what we like the best?" Narwa smiled weakly... "No I guess... it was because of me and Clarion, right?" She shook her head in disbelief. "I know you loved him as your son-in-law... but he... was just not the husband I needed to become happy."

"I know... but I don't want you to live your eternal life all alone. We Gods have to live for so long, we start getting mentally broken if we stay alone all the time." The blue eyes of Bel'Zath focused on his daughter. "You are smiling so weirdly. What is wrong?"

"N... nothing, I... just had to think of someone." Narwa chuckled innocently and looked at her father. "What I wanted to talk with you about... You have traveled Midgard a lot during your youth, am I correct?"

"Yes. I went down there with your mother to find new runes and healing-plants. After all she was one of the greatest healers of all of Asgard." Bel'Zath's thoughts drifted away to a long forgotten time, thousands of years ago...

"Did you... have the feeling as if... well..." Narwa hesitated. "As if you feel more alive on Midgard than on Asgard?"

"..." Bel'Zath looked at his daughter with thoughtful eyes. "I will tell you something now... that you mustn't tell anyone else, my dear... On Midgard we all feel so much more alive than on Asgard. We all live here in our world, the years pass us by without us even noticing it. Hundred years? We don't even care... but on Midgard we can feel

the essence of time the very first time. Every second seems so precious, every minute wasting seems too important to be wasted. We might dislike Midgard, we might hate Utgard... but if there was no darkness, we wouldn't even know that we are alive..."

"W... what?" Narwa's voice shivered. Hearing this out of the mouth of her very father, a god of Asgard, a former member of the Holy Senate,... This really wasn't something she was allowed to tell someone else here... yet she felt the immense truth in his words... "I... don't understand..."

"There is an old chant from a long lost age... Where light and darkness meet, the essence of time is created. The rivers of life flow through the world like veins and when they all meet, the worlds will be regenerated." He smiled softly. "I always taught you, to mistrust the obvious, to question the simple theories of black and white. No matter how much we hate Utgard and how much we wish for its destruction, we mustn't forget that the fact that we still stand and fight against the demon-breed of Utgard makes us aware that we are still alive." As he saw the confused look of the goddess, Bel'Zath rubbed his ankles, thinking of a better way to describe it. "When we are flying, we are free, we are not bound to the ground, so we feel good. The ground is a threat because whenever we lose control for a short second, we might crash and die. But if there is no ground beneath you, if there is nothing left to orientate you, and gravity is lost... how are you supposed to know if you are even moving when the emptiness of space doesn't give you the assurance that there still is anything to turn on."

"So you are saying... light and darkness together create... what we call time?"

"Yes. Together it gives time a direction. And on Midgard we feel this immense feeling of time and direction because it is the place, where light and darkness meets." The god smiled at how fast his girl seemed to understand just what he was talking about.

"The place where the falling god meets the rising demon..." Narwa bit her lip. Now I made so much more sense... and now she had even more reasons to help the Middleworld!

"Was this all you wanted to talk about? You have this... gleam in your eyes... Are you in love?" Bel'Zath grinned.

"W-what?! No way!! I never said I was, okay!?" Narwa hopped up, blushing madly. Her cheeks were almost as red as Zeyir's eyes! ... Zeyir... "N-no! I'm not! I just think he is nice that's all!" She turned and wanted to storm out of the room as she noticed... "Wait... you didn't say..."

"I only asked if you are in love, not with who. But the fact that you thought about a certain person right away gives me the feeling as if you actually are in love." He grinned even wider.

"No! I... that's just ridiculous!" She shook her head so hard, Bel'Zath feared it might fall off at any second. "We don't match with each other at all! Besides he is 700 years younger than I!"

"Haha, is that your problem? As I said: Time doesn't mean anything here."

"Now there is the problem..." Narwa looked aside, blushing even more.

"Is he human? Well, there were worse--"

"He is the throne-prince of Galdor." Narwa stated flatly and rushed out of her father's house. Bel'Zath just sat on his chair, his yaw wide open, unable to grip the sense behind his daughter's words.

"Boooring..."

"We are sorry, my prince, but unfortunately the jester was left behind in your royal castle in the underworld!" Callo rolled his eyes sarcastically, patting the demon-prince.

"But I admit... he's got a point... I'm sick and tired of walking." Allen yawned and turned his head, looking bored at his friends.

"See? Allen thinks it's boring too! That makes two against one! You loose, long-ear!" Zeyir grinned evilly, teasing Callo a little more.

"Man, I miss good old monarchy! Democracy? Who came up with that stupid idea?!" The desert-elf laughed and shook his head in amusement.

"Was that just..."

"... a joke from the ice-king?!" Zeyir completed. "Man, that's a miracle! A miracle!!"

"How funny..." Callo tried his best to deathglare the demon, but his amused grin broke through the ice-mask again and again, challenging Zeyir to shred this very mask into pieces. He hopped towards his friend, trying to imitate Raven's puppy-eyes. It looked so weird, this was too much for Callo. He bursted out laughing, holding his belly. "You know what's most funny about this?! It matches perfectly to you!" Now even Allen was rolling on the ground laughing. "I can't repeat it often enough! You are such a GIRL!"

"Hey!!" Zeyir chuckled. He was used to this by now... Callo always called him a girl, wimp, arrogant royal brat,... "Why do you keep calling me a girl!? You are the one with long hair!! Besides you even wear a necklace all the time! So, who is the girl now?"

"Still you..." Callo grinned, ignoring the mocking tone of his companion. "Besides, you have long hair as well."

"But only a single strain!" Zeyir lolled out his tongue before turning to Allen. "Who looks more like a girl, Allen!? Me or him?!"

"..." Allen rose an eyebrow. The questions didn't confuse him or made him think for a second, but the decision if he should speak the truth or not was really hard. "Well... to be honest..." The human smiled nervously. "The only things you are missing are some bra-fillers, Zeyir, and you would make a perfect girl..."

Now it was Callo's turn to laugh so hard, it was hurting. He leaned against a tree, unable to even move an inch.

"You are sooo mean!" Zeyir bit his lip. His razor-sharp teeth made him bleed, but he didn't care right now. He tried desperately to suppress a chuckle... cause this seemed rather funny to him too... BUT HE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO THINK IT WAS FUNNY!! He mentally hit himself for thinking it was even amusing!

"Now... that you... mention it..." Callo tried desperately to regain his cool. "Now that you mention it, I doubt I will be able to spare a room with him in an Inn any longer!" He chuckled.

"Same here!" Allen laughed and patted the poor demon. Zeyir's ears weren't as long as Callo's but they visibly hang down in frustration. He looked like a puppy, trying to get something to eat... This made his friends laugh even more.

"Guys... you are so mean..." Zeyir laughed and walked on.

After a few minutes, they reached an opening. A wonderful smell reached their noses. It was a soft yet fresh scent... Zeyir looked at the others with an asking gaze.

"What is this?"

"What is wha-tshoo!" Callo shook his head. Now he could smell it too. "Smells... nice."

"Hmm... I think I know what it is!" Allen smiled and walked towards a giant tree only a couple of meters away from them. He removed the bushes from around the stump. As his friends watched the summoner, a white couple of flowers appeared behind the leaves of the plants around. The beautiful white flowers shone softly in the light of the midday-sun. "White orchids!"

"Orchids?" Zeyir blinked and walked towards the flower, examine them a little closer.

"They are bea---tshoo!" Callo held his nose, blinking intensely. "Damn, I think I got a cold..."

"Or maybe you are allergic to them?" Zeyir grinned and knelt down in front of the beautiful flowers.

"Na, I haven't ever been allergic to anything." The elf rubbed his eyes while walking towards the others.

"Yeah, but in the desert, there are no orchids... or flowers..."

"Or plants in general!" Zeyir laughed. "But now it really makes sense..." He looked back at the flowers with soft eyes.

"Sense?" Allen knelt down next to him, staring at the white blooms.

"I always wondered what a silver orchid was." The demon smiled.

"Silver orchi—chi—" Callo held his nose, suppressing the urge to sneeze. Maybe... he really was allergic to orchids...

"Narwa." Allen smiled and patted the demon on the shoulder. "Orchids are said to be the flowers of heaven."

"Hm, it really matches." The demon smiled and stood up. "Alright, let's get going! We have to find a temple!" He smiled and turned away from the wonderful blooms, returning to the path they had to keep on walking on.

Kapitel 29:

Chapter 29

„Ugh“ Callo held his nose, having a hard time not to sneeze all the time. There were a lot of orchids in this forest... one reason more to hate this place...

“So one thing is for sure... when we are done with this journey, we won’t open a flower-shop...” Shade chuckled and hopped up and down in midair.

“Ha ha, how funny...” Callo shook his head and looked over at Zeyir who was grinning like an idiot, amusing himself over the situation of the poor tan elf... “You are so short before getting your bud kicked into next week, you know?”

“If you come too close, I will throw myself into an orchid-field...” The demon lolled out his tongue, running ahead of the group. Allen suppressed a bright grin. He counted their supplies just to keep himself from teasing the poor man next to him. He had to bite his lip even.

“Come on... Suppressing it won’t do you good, Allen...” Callo sighed heavily and looked down at his companion. “Now give it to me already!”

“Ahahaha, not opening a flower-shop!! Awesome, Shade!!!” He held his belly, bursting out in laughter. “It sounds sooo cute when you are sneezing! Like a little boy!! From behind I have to agree with Zeyir. When you are sneezing I could truly mix you with a girl! And this sweet way you try to suppress it all the time! Awesome!!”

“Are you done now?” The tan man rolled his eyes.

“Jupp, now it’s all out. Thank you, I feel better now!” Allen chuckled and blinked innocently.

“I won’t tease you.” Steel smiled and sat down on his master’s shoulder, looking up at Shade who rolled her eye. The little shadow-spirit sat down on the other shoulder of Callo, cuffing his hair a little.

“You know we are only kidding, right?” She giggled and disappeared in a cloud of dark mist.

“Ugh, it really is time we find a village... this forest deserves its name truly...” The elf moved his fingers through his long hair, trying to relax a little.

“You mean the ‘Ocean of Trees’? Yeah, it truly fits...” Zeyir yawned. He slowly returned to the group, sensing the danger was gone... “By the way... I’m hungry, how about a break?”

“I must admit, this sounds rather good...” Callo held his belly. A loud grumble was

heard... causing his companions bursting out in laughter once again. "Hey, rare enough that I am the one asking for a break, right?" He grinned, taking the bag with supplies from Allen, checking what they had left. His mood sank right away...

"What's wrong?" Zeyir looked inside the bag.

"Sweets, fruits and that's it." Allen rubbed the back of his head nervously. "We don't have anything else left. If you want something decent to eat, you will have to go hunting..."

"Aw man..." Zeyir sighed and ran off into the forest.

"Hey! Wait a second!!" Allen ran after the demon, ready to help him. Callo stood alone in the opening, the bag still in hands. He pulled out an apple and took a bite. He was too tired at the moment to hunt after his companions. He was sure that they'd be able to find their way back to him. After all, Allen was with Zeyir!

"Are you alright?" Steel smiled and hopped down from his shoulder.

"Of course he is! He is Callo Moerbin!" Shade popped out of nowhere and glomped Steel playfully before making her way over to the adult. "You hate forests, don't you?" She grinned and sat down on his shoulders, leaning on Callo's head. "Hm?" Shade blinked for a second, staring at a bush not far from them...

"What's wr-" Shade held her hand in front of Callo's mouth, showing him to be silent...

"There is someone watching us." She whispered into his long ear, disappearing in the shadows.

...

"GOTCHA!" The little shadow-spirit jumped out of the darkness, right into the bush, pressing down whatever was hiding between the leaves.

"Ouch! Let me go! Stupid shadow-witch!!" A small blonde water-spirit tried her best to get rid of Shade's grip, but the little spirit got her so tight she couldn't even disappear into the spirit-world.

"Who..." Callo ran up to the two spirits but recognized the stalker right away. "You are the spirit we saw before."

"Ouchy..."

"Let her go, Shade." The tan elf knelt down, helping the small spirit up.

"Okay~" Shade hopped on Callo's shoulder, holding herself balanced on the tan man's hair.

"Why are you here? You are free to go wherever you want." Callo smiled softly,

patting Shade playfully.

"This is... why I'm here..." The little spirit blushed awfully and played with her hair nervously.

"Hm?" Callo rose an eyebrow, not getting what the spirit was talking about. "The elf is gone, you-"

"No, that's not it!" The little spirit hopped up and faced the elder. "I... want to become your partner!"

"My partner? W... why?"

"Well, I'm sure I could be of a lot of help!" The spirit smiled.

"Can you fight?" Shade asked curiously.

"Uh no, I..."

"Can you enchant weapons?" The little spirit on Callo's shoulder leaned forward.

"No but-" The small water-spirit hesitated.

"Then... I guess you are not really of any use to us." Shade chuckled, hugging her master's neck playfully.

"But I-"

"CALLO!!! RUN!!!" Zeyir's voice cut through the thick air like a dagger. The demon came rushing out of the bushes, followed by Allen. A loud roar announced the reason why Callo's companions were panicking... A giant basilisk rushed behind them, just as hungry as the little team...

"Oh sh-!" Callo turned, running as fast as possible, leaving the panicking spirit behind. Shade hang on his long hair, trying her best to not loose grip and fall behind. Allen tried to mutter a summon-oat, but while running it was nearly impossible to chant.

"Allen!! Call for Luna and let her support me! I will fry that thing to dust!" Zeyir shouted, preparing his claws.

"What do you think I'm trying?! Singing an ode to the trees?!" Allen barked frustrated, trying to feel the might of the Great Spirit within him.

"Allen!" Callo ran up to the summoner. "Feel the energy within! The chant will come automatically with it!"

"I know that!" Allen grid his teeth. How was he supposed to listen to his inner energies when he needed all his power for running!?! The basilisk came closer every second, the green snake-like body moving over the soft ground like a fish in the open water. It had

no problem rushing through the thick woods... in contrary to the three companions.

"Ouch!" Allen tripped over some roots, falling to the ground. Zeyir hurried to his side, releasing his claws.

"Come on! Show me what you got!" The demon shouted. He knew there was no other way than to fight anymore...

"Zeyir, Callo! Don't look into its eyes! It will paralyze you!" Allen shouted while trying to free his foot from the root.

"Alright!" Zeyir grid his teeth, rushing towards the dragon-like creature, trying to avoid looking at the head. Callo followed him closely behind, his rapiers tight in hands.

"I call upon the dark servant, the iron shield of the world, the daughter of shadows, the son of the metal-fields. Shade! Steel!" Callo chanted for his spirits, trying to dodge the giant monster.

The basilisk was fast. Too fast for Zeyir. He got hit by the snake-monster again and again, getting slashed against threes and the ground.

"I call upon the dark empress of the night, the midnightqueen, the—" Allen stopped chanting as the giant jaw of the basilisk rushed towards him, ready to bite him into pieces. He jumped aside, starting the chant anew. "I call upon the dark empress—" It was no use, the basilisk was too close. Chanting now was suicide! "I'm sorry! I can't chant!"

"Dammit!" Zeyir jumped on the back of the monster, slashing his red flamesaber into the neck of the monster, but he barely managed to get through the thick scales... It wasn't even bleeding!

"Zeyir! Watch out!" Callo wanted to grab the hand of his friend, pulling him off the monster's back, but he wasn't fast enough. The basilisk turned and slammed its back onto the ground. It turned again and again, smashing its claws into the spot where Callo knew Zeyir laid. "No!" The tan man rushed forward, slashing his rapiers down again and again into the giant body of the monster.

"I call upon the dark empress of the night, the midnightqueen, the ruler over the shadows! By our pact I demand for your aid!" Allen closed his eyes. The Mana flew around him, whileing around his body like mist. Unfortunately... this attracted the attention of the basilisk...

"Allen! Watch out it's coming!" Callo shouted, dodging the turning lizard as it rushed over to the summoner.

'Now or never!' Allen closed his eyes, hoping he would be able to finish his chant in time. "By our pact! I summon you! Lunaaaaaaaaa!" He was ripped off his feet by the lizard, sent back flying into a tree.

Callo's eyes doubled in size. He looked over to where Zeyir laid. The demon was bleeding badly, unconscious and without a sign of life. Allen was crawling on the ground, holding his leg in agony. From what Callo was able to see the leg was broken and the basilisk was only a few meters away from him. "Dammit..." Callo rushed forward, standing between the summoner and the monster. He wouldn't let the beast get past him! Not as long as he was still alive!

"We will stay here as long as necessary!" Shade and Steel appeared next to their master, preparing to defend their friends with anything they got.

"L... Luna..." Allen looked around. The dark mist he had summoned formed slowly into the pale beauty.

"Fear my wrath..." Luna's voice was calm and cold as ice. She lifted her hand in front of her chest, releasing her fully might. A dark energy ball hit right into the monster, causing it to fall back. Callo didn't wait for a second chance. He rushed forward and slammed his weapon into the soft yaw of the beast. The basilisk yelled in pain and tried to get Callo off its body with its claws but the bruises couldn't stop Callo now. He was going to kill this thing no matter what!!

After a few seconds the monster stopped moving, slowly sinking down lifeless to the ground. Callo took his rapiers and threw them aside, running up to Allen. As far as he could tell, the human's right leg was broken and he had some inner injuries as well as a shock from the hit against the tree... Luna just watched emotionless what was happening before she disappeared again.

"Allen, can you hear me?" Callo shivered slightly. His heart was smashing against his chest with amazing speed.

"Zey... Zeyir..." Allen held his head, dazed. His whole body was aching.

"Zeyir!" The elf bit his lip, turning around again, facing the lifeless body of his friend. He ran over, searching for a sign of life. Callo tried his best to find the pulse of his friend, but all the blood and the fact that he was shaking so hard... made it impossible to feel anything. "Come on, be alive... Just be alive!"

"We need help! Immediately!" Steel panicked, floating next to Shade.

"You stay here! I will try to find help!" Callo stormed off.

After 5 minutes of running, he stopped. What was he doing?! They haven't met anyone in ages in this forest, there were no towns around. They were alone, all alone! As Callo realized that he was unable to help his friends in any way, he sank down on a tree. It was the first time he noticed his own injuries... He held his arms, trying to calm himself. He had to think of something. He had to help his friends!! But... how?

"Dammit..." He leaned backwards, closing his eyes.

"It is not very polite to swear in the presence of a lady." A familiar voice came from next to Callo's ear. He jumped up, looking around but no one was here. "I'm down here!" A small blonde water-spirit waved from the ground, shyly.

"You!" Callo stepped back, his heart calming a little again.

"You are hurt! Can I help you? I'm a healing-spirit!" The little spirit smiled sweetly.

"HEALING?!" Callo packed the small spirit, taking her up from the ground and hugging her tightly. "Thank goodness!!"

"Ahahaha, that hurts!!" The little spirit chuckled. "I'm Drop!" She smiled and wondered what exactly was wrong.

"Can you heal my friends?!" Callo started running towards his companions again, Drop still in his arm.

"Y... yeah of course! But shouldn't I heal you instead?"

"..." Callo didn't even listen anymore. He hurried all the way back to his friends.

Shade and Steel kept guarding their friends. Allen was unconscious by now and Zeyir... was still motionless. Shade sighed and sat down next to the demon, spending him some of her dark energy though she knew, Zeyir wasn't lacking energy but blood right now... She was unable to do anything.

"If Zeyir won't survive, Galdor will fall apart... I guess it will fall into the hands of the surrounding countries..." Steel held his knees, sadness in his eyes. "And if no one will help Allen, what then? Midgard will fall apart!"

"Would you mind stop talking as if are dead already?! Callo is not back yet! I'm sure he will find a way to save Zeyir and Allen!" Shade barked angrily.

Suddenly someone stormed through the bushes. Shade formed her head-scarf into two rapiers until she noticed that it was Callo.

"You are back!" She cheered and flew over towards her master as... "Huh? You are that spirit from before!"

"Drop, can you heal them?!" Callo hesitated, letting go of the small spirit. Drop held her head dazed from the sprint, but as her gaze fell on the two injured men she knew why he had rushed so much.

"Ouch, this gotta hurt!" She slapped her hands in front of her mouth. "I need to form a pact with you first! I need your Mana to use my spells!"

Callo didn't wait for a second. He opened his arms releasing his Mana. "Drop. Spirit of Water, Child of Aquarius... 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!"

"I agree with this divine oath and become your partner, bound to you by fate itself." Drop smiled brightly and flew over to Zeyir. "I won't be able to heal them both completely, but at least so much, that they are out of life-danger."

"This is enough for me right now." Callo knelt down next to her. "What am I supposed to do?" He looked over from Drop to Shade. The small spirit bit her lip.

"Take your hand and feel my Mana flowing through your arms. I will do the rest!" The water-spirit smiled and enjoyed the feeling of the Mana-link between herself and the desert-elf. Callo placed his hands on Allen's chest, releasing some of his Mana, healing the summoner's leg and worst injuries. When he was done, he ran over to Zeyir. He was fatigue already... Callo closed his eyes. He released the rest of his energy, trying his best to heal the young demon.

"Come on... you are too young for dying!"

"It works!" Shade hopped up and down cheerfully. "Callo, it works! Callo? Callo!!"

"Mmmh..." Callo blinked sleep-dazed.

"Back awake, huh?" Steel grinned.

"What has happened?"

"You used all your energy on Zeyir and Allen." The small spirit smiled and patted his master. "They will be alright. They are asleep. We will have to stay here for a while I guess..." Steel sighed and shot a glare over at Drop and Shade who were arguing about something...

"Stupid shadow-witch!"

"Hey, I just said the truth, okay?"

"No you don't! I will be his new favorite! You said yourself that he was a knight! I'm a lady and he came to my rescue! That proves it!"

"Ahahaha, that is just a proof of his good manners." Shade grinned.

"I can hear you, girls..." Callo rose an eyebrow... It was already hard with Shade and Steel... but now a SECOND girl in the team... The era of cat-fights has just begun... He sighed and lay back down. All his senses were screaming! Staying in the middle of a forest, hurt, injured, unable to move... But he couldn't care less right now... He was dead-beaten... Besides, the dead body of the basilisk would hold of other monsters at least for a while...

"Good night, Lord Callo!" Drop cheered and flew over to Callo's lab.

"Oh, come on! That's my place!" Shade growled dangerously and flew over to her master. Steel watched the show, shaking his head. He disappeared in fine metal dust to not get involved in any fighting...

Kapitel 30:

Chapter 30

„Hmmm...” Allen turned around again and again, trying to find a comfortable spot to rest in. “Hmm...” He opened his eyes slowly. This bed was SO uncomfortable! “Huh? Guys?” Allen laid in the middle of a forest! And where were the others?! He looked around, hopping back startled as he saw the giant dead body of a basilisk near him. “Goodness...” Now he remembered again. The basilisk-attack, the fight,... “Callo! Zeyir!” He hopped up, running forward as... “UAH!” He tripped over something on the ground. A painful groan made Allen look back. “Oh, sorry, Callo!”

“Huh?” Sleepdazed, the tan elf looked up, blinking tiredly. “Oh... hey Allen...” He yawned, and leaned on his elbows.

“Where is Zeyir?” Allen looked around, unable to spot their companion. Callo just rubbed his eyes and pointed towards a spot next to the dead monster. Zeyir lay on the ground, rolled to a ball, breathing softly.

“Let him sleep a little longer. I had to use a lot of Mana on him, I guess he is still dizzy anyway if you awake him now.” Callo stood up slowly, patting the dust off his cloths.

“You... healed him?” Allen’s jaw dropped open. “How did you do that?”

“Well...” Callo sighed. Now that he thought about it... maybe making a pact with Drop wasn’t the best plan after all... “Let’s not talk about it, you will find out soon enough!”

“Hmmm...” Allen sat down, poking the creature.

Yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaawn Zeyir rubbed his eyes. His body was aching as if a crowd of werewolves had decided to run all over him...

“Are you alright?” Callo knelt down next to the fatigue demon, feeling his temperature.

“I feel as if I drank too much... Were we in a pub or something?” Zeyir flapped off the elder’s hand, looking around confused.

“You wanted to dance with a basilisk... So be glad you only have some morning-after-feeling.” Callo grinned, patting the demon’s shoulder. “You will be alright.”

“Oh well...” The young man turned back towards the ground, ready to take another nap.

“Oh come on!” Callo complained.

"Let's just stay here for a little longer, Callo." Allen smiled and handed him over a plate with vegetables he had prepared in the meantime. "It's almost evening already anyway."

Callo prepared a campfire while Zeyir was still recovering a little – in fact he just didn't want to stand up... Callo couldn't understand how someone was able to sleep for a whole day!

"Are you going to wake up anytime soon?!" Callo barked while throwing a stick at the demon.

"As soon as you are done with cooking, I will stand up and run..." Zeyir turned a little, looking at the desert-elf, smirking.

"Hmpf." Callo couldn't suppress a smile while piling some wood. "Just watch out I don't tie you to the ground and force you to eat it."

"Hm... I think my claws are sharper than your tongue, my friend!" The demon looked up, leaning his head on his arm while watching the desert-elf work on their campfire.

"Oh man... This stupid rock won't work!" Callo tried desperately to set the fire with two firestones but none of them seemed to work properly.

"You know... you could have just asked me instead." Grinning, Zeyir summoned his flamesaber right on the wood-pile, causing it to burn.

"..." With a smack on the back of the demon's head, Callo sat next to his friend, enjoying the heat of the flames. "It's almost dark already... I wonder where Allen is."

"Didn't he say he was going on a hunt?" Zeyir yawned, not actually tired, but bored.

"Yes." Callo lay down next to Zeyir, looking up at the stars.

"Come on, old man! Tell me a story! I'm bored!" The demon grinned playfully while joining his companion, looking through the trees up into the wide dark sky.

"I'm not your grandfather!" Callo laughed, feeling uncomfortable...

"Yeah, but you are so old, you could actually be!"

Smack

"Okay, I will shut up." Zeyir muttered while rubbing his aching belly.

"How about you tell me something from Utgard instead?" The tan elf smiled interested. He loved old tales and he only knew very few from the World of Demons...

"Hmmm..." Zeyir thought for a second. "I can't really remember any interesting ones..."

"Any historical things you can remember? Or was the only thing you cared about on Galdor how to get rid of your watchmen?" Callo chuckled, remembering how annoyed Zeyir had been on Utgard about his servants following wherever he went....

"Tse..." The demon-prince rolled his eyes. "Do you know that Nocturne was the first person following the path of peace between Asgard and Utgard? That was because a general of the Gods spared her life in a battle. It is said that she fell in love with him that day, but rejected her own feelings. She wanted to make it possible for Asgardians and Utgardians to live together if they really loved each other. Soon she gained followers. Her courage and fame even convinced some of the Gods and angels from Asgard to follow this cause. Sol was the second one following this path..."

"You always say 'this path'. Don't you mean, they followed Nocturne?" Callo rose an eyebrow, wondering.

"No..." Zeyir bit his lips. "Most people actually say that it was Nocturne's ideals, but from what we know from old documents, there was someone else, leading them but no one actually knows who it was. And in the end... They sacrificed their lives to turn into pure Mana... I wonder how it feels to lose your body, all your Mana streaming into space and your very soul turning into the embodiment of this might..." The demon closed his eyes, a chill running down his spine.

"Guys?" Suddenly, Allen stumbled through the bushes.

"Now this took you a while!" Zeyir complained while trying to spot their dinner... "Didn't you catch anything at all?" Disappointment was written clearly in his face.

"..." Callo and Allen both stared at the demon. "Can't you possibly think of anything different but filling your stomach?!" The elder's eyebrows disappeared somewhere behind his bangs in wonder.

"Let's not fight..." Allen interrupted and sat down. "But you are right, it is weird... It is as if something made all the animals in the forest hiding in their holes. Besides..." The summoner bit his lip nervously.

"Now spit it out." Zeyir yawned, unimpressed by some nervous animals...

"I told you that... I have the feeling as if something within me changed after forming pacts with Luna and Sol, right?" He waited for his companions' nods before he continued. "Well... I can feel something is not right, as if there is a danger lurking in this forest, waiting for us. It keeps sending chills down my spine and I can't get rid of the feeling as if something is about to happen!"

"..." Callo shook his head. "You are nervous, that's usual after a fight as the one we had before. Besides, maybe the animals are gone because of the dead basilisk. They still sense it as a danger maybe. Additionally to that, I had to use a lot of my own Mana

on you. Maybe that is what you are feeling as chills! It should be gone by tomorrow..." He smiled softly, trying to comfort the young man.

"I disagree." Callo and Allen stared at Zeyir as he stood up all of a sudden, glaring down at the human with worried eyes. "If you say that something is not right here, then we should get out of this forest as fast as possible!"

"But-"

"Callo, don't interrupt me!" He barked towards the elf that blinked in surprise, unable to reply anymore. "If I learned one thing from the past, it is to trust in Allen's skills as a hunter. He was able to find food wherever we went. And he always was in rather good control of his own Mana... maybe beside that incidence with Luna and- arg- just forget it! He'd feel it if it was your Mana, Callo!" Zeyir pointed at the young summoner while still focusing on Callo. "We should get out of here as fast as possible!"

"Thanks..." Allen smiled and stood up. "The sooner we are out of here, the better I feel..."

"... So much for my campfire..." Callo rolled his eyes and jumped up, running after his companions.

They were almost sprinting through the thick woods near the river they were following since days. Allen rushed ahead of the group as he was used the most to such areas. He was followed by Callo, not used to forest, but still a good sprinter. As always Zeyir was the last one amongst them, trying his best to get after them.

"Huh?" The demon stopped all of a sudden, looking around nervously. "Guys! Wait!"

"Hm? -AH!" Callo ran right into Allen, crushing on the soft ground with the human. "Ouch..."

"Are you alright?" Zeyir ran up to them, helping them up.

"Yeah..." Allen shook his head. "What is it?"

"Can you feel that?" The demon-prince balled his fists nervously. "We got serious trouble!"

"Hm?" Callo leaned on a tree, trying to sense whatever Zeyir felt... "I can't feel anything..."

"Are you serious?! I can sense the pestering smell of Asgardians on all of this place!" He barked.

"Asgardians?!" Allen stepped back. He remembered their lat encounter with Asgardians... Not Narwa, but Yanra! "Y... you mean...?"

"Look!" Callo pointed upwards all of a sudden. Through a small gap between the trees, a few shootingstars lightened the dark sky softly, almost floating through the darkness.

"They are around us..." Allen's heart started beating so hard. Cold memories came up within him and the urge of just running away pulsed through his body.

"..." Zeyir stared from Callo to Allen and back to Callo... "I think I have a plan!"

"So... Where are they?" A white haired, armored god stood in the forest, looking around at the darkness of the nights on Midgard...

"Somewhere here in this forest, Marduck!" Next to the white haired man, a God with black hair appeared, followed by some angels.

"Don't tell me we are going to search through this whole forest, Yarna!" Marduck's eyes gleamed dangerously. "I have better things to do than to hunt down a human and his demon-friend."

"You forget how important the obliteration of the 'Blessed Clan'. No one is supposed to unseal Twila's might ever again!" Yarna growled in return. "Of course I know their average position."

"Very well." Marduck grinned sheepishly. "It has been a while since my lance tasted some fresh demon-blood! And additionally to that a noble. Sounds great!"

"Noble? This little pest we have to deal with here is probably one of the most famous living demons of Utgard!" Yarna laughed, playing around with some light-mana in his hand. "And as soon as this little hunt is over, our quest is completed." The violet gem on his head gleamed dangerously. "The end of Utgard starts with the end of the Grozen-family."

"They won't stand a chance indeed." Marduck laughed while walking into the darkness. "Let's end this!"

"Now come on, Zeyir!" Allen ran ahead through the woods while grabbing the demon's arm to dragger him along. "Hurry up already or do you want to end up fried?!"

"I try to run as fast as I can, okay?!" The demon barked exhausted. "I need a break! Please! Two minutes won't kill us!!"

"Are you kidding?!" Allen stopped all of a sudden, staring at the demon in disbelief. "You can't be serious!!"

"Oh, I think he is..." Suddenly, Yarna appeared between two trees, crossing his arms.

"Unfortunately... he is totally wrong." Marduck appeared on the contrary side, his spear gleaming in the surreal light surrounding the god.

"Oh sh-!" Zeyir's eyes doubled in size. "Hey..." He smiled nervously. "Marduck, still Yarna's message-boy? I already heard you two are kind close. Why don't you two go book a room in a nice little Inn while we go and save Midgard, huh?"

"Why you little-"

"Stop, Marduck." Yarna growled. Zeyir was certain, if gazes could kill, he'd die on the spot. "I knew you were grouping up with that summoner-brat." He stepped a little closer. The angels accompanying them, remained in the shadows of the trees. As it seemed Yarna and Marduck wanted to finish this on their own... And Zeyir was aware, that these two were very well able to do so. "Now let me pay you back for your twisted game near Ardon!"

"Oh, you mean the one when I send you through half of this world, fooling you like a complete idiot?"

"Zeyir!" Allen hissed nervously. "Don't make them mad!"

"Who cares? They want to kill us anyway, so why not hurt their pride a little before dying?" Zeyir shook his head unimpressed. "How about it, guys? Are you coming now or can't you handle with an adult demon?!" His eyes almost burned as he deathglared Marduck. "Or can you only capture little kids?!"

"Hmpf." Marduck smiled. "You wear these scars rather open. I must say that surprised me. After all it is a mark given to you by my hand."

"As if I care! It shows that I escaped a whole army of Gods. And that while I was still a little kid." Zeyir lolled out his tongue. "Let's see if you get me again!" His voice was unnaturally loud... "Now charge already or do you want to chit-chat with us the whole time?!"

"Then let's end this already!" Marduck stormed forward, his spear spinning around in incredible speed.

"DARK LIGHT!" Allen shouted all of a sudden. The darkness grew so thick around them for a short second, that Marduck and Yarna lost sight of their victims.

"Dammit, where are they?!" The white-haired god turned around and around, searching for Allen and Zeyir.

"Oh, they are still here... somewhere..." Yarna stepped forward, a sphere of light forming in his hand. "This trick won't work, Grozen!"

Suddenly two shadows rushed through the bushes into two different directions.

"Get them!!" Yarna and some of the angels rushed after whoever ran to the north, Marduck and the rest of the guards ran after the person that flew towards west.

...

...

"Are they gone?"

"Yes, and for goodness sake, if you don't step off my leg already, Zeyir, I will throw you into a pack of raging basilisk!!" Callo's voice growled dangerously through the shadows of the night as Zeyir lifted the shadow-seals off of them.

"Oh, right! I'm actually sitting on you..." He laughed, still shaking from nervousness. "Sorry, I thought it was a tree."

"Sure." Callo sighed and patted both Allen and Zeyir who were almost unable to move anymore.

"These were the worst 2 minutes in my whole life..." The summoner buried his head in his hands.

"I'm grateful they were total noobs concerning summoning..." Zeyir sighed.

"True... If they'd noticed that it wasn't me, summoning the dark light, we would have had a real problem..." Allen tried to stand up while balancing himself on a tree. "Who did you send off into the shadows now?"

"I sent Shade towards north and the other shadow was Steel." Callo stood up now as well, offering Zeyir a hand.

"Let's get out of here before they notice we fooled them again." A weird grin appeared on the demon-prince's face. "Pretty ironic indeed..." He muttered under his breath.

"Agreed. Come on!" Callo rushed ahead, following the riverside.

"Hello?" Narwa knocked on the wooden door of the treehouse while walking inside. "It's me! Are you home?"

"!!" A door slammed shut in an upper floor. "Narwa!!" A raven-haired woman, clawed in a blue dress stood on top of the stairs, smiling brightly as she recognized her friend. She rushed down the stairs, hugging the goddess playfully.

"Raven!" She smiled softly and hugged the human mercenary back. "How have you

been?"

"Rejected every job I got offered until now cause I hoped you'd be back soon!" Grinning she ran into the kitchen. "I made some cookies!! Want one? Where are we going to be headed next?"

"Sure!" Narwa smiled softly. "Uhm... Raven... I think I..." She blushed deeply. "I..."

"What's wrong?" The human returned into the living-room, throwing a cookie towards the goddess while mumbling on one herself. "You are getting awfully red there!"

"I probably will join the boys again." Narwa tried to smile, but it was as if a cold hand embraced her stomach.

"You don't really sound happy about it..." Raven sat down next to the goddess, taking her hand. "If there is something bothering you, you can tell me. We are friends after all, right?"

"..." The white witch smiled softly and leaned her head against her friend's shoulder. "I think... I have a crush..."

"Oh shut up!!!" Raven jumped up, her mouth wide open yet the amusement was written on her face. "Don't tell me you fell to that Casanova!!!"

"W... well... I... can't really tell how that happened as well..." She muttered, blushing a little more.

"You know that he's got a girlfriend, don't you?" The mercenary rose an eyebrow questioning.

"He does?!" Narwa's mouth clapped open in shock. "B-but..."

"Yeah!! That girl in the desert! Don't you remember? He wears her necklace all the time!"

"NO!!!" Narwa yelled. "I wasn't talking about Callo, I meant Zeyir!!!"

"..." Now it was Raven's turn to change face-color, though her face turned pale instead of red... "But you two keep fighting whenever you see each other! You even smack him with your staff all the time!"

"..." Compared to Raven, Narwa's face looked like a tomato at the moment.

"Okay, okay, okay... I couldn't care less. Just go ahead and live through this weird relation-thingy or whatever you want to call this hate-love-relation..." She sighed frustrated. "shall we go?"

"Sure!!!" Narwa smiled and watched Raven packing her bags for their travel.

Kapitel 31:

Chapter 31

„Now come on already!“ Raven barked while walking on. “They have to be here soon, so we have to hurry!” The dark-haired woman looked back while looking up at the dragon that had carried them here.

“Bye, sweetheart.” Narwa patted the creature's head thankfully and looked up at the person riding it. “Thank you very much for your help!” She smiled softly.

“No problem!” The rider was a small human-like person... Narwa had never seen a dwarf before, but this dwarf-woman called Grenlin had offered them their help right away as she had heard they needed someone to carry them to the elven-capital. They had been stuck in Corrunt, a city close to Raven's home –Wehrheim. No dragon-rider wanted to bring them to the elven capital Titania in the middle of the ‘Ocean of Trees’. Grenlin however had offered her help right away when she heard the girls wanted to meet their friends.

“You were such a big help! How can we ever pay you back?” The white-haired woman walked up to the dwarf, offering her a hand.

“You know...” Grenlin giggled playfully. “I would love to see the guys who are worth it for two such wonderful women to travel through a whole continent just to find them again.” She laughed. “Besides, I needed to cross the forest-ocean anyway to get to my homecountry.”

“Right, the Mirror-Mountains aren't too far away from here, aren't they?” Raven smiled and walked towards Narwa, taking her on her hand. “Come on! We don't want to miss our... dream-guys!” She laughed, receiving an evil glare from a very blushing Narwa...

The three dream-guys were still totally lost in the forest...

“Do you think they will find us again?” Allen rubbed his arm nervously.

“You asked this over five times by now, Allen.” Callo sighed. “Why are you so nervous about them?! This forest is giant! They won't be able to find us again!”

“...” Zeyir walked up to Callo, smacking him. The tan man deathglared him in return, yet a little confused about the demon-prince's reaction. “You have no clue... Yarna and Marduck are well known in Utgard. Yarna is a strategic master-mind with spies in every world and kingdom if you believe the rumors... Marduck however is a veteran. He was leading many attacks and fights between Asgard and Utgard, even though they are forbidden. His assaults are famous, his eager tries to lead Asgard to the top

are well known and his loyalty to the Holy Senate is pure idealism."

"Besides... They found Ardon as well and it was said to be a village unable to find for anyone who wasn't there before..." Allen sighed. "This black haired god... Yarna... He killed my whole village... If it wasn't Zeyir to lead me out of there back then, I'd be dead now as well."

Zeyir rose an eyebrow. "Wow, don't tell me that was some kind of thanks."

"What do you mean?" Allen blinked confused.

"Oh, I just remember you yelling at me for having no feelings, being a mean--"

"Okay, okay, we got it..." Callo barked. "Can't we just... get out of this forest?! If I start singing or writing poems, please kill me on the spot..." He sighed heavily. Allen and Zeyir laughed at that one. The elf had truly managed to lighten the mood just now.

"Haha, just how comes desert- and forest-elves hate each other just as much as Gods and Demons?!" Allen chuckled while looking at the demon next to him.

"Hmm..." Callo thought for a second. "No clue."

"I have a theory there!" Zeyir's evil smile didn't really please the desert-elf at the moment... "The desert-elves and the forest-elves are like cats and dogs. While dogs are more of the strong type. They are strong when hunting in a group, but they rather bark than bite. Cats are independent and freespirted. They love being out in the open but if they dislike something they crush their claws into your flesh. Aaaand they hate each other especially for these differences."

"And I would be..." The expression on Callo's face grew darked. Allen was holding back his laughter...

"One word: Bark."

"I give you 5 seconds before I crush your skull..."

"Theeeen I better run!" The demon rushed ahead, grinning brightly.

"JUST SO YOU WAIT!!!!" The elder rushed after him, rapiers drawn.

"Oh guys! Wait for me!" Allen laughed, running on... he was stopped by a high sound, like the sound of a cat or more like a squirrel... "Hm?"

A white little creature eyed him curiously, looking at his bag. The long ears waved slightly in the wind and some orange furr-parts gleamed golden in the sun that shone through the leaf-roof above them. It looked like a squirrel, just a little huger, like a small dog. The intelligent eyes followed him wherever he went.

"Hey, you... you are a spirit, right?" Allen smiled softly and leaned forward. "You are staring at my bag...?" The summoner followed the animal's gaze. "You smell this, don't you?" He took out his last portion of chocolate. "Here, you can have some..." He broke off a piece of the brown substance, handing it over carefully. The little spirit stepped closer, smelling on it a little, before placing its little feet on Allen's fingers, taking the piece of chocolate with the small yet sharp teeth. As the human wanted to draw back his hand, the small creature ran away as fast as possible, disappearing behind the trees.

"Sweet." Allen smiled before rushing after his friends again.

"Man!! Why did you have to form a pact with a healing-spirit?!" Zeyir complained. "Now you can beat me up with the insurance that you can flick me together afterwards again!!" His annoyance was clearly visible in his face.

"Just sit still..." Callo chuckled and healed the spot on Zeyir's head he had managed to hit with a summoned piece of steel.

"You guys are so childish... Sometimes I feel like a babysitter for two hyperactive 10-year olds you know..." Allen leaned on a tree, watching the show. Drop eyed Callo dreamdazed all the time, not concentrating on the healing, so it healed the wrong spot most of the time, not really using anything... Callo didn't notice, so he thought it was Zeyir's fault, moving too much which caused Zeyir to freak out even more now actually causing the healing to heal the wrong spot, which caused Callo to- "Arg! Drop! Concentrate! Callo, shut up! And Zeyir just sit still already!"

"Gotcha, boss..." Zeyir lolled out his tongue.

"Do you have anything to eat?" Callo looked over to Allen. "I think it's time for dinner..."

"Summoning makes hungry. I heard of that already." Allen grinned. "Yeah, shouldn't be much of a problem. We came across a few fine mushrooms before. I picked them up while you were busy killing each other..."

"Great!" The demon clapped his hands, receiving another smack from the elf.

"You know, I can help you!" Suddenly, Shade appeared on Callo's shoulder, looking over at Allen. "If you want, I can take a look for some herbs. I'm sure that will be tasty!" She grinned in her usual slightly evil manner. The way Drop deathglared her made Allen believe she and Callo were a perfect match...

"Sounds like a good idea to me. If it's alright with Callo."

"I don't care as long as I finally get a hang on this healing-stuff..." The tan man sighed, now finally noticing why it didn't work. "Would you mind not wasting my Mana?"

"Oh, sorry!" Drop hesitated, concentrating on Zeyir again.

"Hehe, okay, I will take a look around!" Shade rolled her eye before disappearing with a quite 'Plop'.

"This must be heaven..." Zeyir smelled on the pot Allen was currently preparing. In fact it was their desert, they were already done with lunch, but after their previous encounters with basilisks and raging Gods, Allen thought they deserved something special today!

"Out of the mouth of a demon... is that a good or a bad thing?" The human chuckled and threw his remaining piece of chocolate into the pot filled with apples and berries. It turned into a cream like substance, smelling wonderfully sweet.

"Hehe, if he was a dog, his tail would wag like a tornado..." Callo grinned and leaned on the treestump.

"Bleh!" The demon lolled out his tongue.

"I'm done!" Allen laughed and filled the sweet substance into three bowls, handing them over to his friends. Before they even had a chance starting to eat, Zeyir was already wolfing down his portion. "Hungry?"

"Nowily." Zeyir swallowed. "Not really... but I love this sweet fruit stuff!"

"..." Callo smiled and leaned forward, handing him over his bowl.

"Huh?"

"As reward for your previous masterplan." The tan man grinned, enjoying the bright eyes of his friend. He really looked like a dog at the moment...

"Awwwww, you are so sweet, Ca-chan!" He tried to look as innocent as possible, but failed miserably...

"Hahahaha!" Allen held his belly while eating the rest of his fruits.

"Whatever..." The elf rolled his eyes, sighing.

Zeyir was just about to eat the second bowl as... Something white rushed through the leafs, smacking Zeyir on the back of his head, causing him, to fall forward.

"UAH!!" He dropped his bowl but the white little creature caught it before it landed on the ground. "Ugh, what the-"

The squirrel-like creature rushed off, disappearing between the bushes.

"HEY!!! Bring back my desert!!!" The demon jumped up, sprinting after the creature.

"Zeyir, wait!" Callo and Allen ran after their companion.

"Kisu? Hey, Kisu!" A greenhaired elf walked frustrated through the forest. "Come back! You need to train with me!"

Suddenly the white creature jumped through the bushes, hopping on the young man's shoulder.

"Hey, there you are..." He sighed and patted the little spirit. The orange fur-parts of the little forest-spirit gleamed golden in the evening-sun. "Hm? Where did you get that bowl from?"

"CALLO, GET IT!" Zeyir's voice echoed through the trees as the tan man came running through the bushes. He was much faster than the demon...

"YOU!" Argon pointed at the tan man in shock, stepping back.

"You are—" Callo stopped on the spot, blinking confused.

"That's the guy wanting to force me to form a pact with him!" Drop appeared all of a sudden, her shrill voice warning Allen and Zeyir that entered the spot now as well.

"What's going on here?" The summoner blinked confused, looking from Drop to Callo and over to Argon.

"That little beast has my bowl!!" Zeyir barked stepping forward towards the elf and wood-spirit.

"Watch out!!" Allen grabbed Zeyir's ponytail in reflex, pulling the demon back as an arrow missed Zeyir by only a few inches.

"ALLEN!!!"

"Oh, sorry..." The human let go of the demon's hair, immediately starting a summon.

"Where did that arrow just come from?!" Callo growled, summoning Steel. "We need your help!"

"Gotcha!" The little spirit's power floated through the air, creating some kind of cell-shaped shields around the companions.

"Haha, now it is over for you!" Argon laughed evilly... compared to Zeyir's usual mean laughter it sounded just pitiful...

"Damn you little- ... No one dares trying to kill me and just gets away with it!" The demon formed a shadow-seal ready to hunt down whatever had just shot at him.

"Gleam!" A female voice echoed through the trees as a flashing light blinded the companions. As Zeyir re-opened his eyes he was clearly visible again. The light had burnt away his magic seal...

"Dammit, where is she?!" The demon bit his lip, stepping back to remain in the shielded area.

"... the burning King of the Sun. I summon you by our pact! Sol!!" Allen's voice grew louder all of a sudden as he finished his summon. Light streamed out of Allen's amulet as the Ruler of Light appeared in the middle of the forest.

"WHAT?!" Argon jumped back in shock, dropping Kisu by accident. "Nuramond! Get away!" The elf was just about to turn and run, as Callo grabbed the greenhaired man's arm, dragging him to the ground.

"You stay where you are!" The former Moonguard growled dangerously while Drop and Steel floated above his head.

"No!" Another greenhaired elf jumped off a tree, this time female, and stopped in front of the group. "Let Argon go! You... can do with me whatever you want, but let go of my little brother!" The elven woman knelt down in front of the Great Spirit, lowering her head.

"Nuramond! What are you doing?! Get out of here! You won't stand a chance against a Great Spirit!" Argon started panicking, but he didn't stand a chance against the well-trained grip of the desert-elf.

"Be quite, Argon!" Nuramond hissed. "It is your fault you got yourself into this situation, but still it is my duty as your sister to get you out of this!"

"..." Allen felt dizzy from the summon, placing a hand on his forehead. "Ugh... I don't really feel like doing anything at the moment..." He closed his eyes.

"Hmpf." Sol eyed his summoner and disappeared back into the spirit-world

"Hey!" Zeyir barked. "Where did he go?!"

"I can't hold him up for long yet, Zeyir, it was the best choice." Allen focused Nuramond. "We don't want to hurt you or your brother. We just-"

"We don't?" Callo rose an eyebrow, receiving a death-glare from Allen... Man, the human became better and better in deathglaring!

"Of COURSE we don't!!"

"Awww..." Both, Zeyir and Callo looked rather disappointed...

"GUYS!!" Allen shouted. "Anyway..." This was worse than kindergarten, that was for sure...

The woman called Nuramond glanced towards Callo, recognizing the kind of elf-tribe he had to belong to.

"We are looking for a town. Can you bring us to one?" Allen smiled softly, helping the green-haired elf up. She looked at him blinking for a few seconds seemingly thinking about her decision.

"Well... Of course. Why not." Giggling, the forest-elf looked over to Callo and her brother, walking up to them.

"If you dare touching my sister, I swear by the great trees, I-" Callo pressed Argon's head to the ground making it impossible for him to speak on.

"Hello, my name is Nuramond Whisperwind, and this is my little brother Argon." Smiling the elf offered the tan man her hand. The knight-like way he was raised, Callo greeted her in the manner he was taught to greet a lady, with a kiss on the hand. Zeyir just lolled out his tongue in disgust, turning away before anyone got the idea of greeting him the same way...

"Callo Moe-"

"HEY! What are you doing with my sis-"

"Argon!" Now it was Nuramond's turn to shut her brother up.

"Anyway, my name is Callo, this is Allen and that demon over there is called Zeyir." A rusper was heard from above their heads. "Oh, and this is Drop and the grey one is called Steel. Two of my summons."

"Nice to meet you." Nuramond didn't even look at the others. Somehow Callo got a strange feeling with this elf. "The little guy over there is my summon-spirit Kisu. So seems we are both summoners, right?"

"I thought that was nothing special amongst elves." Zeyir whispered towards his human friend.

"It isn't but you know, if you got a crush, you search for any kinds of similarities." Allen chuckled, recognizing immediately why Nuramond was acting that way.

"As long as she doesn't start with 'we both have pointed ears' I'm alright with it!" The demon laughed and watched the show. "Anyway, guys, would you mind showing us the way to the next town now?"

"Hm?" The greenhaired girl looked over to them, a little confused for a second. "Right, of course!" Smiling, she helped her brother up. "Let's hurry, so we get to Titania before night."

"B-but, Nura!" Argon seemed a little desperate now that they started walking towards

south, following Nuramond...

"Argon, you just will have to try tomorrow again." She patted the boy, giving an impression of a caring mother more than a sister.

"I wouldn't even be in this situation if the stupid brutal of desert-bully didn't pretend me from forming a pact with the little thing up there!" He pointed at Drop who glanced at him dangerously.

"Sorry but I don't understand." Allen walked up to them, getting interested in the whole situation. This seemed like lots of fun!

"To an elf's 18th birthday, an elf has to for a pact with his first spirit to be seen as a true adult amongst us. Otherwise he will stay one of the youngsters for us." The woman took Callo's arm interested. "Is there anything like this in the desert as well?"

"Uhm..." Callo hesitated. Why did this elf hug his arm?! "Not... really... It is an honor to form a pact with a spirit and usually only the nobles form pacts with other spirits, so... it is more a symbol of royalty or at least knighthood."

"So you are a prince?"

"A knight." Callo sweatdropped. This conversation went to a direction he didn't like at all.

"Hihi!" She chuckled a little more and leaned on the other elf. "A knight, huh? Sounds great!"

"..." Zeyir and Allen were almost bursting out laughing, Argon though couldn't find of this as funny at all.

"I just pray we will get to Titania before he gets why she is acting like this..." Rolling his eyes, he glanced over to Zeyir and Allen who had a really hard time not to roll on the ground, amusing themselves.

"Is she like that often?" Zeyir held a hand in front of his mouth just in case Callo was looking.

"Not at all, but I guess she has an issue with tanned men..." Argon's mood sank even more. "Why the hell a desert-elf?!" He added desperately.

"Hahaahahaaa, come on, that's not THAT bad!!" Allen laughed shutting up again right away as he noticed how loud he was.

"Yeah! Imagine she would date a god! That'd be even worse! Hahahaha!" Zeyir received some weird glares for that one...

"Zeyir, I guess for forest-elves, desert-elves are just the same as gods for demons." Allen rolled his eyes.

"Oh..." The demon blinked for a second thinking. "I wouldn't want to date either one!!" Laughing, he looked at Callo, suddenly getting a shoe thrown at his head.

"I wouldn't want to date you either!" Callo barked from ahead of them. "You are so loud these god-warriors would have noticed you if they were even miles away!"

"Whoops..." Zeyir chuckled, rubbing his head.

"... You are a really strange group, aren't you?" Argon eyed the human summoner curiously.

"Yeah, we are a pretty unique group."

Kapitel 32:

Chapter 32

„Oh and this is wonderful too!“ Raven held a long white dress in hands. Silver ornaments decorated the sleeveless top and a long silken scarf hang loosely down, almost floating in the soft breeze of the street. “Look Narwa! This’d suit you just perfectly!”

“Yes, it’s truly beautiful!” The white goddess looked through the other robes of the store they were currently visiting. The elven town was filled with so many wonderful stores... The girls could barely decide which one to visit next... There were shops with brooches, flutes, weapons and Raven swore she had seen one for hair-extensions! Not that Narwa needed any...

Grenlin followed the two girls, enjoying their lively behavior. She wasn’t used to this kind of company. The dwarfs she used to travel with were rather harsh and strict most of the time. These women were full of life and just spread of energy!

“Oh and this would match with you perfectly, Grenlin!” Narwa smiled and ran up to the woman that... barely reached her bellybutton in size... “This would look so nice.” She held a red dress with white ribbons and laces attached on it. It didn’t look too girlish, but enough to give her a feminine touch.

“It looks really nice Narwa, but... Nya, I dislike dresses... I need trousers to feel good.” Chuckling, the dwarf patted the disappointed witch, giving her a cheering smile. “How about we go to the Temple next?”

Nodding the girls agreed. They wanted to visit the forest-temple ever since they had arrived. The temple was built high on the giant tree around which the town was built.

“Here we are!” Nuramond smiled and pulled on Callo’s arm to lead him into the elven city, followed closely by Allen, Zeyir and Argon... first two just about to explode from suppressing their laughter... Argon felt more like crying though...

“If you’d mind.” The greenhaired man pushed himself between the tan elf and his sister. “Oh sorry, I mixed you with a tree-stump...”

“As long as you don’t start hugging me or writing poems about me I don’t mind ...” Callo retorted sarcastically.

That was too much for Zeyir. He bursted out laughing, while leaning on Allen who now couldn’t see any reason anymore why holding back as well... They kept chuckling and laughing the whole way till they finally reached an Inn...

Nuramond had offered them to pay for their rooms, but Zeyir and Allen had refused...

at least that little honor was left in their veins so they wouldn't let a lady book their chambers!

"Alright, guys. I want to invite you to my home this evening as little thanks for helping my brother." The greenhaired girl smiled sweetly. The guys stared at her in disbelief and shock... 'HELP?!'

"W-well..." Zeyir blinked nervously and looked over to his comrades... "I... guess that'll be alright..."

"Fine!" Nuramond chirped happily. She took her little brother's arm and dragged him towards the exit. "I will pick you up at 6 pm if that's okay with you. In the meantime you might want to restock your supplies!" She smiled delighted and pushed the exit-door open, leaving the three men behind.

"My..." Allen sighed and fell on his bed. It's been so long since they had slept in a regular bed.... The last time was in... Utgard and he had been out cold then... Oh great... "Now that I think about it... I wish I would have been able to see Galdor..."

Zeyir and Callo stared at the human confused. What was this sudden change of subject?

"W... well..." The demon bit his lip confused. "I guess... it is kinda... impressive if you don't live there every day..."

"What impressed me most was the black marble. I have never seen a dark material this intense..." The desert-elf mused his demonic companion. "Besides I have to admit your father isn't even half as bad."

"Tse..." Zeyir rolled his eyes. "Makes me remember I should probably buy him some souvenirs and send them to him..." An evil smile formed on his face. "Wanna tease him a little..."

"Hehe." Allen chuckled and hopped up, preparing for going to the market-place.

The elven market-place was giant. Filled with all kinds of shops, the boys decided to check on the weapon-stores first... Allen needed a new set of daggers... his were rampaged ever since their grindstones had gone out... Lucky Callo and Zeyir they owned special weapons that didn't loose sharpness that fast...

"Alright! We need..." The summoner paused for a second, staring at all the wonderful weapons with glee written in his eyes... Man, this guy could be really creepy when it came to blades... "5 Grindstones, two of these daggers, oh and that sword is nice! This one looks great too! How about—mhmnmhm..." Callo covered his comrade's mouth hesitantly.

"Just 5 grindstones and these two daggers... thank you..." Zeyir tried to chuckle innocently, but getting hit by the angry human again and again made the effort rather

pointless...

"Man, you are so unfair..." Allen stared at his new two daggers... "That sword looked so cool..."

"And how exactly did you plan on paying for something like that?!" Callo smacked his friend firmly on the arm, hoping to beat at least a little sense into him this way... But it was useless... he just kept staring at his daggers unimpressed.

"..." Zeyir closed his eyes. A weird feeling followed him ever since they had entered the marketplace. "Guys?"

The two men looked at their companion surprised. Zeyir had kind of fallen behind and the worried expression on his face showed them that indeed something was not alright...

"Are you alright?"

"Do you miss Utgard?" Allen's face took a worried expression, but as the other two men stared at him unimpressed, he added "Just wondering..."

"I can sense something strange in this town." Zeyir ignored Allen statement, concentrating on the subject again. "It is as... I can't really tell what it is, but we should make sure to stay on our guard." He sighed... He wished he was able to give them a better description of what was going on, but within him something really seemed to not be right... this weird feeling was like some kind of instinct, trying to tell him something... but what?!

"Well... then I guess we should return to the Inn after restocking supplies. If you want, I can do that." Allen wanted to take the wallet from Callo as the dark elf focused on Galdor's prince again.

"Could it be Gods?"

"M-maybe..." Zeyir hesitated. This could be it... maybe he was sensing a god!

"Then I better go restocking supplies." Callo swiftly snapped the wallet away from Allen, giving him a death-glare. "You are both on their black-list... for being a van Tirith, and you for being a Grozen..." He pointed at Zeyir's forehead. Even if it wasn't Marduck and Yarna, some gods might recognize the blue mark on his head. "Besides, they haven't seen me yet, so I'm out of danger."

"Guess you are right." Allen sighed disappointed... this would have been the perfect chance to run back and buy that bastard-sword he had seen before...

"Okay. But if you are not back till 6 pm-" Callo already turned away from them, cutting Zeyir off. Of course he would be back until then!

"Meet you later."

"..." Zeyir rose an eyebrow. "I don't know... but maybe it wasn't exactly the best idea to let him buy our food..." Chuckling he patted the summoner, heading back to the Inn.

Their Inn was close to a giant tree in the center of the city. On top of it some kind of temple was placed... It looked nice with the white walls and the green and golden ornaments... and the soft shadow it casted over the houses was just perfect for the young demon. He disliked too much sun anyway...

They had almost reached their Inn again as the feeling within Zeyir grew stronger again. He stopped and pulled Allen into a side-alley, off from the main-street.

"What's wrong?"

"C-Callo..." Zeyir gulped. His body was shivering. "Callo was right. There really are gods in this town..." He bit his lip and carefully looked around the corner of the building. If Yarna or Marduck were here and found them they were doomed! Allen would never be able to cast a summon fast enough and without Callo, Zeyir couldn't take on both of them! Even one of them would be a really rough battle with unclear ending... probably him dead... He shook his head to get rid of these thoughts... but the fact that it was Marduck who was after them as well worried him the most...

Nervously, Zeyir moved his hand over the scars on his chest. He knew that aura... but was that really Marduck or Yarna? It was familiar, yet... having a godly aura could only be a bad thing! Yarna or Marduck... Yarna or Marduck... Suddenly he heard words from right next to him.

Zeyir turned around, just to see Allen casting the last words of his summon.

"Allen, are you crazy?!" The demon wanted to interfere but it was too late.

Luna, the Great Spirit of Darkness appeared next to them, sending an immense wave of dark Mana through the city.

"Oh great! Any god within twenty miles range will have felt that!" Zeyir hissed.

"Yeah, and so will have Callo. Besides, that way I can give you a powerboost right from the start! Maybe they will retreat then." Allen looked at the Midnightqueen in respect.

"..." Zeir slapped his hand against his forehead. Of course having Luna here from the beginning was an advantage, but maybe they wouldn't have found them anyway?!

"I know this is the harder way, but it is also the safer one!" Allen hissed. "I don't want this town to turn into a second Ardon!!"

"If there are really Yarna and Marduck in this city, it WILL turn into a second Ardon you fool!" Zeyir hissed, grabbing his hand and dragging him deeper into the alley to get

away from the public masses.

"What if it is just a random god visiting this town?!" Allen barked. "Sensing such a strong dark presence as this of a Great Spirit, the god will retreat immediately!"

Zeyir stopped. Allen was right. The strong dark presence would scare any other god beside Yarna and Marduck away... and even if this had just shown off their location, with Luna on their side, he was at least able to hold against the two warriors for a little...

Suddenly he snapped back into reality. Panick filled his stomach as he sensed the godly aura coming closer to them.

"Prepare, they are coming!" Zeyir summoned his flamesaber in hands, ready to attack at any second their enemy was going to show his face.

"Luna, are you ready?" Allen looked up at the emotionless maiden, receiving a nod as an answer.

"There you go!" Zeyir rushed forwards as he felt the godly presence entering the alley.

"So there you are!"

Zeyir tried his best to stop, unsummoned his sword, but the ground was too wet to stop anymore!!

"AAAAH!" He ran directly into a very familiar god indeed... or to be more exact into a goddess...

"Uff!" Narwa landed on the ground, Zeyir landing right next to her. Raven came running up to them worried, but as she spotted Allen in the darkness, decided to greet him first.

"Allen! Hey!!!" She hugged him playfully, looking up at Luna in awe. It was the first time she had ever seen the Great Spirit and her dress of darkness and stars impressed the young girl far more than the awful situation her friend were on...

"You stupid idiot!" Narwa smacked her staff down on Zeyir who was still lying flat on the ground...

"Heyy! You are lucky I didn't slice you into pieces!" He retorted annoyed. "You could be dead by now so be grateful I reacted faster than you did-" Another hit with the staff made him shut up...

"You are such a rude person, it-it... Gra! I can't even find words for what you are!" The goddess snapped annoyed, standing up and trying to get her white dress clean again, but the muddy ground was just too wet to get off again... "That was my favorite..."

"Yeah... sure..." Zeyir rolled his eyes, receiving a smack from behind. "Ouch! Hey, who..."

As he turned around, he couldn't see anyone... until he looked down.

"Hey, that's not the way to talk with a lady, ya moron!!" The dwarfen woman smacked him on his arm again –not reaching the higher parts...

"Zeyir!" Callo came running through the street, two bags with supplies hanging around his shoulders while he held his rapiers in hands. "Uh... Narwa?" He looked confused at the goddess... so she was the cause...?

"Good midday, Callo!" The goddess smiled politely, waving with one hand over her skirt playfully. "I am terribly sorry for causing this--- incidence... I didn't know that stupid demon..." She gave Zeyir an angry glare. "...couldn't realize the difference between my aura and the one of an enemy." She hissed dangerously, promising revenge.

"I..." Callo looked from Luna over to Allen and Raven, back to Zeyir, Narwa and the unknown dwarf. "...see..."

"Hey, Callo!" Raven grinned brightly, waving the desert-elf.

"So you are the guys they were looking for? My name is Grenlin!" The dwarf smiled. "They were right, you guys really are handsome!"

"GRENLIN!!" Narwa's face grew just as red as Zeyir's eyes...

"Aw..." Allen looked at Raven, chuckling, receiving just an agreeing smirk from the mercenary.

"Well, you guys are way handsome, hehe~" Raven giggled innocently and hopped towards Narwa, hugging her playfully. Narwa looked away, nervously. Grenlin chuckled at the sight of the white witch. These youngsters were so cute...

"Anyway..." Grenlin interrupted the funny scene.

"How about we go to the Inn to talk...?" Zeyir sighed frustrated. This was getting more and more complicated...

Inside the Inn, the men entered their room, followed by three girl – receiving weird glares from the other guests.

"Raven threw herself on the bed on which she spotted Allen's packs, making herself comfortable. There were no chairs or tables in the room, so Narwa hurried over to Callo's bed, using her hat to sit on, to not sitting directly on the elf's blankets since her skit was still dirty from the little encounter with Zeyir before... Callo sat down

next to her while Allen jumped on his bed, next to Raven. Zeyir made himself comfortable on his own bed. Grenlin leaned on the doorframe, watching the –what she believed- couples interested.

“Hehe, you two make a nice couple!” She pointed at Narwa and Callo.

“Excuse me, but you must have misunderstood something there...” The desert-elf rose an eyebrow smirking.

“Oh...” The dwarf chuckled nervously. Could she really be that wrong...? Narwa had acted so nervously when it came to the three guys... She was so sure she had a crush in one of them!

“I... I would appreciate it if you didn't...” Narwa's face grew red. So she was right after all, but then who was the one?! Grenlin looked over at Zeyir. Nya, couldn't be him... She would have tried to sit next to him then... teenager always acted that way. Yet, maybe it was Allen, and Raven had been faster. That had to be it!

“Gotcha, girl.” She smiled and walked over to the window, looking outside and up to the forest-temple. The air was already a little cool here in the shades of the giant trees. Evening was coming...

“What are you doing here, girls?” Allen smiled, lying next to Raven on his bed. The mercenary chuckled innocently, rolling her eyes.

“Juuuust to see you again of course!” Grinning, she made herself comfortable.

“Haha, sure.” The summoner looked over to Grenlin surprised, noticing her worried glare on him...

“To be honest...” Narwa interrupted. “I talked with a goddess in Asgard and strange things are happening in all three worlds...”

“Woah, wait a sec!” Grenlin interrupted. Narwa slapped herself mentally. She had totally forgotten Grenlin didn't know anything about what they were doing here! “Asgard?! Goddess?! What are you talking about?!”

“You haven't filled her in, huh?” Zeyir grinned evilly. Narwa didn't like the look on his face at all... These almost bloodthirsty eyes announced a mean plot that was definitely going to turn against her again...

“Grenlin, I'm sorry I didn't tell you earlier.” The goddess stood up nervously, not taking her observing eyes from the demon-prince.

“I am a summoner.” Allen stated, noticing the waves between his best friend and the nervous goddess. “And since a few months my friends here and I travel through Midgard searching for the Great Spirits.” He smiled at the confused expression on Grenlin's face. “Strange things are happening here lately and it seems to have a close connection to Asgard and Utgard as well.”

"That's why I am here as well." Narwa spread her wings, showing her godly beauty.

"I... think I..." Grenlin rubbed her forehead in deep thought. "And... that guy's an Utgardian then?" She pointed towards Zeyir who snorted at the 'guy'...

"I'm not just a random Utgardian, okay?! I'm the Prince of Gal-" Interrupted by a smack from Narwa and a thrown boot by Callo, Zeyir shut up...

"Haha, honestly you'd really make a sweet couple!" She chuckled receiving a deathglare from the dark elf.

"Anyway, I hope it is alright for to keep quiet about it." Raven smiled at Grenlin. She already trusted the dwarf and didn't mind her filled in at all.

"Of course!" She smiled. "You can count on me! But I have to ask you to come along with you then! I can't leave the fate of our world in the hands of such youngsters as you are! I might be already over 30 years old, but you can count on me!"

Callo and Narwa snorted at that statement... That dwarf was clueless...

Suddenly someone knocked on the door. Taking a look outside, Allen gasped. It was already past 6 pm!

Nuramond opened the door to the room shily, getting rather shocked by the amount of girls inside.

"O-oh, hey Nuramond! Come in!" Zeyir grinned, hoping for Argon to be with her. Kisu rushed past the elf, hopping into Zeyir's arms. "Oh, hey little chocolate-thief!" He rubbed the spirit's ears playfully while receiving some affectionate smudges from the little squirrel-like creature.

"..." Narwa blushed as she watched the demon playing with the spirit. By now it rested on his shoulders, watching Nuramond happily.

"I wanted to pick you up for dinner..." The forest elf looked at Callo nervously and a little saddened.

"Right, we are really sorry. We met some comrades of ours here, so we totally forgot about time!" Allen tried to rescue the situation. Poor Nuramond...

"Exactly!" Zeyir got the hint and hopped up, taking Narwa's hand, leading her away from the desert-elf. "At least try acting like my girlfriend for a second, k? I will explain later?" He whispered almost unheard towards the goddess. Now her face grew even redder.

"I see!" Nuramond chirped happily, walking over towards Callo. "I'm sure you will love my cooking! I prepared something I heard was a typical desert-elf-dish!" Trying to impress Callo, she leaned forward a little taking his arm. "Come on!"

"As long as it doesn't taste like his cooking, I'm alright with it..." Allen whispered towards Allen, chuckling.

"If you want, you are invited as well!" The forest-elf smiled happily towards the other girls in the room.

Things really grew stranger with every single day...

At Nuramond's house, the group enjoyed a really nice meal. The sauce with lamb and something that looked like pancakes was really spicy but it tasted awesome. Allen had taken a third dish, Zeyir was even at his fourth. Callo, Raven and Grenlin –who had gladly taken the offer for a free meal- were at their second take while Nuramond and Narwa only ate from the pancake-like bread...

"You don't want any of the meat, girl? You are going to fall from your flesh!" Grenlin looked at Narwa worried.

"I'm vegetarian, Grenlin. And besides, it really is not as if I had any weight-problems." She chuckled innocently.

"That's what you are saying now..." Zeyir rolled his eyes, receiving another smack from Narwa's staff.

"Somehow I really start thinking you like being smacked." Callo grinned. Nuramond took the chance and hang right by his arm again.

"And? Do you like the food? Did I make it right?"

"For your first time trying a desert-dish it was good." He grinned. Man it felt as if it had been ages since he had gotten something like this to eat last time... Not that Allen's cooking was bad –not at all- but it was great eating something that tasted so familiar. "Next time try to get the Matzen not all burned up." He pointed at the pancake-like bread. "And a little less spice will do as well." He smirked. He didn't mind the spice at all, but the others' heads were all red already...

"Alright, I will try my best to become better!" Nuramond smiled delighted and returned to the table, taking another Matzen.

The group sat together until past midnight. Argon had only interrupted them once, picking himself some fruits from the storage-room next to the dinner-room before returning to his room again, grumpy. He would never eat a desert-dish nor would he sit next to a brainless bloody barbarian, a word he thought as kinda matching for the desert-brute sitting on his table... He had received a firm smack from his sister for that comment and some good laughs from the rest of the group...

Nuramond had started a conversation with Allen and Raven about crafting and blades. She seemed to like ornamenting all sorts of weapons, buying rather simple ones and

refining them with very well-trained methods. Callo had to admit, Nuramond was –despite the fact she was a forest-elf – not even half that bad.

While Zeyir and Narwa sank into an argue again about whatever reasons they could find again, this time it was about Zeyir's short shirt and how rude it was to show off his belly that freely, Grenlin mused Nuramond and Callo. That desert-elf really was clueless to no end... he wouldn't even have noticed the girl was interested in him if she overwhelmed him with red roses and pralines. Allen and Raven however were a perfect match! They came along greatly and seemed to have the perfect mixture between differences and similarities to come along with each other greatly. But what made Grenlin worry was the fact that Narwa seemed to have a crush on Allen too... this might cost the girls friendship in the end even...

The dwarf sighed and leaned on the table, tiredly.

"You are so silly!" Zeyir barked annoyed while crawling his hands into his hair.

"No, you are the one who is totally reckless and childish. You behave like a kid!" Narwa took her witch-hat in hand and twisted it a little, trying to get rid of her aggressions.

"Mind me reminding you? Compared to you old lady, I, in fact, am almost still a kid!" He lolled out his tongue, and so did Narwa...

Suddenly Grenlin realized it!!

"Wait, so you have a crush on Zeyir, not on Allen!" The dwarf chirped.

...

A long pause in which anyone stared at the woman in utter confusion, shock and surprise.

The first sound that broke the silence was Zeyir's laughter.

"Yeeeeeeah, sure, nice on, Gren!" He laughed a little more, now having Allen and Raven join in as well, though they more did it because they saw Narwa's face-expression, trying to save her from an uncomfortable situation. The goddess snapped out of her almost trance-like state, back into reality.

"Hahaha, no, not at all, Grenlin!" She smiled innocently. In her 700 years of life she had learned to suppress her actual emotions in times necessary... but this was so hard... Hearing Zeyir laugh at it like this was almost like a knife in her heart... If she would have let go of her feelings, she would have been crying... Why did she have to fall in love with someone who would never feel the same way for her?! Why did she always had to try reaching the impossible?!

Allen stood up from the table all of a sudden, rubbing his belly. "The food was really great, Nuramond! Thanks a lot!"

"You are most welcome!" The forest-elf smiled, pleased.

"Right, for tomorrow ... or better today..." Callo looked at the clock hanging on the wall... almost 1 am... "We need to get to the Cathedral of Nature. Do you know how we might get there?"

"The Cathedral of Nature?!" She blinked shocked. "You... will need permission from the Dukes to enter it."

"And how-" Raven was just about to ask as Nuramond continued.

"Tomorrow is a ball at the forest-temple to praise the glories of nature." She ran to a cupboard searching for something. As she returned she held three letters in hand with golden ornaments and sealed with a blue flower that, despite the color, reminded Allen of cherry-blossoms. "I and Argon got three tickets plus partner."

Zeyir stared at the tickets. This was the perfect chance! "But won't you and Argon go there with a girlfriend or something? Then only two of us were able to get there."

"Argon won't go. He won't go without a summon-pact." She smiled. "And... I could go with Callo, so the other tickets are for you to use!"

"I-"

"Great!" Allen, Raven and Zeyir interrupted before Callo got a chance to reject. "So, then we will have to go shop some new cloths tomorrow!!" Raven added happily. How came this girl was always thinking about shopping?!

"Very well. Shall we meet therefore tomorrow again? I will pick you up at midday!" Nuramond was so happy, she hugged Kisu so tightly, the poor thing escaped panicking into the trashcan at the other side of the room.

Back in the Inn, the guys were booking rooms for the girls.

"They have only two double-rooms left. You have to decide who will sleep with who." Callo handed over a key to Raven and one to Grenlin. Narwa had been silent for the rest of the evening, so maybe it was best if she wasn't alone...

"I'll take a room with Raven." Anyone stared surprised at the human summoner as he spoke up all of a sudden. "I need to talk with Raven about something important, so it'd be best if she had the single-room. I will go to my room again as soon as we are done talking, but as I don't know how long it will take I-"

"It's alright." Zeyir just patted his friend. "I need a nap now so just make sure you are not too noisy when returning to our room, okay?"

"Sure." Allen smiled and walked to the highest floor with Raven. The guys' room was located in the middle-floor while Grenlin's and Narwa's room was at ground-level. The

team split, going to bed after a great evening...

Raven shut the door behind them as Allen sat down on the bed to the side. The mercenary placed herself next to him, worried what he might want to talk about.

"Is something wrong?" The tone in her voice gave Allen a chill, she was really worried about him.

"There are... two things I need to talk with you about..." He sighed deeply and covered his face with his hands. This was burning on his soul now ever since he had re-awoken from his deep slumber after they had returned from Utgard... and now he had finally met the only person again he felt like talking about with...

"Go ahead, what is it?"

"You see... first I really have to wonder..." He rose an eyebrow, grinning innocently. "Since when does Narwa develop feelings towards Zeyir?!"

"Oh... that..." Raven chuckled bemused. "I was kinda shocked when I heard it as well... I think she realized it after her return from Asgard... must be really rough for her... Zeyir is not really the person to... you know... rely on..."

"I have to disagree in that on. He is absolutely reliable, even though his cold-blooded attitude gives me a chill..." Allen leaned back on the bed, his hands on his belly. "To be honest, I doubt he really dislikes her... In fact I have the feeling as if he likes her much more than he'd dare to admit. The fact that they are Goddess and Demon is the only thing that stands between them... but I guess that is none of our business... They have to figure that out on their own."

"But we could at least help them getting to the point to figure it out." Raven smiled so sheepishly, it was creepy!! The summoner felt a chill running down his spine. "Anyway, what was the second thing you wanted to talk about?"

"..." Allen closed his eyes. His heart was pounding so hard, he couldn't take it any longer. "Raven... what would you say... if I changed...? If I... was not human anymore all of a sudden?"

"That's completely ridiculous! You are you and that's it!" She smiled and kissed his forehead. "So don't be silly."

"Ever since I made a pact with Luna and Sol my body feels like changing. I don't grow tired anymore that fast and my senses grew sharper. My whole body feels like changing. It is almost as if I became a different person... and it scares me..." Once again, he took up his hands, covering his face from the woman, almost as if he wanted to hide whatever was lying underneath them...

Raven looked at him with saddened eyes, pulling on his wrists, getting free sight on him again. "That is none-sense! You are yourself because you are Allen van Tirith! You

are still the same person! It doesn't matter what you are, it is important who you are and even if the what is changing, the only one to decides what becomes out of the who is you!" She almost barked at him for having such dark thoughts. "What are you so scared of?! You will make pacts with all of the Great Spirits, and even if your body changes, you can ask them easily to turn you back! I'm sure they can do that! So what's your problem?"

"Raven... this journey... will cost my life."

Kapitel 33:

Chapter 33

„Hmmm...” Grenlin rolled around in her bed, enjoying the soft blankets and especially the sweet smell of fresh soap, coming from the bathroom in which Narwa was just taking a bath. It had been such a fabulous evening. The food had been great and the conversations were so funny. The only thing that she had to mentally slap herself for was her burst-out when she had realized about the goddess’ feelings towards their demon-companion... What a strange couple indeed...

A knock on the door made her snap back into reality.

“Who is it?” Her sleepy voice was a mere croak, she had laughed too much and too loud yesterday...

“It’s Raven!” A chirpy voice entered the room. The mercenary seemed to be in a rather good mood... made her wonder what she and Allen had been talking about yesterday...

“Come in!”

“Okay!” Raven slammed the door open, bringing breakfast on a tablet into the girls’ room. It looked truly delicious... Fresh fruits from the forest, elven bread, marmalade and yogurt. “Allen made breakfast, but you weren’t down when we were done eating, so I thought I bring it to your rooms.” She smiled happily.

“Oh, thanks a lot.... But what is the third dish for?” The dwarf observed the tablet a little closer.

“That’s for Zeyir. That demon never gets up before midday!” She chuckled and placed the stuff for Narwa and Grenlin on the little table to the side before leaving for Zeyir’s room. She entered the room carefully, sticking her head inside.

The oh so great prince of Galdor was lying in his bed, half-covered with his blankets and stretching all limbs away from his body. Raven couldn’t suppress a giggle. Zeyir was indeed very lovely when he wasn’t just in the mood to tease someone... She had to agree with Narwa there.

Looking around she had to remember there was no table in this room... what a shame. Sighing she walked over to Zeyir, placing it on the ground before his bed.

Sneaking out of the room again, she closed the door behind her, joining Allen and Callo in the entrance-hall of the Inn again.

“Let me guess...” Callo grinned as he saw Raven coming down the stairs.

“Yes, Zeyir is still asleep.” The human girl completed for him. “We still have one hour

until Nura Mond picks us up..."

"Guess it is time to decide who is going then..." Allen sighed heavily and looked from Callo to Raven. "Callo has to go with Nura Mond. That was the deal..."

"Hmpf..." The dark elf crossed his arms in front of his chest, leaning back against a pillar. The only person he had ever gone to a ball with was Serena... He had no clue how to act with other women...

"Anyway, I'd like to go with you, if that's alright!" Raven chuckled and leaned forward, eying Allen playfully. She received a happy nod as reward. She bit her lip happily and hopped back again towards the stairs. "How about we send Narwa and Zeyir together? Zeyir and Grenlin would look weird... besides, that's the perfect chance for her!"

Callo looked confused at the two humans, feeling left out of the topic... What were they talking about?! Zeyir and NARWA?! This was going to end in bloodshed and murder! "Come on... you are kidding right?! The two of them dancing?! I bet they tap on each other's feet in full purpose. And you know what that will lead to... Narwa smacks Zeyir, Zeyir yells at Narwa, she yells back, he tells her that Asgardians are stupid, she retorts that Utgardians are even worse,..."

"Hahaha, yeah, really sounds like them." Allen laughed at that one. "But hey... did Mister Leave me Alone just make a joke here?! By Asgard! What a historical day!" He received a smack for that one...

"Hihi!" Raven let herself fall backwards, sitting on the stairs. "I still think it'd be fun letting them dance together. After all, Zeyir is a prince and she is a high goddess... They should know how to behave in public. Nura Mond said that the lords of the Forest-Temple let only very few couples up to their stage, so if we want a chance to talk with them, we have to give our all, and I am sure they both can realize tha-"

"AH!" A yell from upstairs made them snap out of their conversation and running up the stairs to Zeyir's room. As they stormed into the room, they couldn't suppress an outburst of laughter.

"Haha, how funny..." Zeyir rolled his eyes as he lay on the floor. From what they could see, he hadn't noticed the tablet in front of his bed, slipping all over it... The marmalade and yogurt covered his black shorts and long T-shirt he used to sleep in. "Let me guess, that was Callo's idea..."

"Haha, no, in that case I'm innocent!" The dark elf grinned as sheepishly as possible for him while Raven tried to regain her cool -which was rather hard as she still had to hold her belly from the laughing.

"Nya, sorry, that was my fault alone." She added between the chuckles. "I really only wanted to bring you breakfast!"

"Suuuure..." He rolled his eyes, standing up from the floor, patting the remaining of

his 'breakfast' off his cloths as good as possible.

As they were finally all done with dressing up, bathing or taking breakfast, the group met at the entrance.

"So we are going to buy dresses for tonight?" Raven chirped happily.

"Yupp. I gotta help you pickin' as I won't go there for sure." The dwarf laughed bemused over the happiness of the human girl. That was indeed a cheery personality here.

"Right..." Zeyir and Narwa sighed, not looking at each other. "I brought my formal suit with me from Galdor so I don't really need anything..." The demon looked hopefully back towards the stairs, hoping he was able to get away without having to go shopping...

"Nice, then you can help us picking something." Allen grinned evilly. Zeyir sighed. Too bad...

"I think it'd be coolest to separate for shopping! That way it will be a giant surprise in the evening what the others wear!" Raven hopped on the spot, thrilled. Callo agreed with her and unfixed his wallet from his belt.

"Here, you can have some of our fonts." He gave the girl 100 Gar. Her eyes widened happily.

"Woa, I didn't know you were rich!!" She took the money, happily, letting it disappear in her pocket... that'd sure make an awesome dress for them!

"It is the money of all three of us... and Kyrin gave us an extra boost on money when we were in Galdor." The elf shot Allen an angry deathglare as he just wanted to bring the sword-topic back. "That doesn't mean we can throw it out for any junk, okay?!"

"Too bad..." The summoner sighed.

Nuramond had finally arrived. She was filled in by Narwa that they were going to split until evening, and the elf thought it was really a nice idea to get surprised in the evening.

The boys wandered through the streets, looking for some nice shops they could buy formals in... but whenever they found one, Callo lead them on... He wasn't going to wear a typical forest-elf-outfit! Besides, green was definitely not his color...

After over an hour of searching they finally found a shop of a dark-elf.

The woman had grey skin and silver hair –typical for the dark-elf kind. Her dresses weren't the typical kinds of robes they had found in the other shops. They weren't ornamented with so many strings or ribbons, but with belts instead.

After half an hour of advising, Allen had tried a crimson jacket on. It had black belts fixed over the arms and long sleeves with black endings. On the back two long strings of black fabric were fixed, giving him a feeling as if he still wore his scarf. A pair of white trousers matched perfectly with the black shoes.

Zeyir sat on a couch in the corner, eying the human from head to foot while Callo was busy looking through the other cloths for something for himself.

"I think it looks awesome..." The owner of the shop –her name was Terra- chirped happily while fixing the last belts on Allen's jacket.

"I have to agree. It suits you really well." The demon grinned, enjoying a drink while waiting. "The only thing bothering now is your green head-bandana..."

"Riiight..." He sighed and took it off. His whole mess of hair fell into his face, covering eyes and nose while his goatee made a perfect match with the mess...

"I think I have something to fix that." Terra ran back to her storage-room, searching for something. In the meanwhile Allen tried his best to get his mane out of his face again without knotting it all up.

"Honestly, Callo, how do you manage to have so much hair and never tangle them up?!" He asked frustrated as his fingers hang in the mess of hair.

"When your hair is as long as mine, you barely have that problem anymore as the weight keeps it down." He lolled his tongue out while musing another suit.

Terra returned with a thin black headband that almost disappeared between Allen's hair as she fixed it on his head, releasing peace and order in the struggle of chaos on the poor summoner's head...

"Now it's perfect!" Zeyir and Terra both chirped at the very same second.

"Hehe~" Allen rubbed the back of his head, pleased by his image in the mirror. "Now only one left is Callo..."

"I think that one would look awesome on him!" The dark-elf ran to her storage-room again, searching for something. "I think that'll fit perfectly with a desert-elf!"

"I prefer dark elf..." Callo sighed in bad memories... He didn't really identify himself with his clan any longer...

"Huh? Dark-elf?!" Terra blinked confused while returning with a big box in hand.

"No, dark elf, not dark-elf..." He flapped a little with his ears while blushing. "Just forget about it."

"As you wish." She grinned and pulled the box open. She pushed the elf with the box

into the cabin, ordering him to take it on. Without further complains, Callo disappeared behind a curtain, trying the outfit on.

"Are you sure you don't want any?" Terra looked at Zeyir saddened. "I have such awesome outfits for you... Demons and Dark-elves have a lot in common, you know?" She grinned sheepishly.

"It'd be really alright, Zeyir!" Allen laughed and patted his demon-comrade.

"..." He sighed. "How about that: I run back into the Inn, pick up my formal outfit and we have a look if you have something more matching, alright?" He rolled his eyes and jumped up at the cheering and agreeing nods of Allen and Terra.

As Zeyir ran to the Inn he really had to ask himself what he was doing... His prince-suit was good enough for any kind of ball, that was for sure. Still... maybe Terra knew some ways to get it a little more to his own taste... Zeyir liked his casual outfit much more than his formal one... and that for a lot of reasons... Maybe the dark-elf actually knew a way to fix that! Besides... he couldn't wait to prove Narwa that he in fact was not just a spoiled bratty prince, but he could be an honorable leader as well!

Callo stared into the mirror... He couldn't possibly wear that... He just couldn't!

"Are you finally done, Mister 'Dark Elf'?" Terra's voice echoed through the curtain as Callo snapped back to reality.

"I-I doubt this is going to work for tonight..." In that very second, Terra ripped the curtain open, musing the elf.

"What are you talking about?! It looks perfect!" She barked, dragging him into the main-room. Allen's mouth clapped open at the sight of the tan man.

"Yeah, it looks awesome!" Allen stared at his friend.

Callo wore a white shirt with high collar and plunging neckline, giving free view on his necklace. Over it a dark-red jacket with long wide sleeves gave him a majestic look. A few golden ornaments added to the image. A dark-gray set of trousers and black shoes fixed with belts matched perfectly to the overall-image.

"If I was you, I'd fix your long hair into a loose ponytail... like this." Terra took a gummy and fixed it in about shoulder-length on Callo's hair. "Now it is perfect!" She grinned and patted the elder.

"..." Callo just stared into the mirror... He was looking good, no question about that... but he had the weird feeling as if this might be even a little too good... Sighing he moved his fingers through his golden mane, eying himself a little longer in the mirror...

"We take it!" Zeyir's voice echoed through the shop as he returned through the entrance-door. "Callo, that's great!"

"Hmpf." Was the only reply of the desert-elf.

"Oh, let me see that!" Terra gasped and snapped Zeyir's formal cloths out of his hands. "That... that's fabulous! The quality is... is just... perfect! Where do you have that from?! Are you some kind of aristocrat or something?" She gulped and had a hard time thinking of the young man in front of her as a politician or something the like...

"S... something like that..." Zeyir rolled his eyes, while Terra pushed him into the cabin, wanting to see him with the outfit.

As the demon returned with his prince-suit on, Callo was the only one whose mouth wasn't clapping open. The tight black top with long wide sleeves added to Zeyir's slim yet athletic body-built. The silver ornaments seemed to glow in a foreign light while the crimson cape was fixed with two golden brooches to his top. The black trousers were fixed into black leather-boots.

Now Allen had to agree... Zeyir looked like a perfect prince in this outfit. Honorable and majestic.

"Wow! That's great!" Terra blinked and ran into her storage-room again. Allen had to wonder why she had most of her stuff in that little room instead of in her open shop...?!

She returned with a box in hands once again. As she opened it, Zeyir could spot a couple of silver chains, ornamentations and buttons.

"I'd add some of these... I have them left from an outfit I made for a dark-elf-lord a few months back... look." With a well-trained hand, she added black leather-belts with silver buckles on his sleeves, riffling them a little at that spot. Next she fixed some of her ornamentations on Zeyir's black collar as well as at the ends of his cape. With a couple of chains, she snapped off the golden brooches and took two blue gems instead, matching with Zeyir's mark on the forehead. Another chain she fixed on his black leather-belt, making it hang loosely over his legs. "Now it is truly perfect!" She grinned.

Zeyir had to agree. It looks even better now. And it was more his taste than before with the silver chains and ornaments...

"Great!" Allen chirped happily, looking over at Callo. "I think that's it then... Shall we pay?"

"Alright." The desert-elf smiled. By now he had re-dressed into his normal outfit. Zeyir disappeared in the cabin to take his casual stuff back on again, as well as Allen.

"That'd make... 120 Gar please." Terra smiled. Callo had already expected a high price so he didn't really care... at least it was important they made a good image of

themselves tonight, so they got a chance of talking with the elven-lords of the temple... A thought that made Callo shrug... He gave the dark-elf the money and fixed the rest on his belt again. "My pleasure!" Terra grinned and leaned forward a little. "Just one question... That demon-guy you are traveling with... could it be he comes from Galdor?"

Callo grew pale on that question. Did she recognize his mark?! How stupid of them... Zeyir's demon-mark was proof he was from Galdor! Why had they forgotten?!

"W-well..." He looked away awfully ashamed. He had never been the best person in lying or denying something...

"Hehe, so I was right..." She smiled. "That kind of fabric he wears is typical for Galdor!" Grinning she counted her money. Callo's heart started beating normal again at that statement... so she hadn't recognized he was in fact Galdor's beloved prince... good...

"Alright, we are done!" Allen and Zeyir returned to the main-room in their typical cloths. "Bye, Terra!"

They left the shop, walking back to the Inn. On their way Callo took Zeyir's arm, stopping him for a second.

"What's the matter, Callo?" He half expected something mean to come from the desert-elf again... They hadn't been teasing each other for a whole day by now! That was really strange... so was about time they picked on each other again!

"Is there a way to hide your demonic mark?" The elder asked seriously, coughing the demon off-guard.

"Eh.. Huh?" Zeyir needed a couple of seconds to understand the question. "Uhm... Not really... But with a little energy of Luna and Sol it should be unrecognizable for others when staring at it..." The demon sighed. Of course. How could he have possibly forgotten about that?!

"Alright. As soon as we are back at the Inn, I will make Luna and Sol seal your mark away." Allen smiled and walked on ahead back to the Inn.

Zeyir however stopped again for a second. He looked around... What was that? Had he just... felt something? "Hm..." He looked around. There were a lot of dress-shops around... so maybe Narwa was in one of them here...

"Zeyir, are you coming?" Callo shouted from almost 100 meters ahead of him.

"..." The demon shook his head, running towards his companions.

A man was sitting on one of the branches on top of the giant tree, standing in the center of the city...

He stared with empty eyes at a photograph hidden in an amulet around his neck. He stared at the happy family on the photo... A man with his wife, a girl and... two boys...

He grit his teeth frustrated and closed his hand around the amulet tightly, almost breaking it.

White hair fell over his face, hiding his hate-burning green eyes.

A couple of white wings spread from his back as he stood up, his lance tight in hands. He was going to have his revenge... He was going to have it no matter what... And if it'd cost his life, he didn't care... The only thing important was vengeance... A blood-revenge for what they had done to him... And he knew perfectly well who was going to pay for it...

Spreading his wings, Marduck flew into the wide open sky, towards the blood-crimson sunset.

Kapitel 34:

Chapter 34

Evening. Time had passed so fast, the sun was already about to set. The cool fresh breeze of the forest entered the city, bringing the scent of fruits and flowers into the streets.

The three men still waited at the entrance-hall of the Inn for the girls to come down. As far as Callo could hear with his keen ears, they were running around between their rooms and the bath-room, chatting all the time about things Callo couldn't quite hear... they seemed to talk all at the same time... How did girls do it that they were talking wildly between each other's sentences, yet they understood anything the others said?!

Zeyir played around with his cape, whistling bored while moving his fingers over the newly added ornaments. Allen tried to balance a glass with water on his finger, almost spitting the liquid all over him accidentally. Luckily he was always fast enough though to catch it before it fell down...

Finally steps were heard on the stairs. Unimpressed, Zeyir looked up to see Nuramond coming down first. She wore a typical forest-elven robe. Green and golden ornaments on a silky white dress, knotted together with golden strings. The long gloves were almost invisible. It really was a fine fabric, waving around her skin seemingly without gravity. Her hair was hanging loosely around her shoulders, decorated with small white flowers every here and there.

Smiling she went over to Callo, taking his arm.

"Alright, I hope you don't mind me wearing a forest-robe?" She looked at the tan elf with happy eyes.

"I don't mind it." Callo sighed... It was the first time he went out with someone else than Serena... this felt so strange! But it was just a ball and it was just for the purpose to get permission to enter the Cathedral of Nature! So there was nothing about it! He nodded and looked at the others. Allen was staring upstairs, Callo would have sworn his eyes would fall out at any possible second... But as he looked up, he understood why.

Raven stood on top of the stairs, presenting herself. Her dark bangs were ornamented with little green and brown jewels, fixed to her hair with golden strings. Her sort green dress sparkled and the texture of it looked almost like basilisk-scales. Over it she wore a toga of the same material as Nuramond's sleeves. On her arms golden bracelets and leather-bands hand freely, making little sounds while moving. The high leather-sandals matched perfectly with the overall image. She looked as if she wanted to go to a royal ball, but still... her wild and free-spirited nature shone through the cloths, matching the over-all image.

"And now we proudly present..." She grinned and stepped aside. "By the way I needed over an hour to fix Narwa's hair..." She added sarcastically. "Asgard's silver orchid! Tadadada!"

Zeyir almost fell from his chair as he spotted the white beauty. His face-color matched perfectly with his eyes at the moment...

Narwa's hair was indeed spectacular. Her long silver mane was knotted with hundreds of little white flowers into an almost net-like structure, falling over the rest of her hair. Little blue gems hang from two bangs she had falling over her shoulders. She wore the dress she usually wore on Asgardian festivities when she had to present herself the best way she could... and damn it did...

"I... is something wrong?" The goddess asked nervously, patting over her white dress. The silk-like fabric showed her body-shape perfectly, framing her with every movement. Small angel-wing-decorations ran down her hips over her legs, almost invisible, but still there... On the white necklace, a piece of fabric hang down on her, over her shoulders while a second one hang loosely like a toga around her slender gloved arms.

"D-don't... you think you... over did it a little?" Zeyir just said the first thing that came to his mind, rewarded with a smack from the witch... "Hey!"

"I-I'm not! That's what I always wear during balls!" She snapped, looking down on him. She searched something to complain about but... couldn't find anything... dammit... "A-and you could have done something with your hair!"

"Sure. Or I could just-"

"Okay, guys, enough exchange of lovability..." Raven cut between them, rolling her eyes. These two were so childish... But still somehow she thought of them as a great match! If these two weren't able to attract the lords attention, none of them would for sure... She just prayed they were going to attract it by their positive behaves, not by yelling at each other... "Let's just get this over with!!"

The Forest-Temple was more like a castle. Built on the tree's branches, the marble-palace guarded over the city, overlooking the thousands of houses on the bottom. Little fireflies made candles on the stairway up to the entrance almost unnecessary, illuminating the path in a surreal light.

As the six of them finally arrived on the entrance, two elven-guards stopped them, asking for their invitations. Especially Callo earned some mistrusting looks...

Nuramond handed over the three letters, taking the tan man's arm, making clear that if anyone dared to pick on him, they had to handle with her...

"Very well... Welcome to the ball." The guard bowed respectfully, leading the little

group inside.

Most of the guasts were forest-elves, wearing lighter colors like soft blue, green, yellow or white. That alone made the companions outstanding from the rest... leave alone Callo as the only desert-elf around against all the forest-elves here... They just prayed no one would dare teasing him... They didn't want to know how they reacted on his 'tree-hugging poets'-comment...

"Oh, look!" Allen pointed over at a side-room. "They have a buffet. I gotta check that out. Are you coming too, Raven?" He didn't actually wait for an answer, just dragging her along. But she didn't really care. Some food would do her good!

Callo sighed and looked over to Zeyir.

"Alright, guess we will split here. We will meet at latest 3 am at the entrance again. Understood?" From the sound of Callo's voice, Zeyir could have sworn he would have loved to say midnight instead of 3 am...

"Alright, gotcha!" He grinned and waved in good-bye as the tan man and the green-haired girl disappeared in the masses. The demon looked at the woman by his side and how she crossed her arms in front of her belly, almost as if she felt cold. 'This is going to be a long evening...' He moved his white-gloved fingers through his hair before turning to the goddess, taking her hand in a gentleman-like manner. "Okay, Narwa, I know you don't like me, but at least this evening we will have to come along." He looked directly into her deep sapphire eyes. "Just think of me as... one of your god whatever guys you'd prefer going to a ball with, alright?"

"..." Narwa hesitated. She closed her eyes. 'I don't want to go with anyone else here but with you...' She whispered mentally, well aware that the demon-prince next to her could not read her mind... "I... will do my best to make it as easy for you as possible."

"I'd love to say, just act like yourself, but we know how that would end, right?" He grinned sheepishly, earning a kick on his foot as reward.

"Idiot." She added before taking his hand in a princess-like way, following him to the dance-floor.

Callo in the meantime had a rather rough time keeping Nuramond's forest-friends from killing him... No matter what he said it was always the wrong thing... He sighed and just prayed someone could make the time run along a little faster... it had been only 15 minutes so far and he was more exhausted than after an hour of training...

"So, how is it living in the burning sun with nothing but rotten trees around?" A male elf with blonde short hair asked sarcastically. Of course Callo noticed the mocking sound in his voice, but at least this night he had to suppress the urge to chop some heads off... Come on, it couldn't be that hard to not kill someone!

"I heard you have to put a lot of spice into your food to keep it from turning un...enjoyable..." The girl-friend of the elf that was trying to mock Callo seemed to want to impress her love, adding random things to anything he said, just to stay part of the conversation.

"Yes, that is indeed true. The hard conditions in a desert thought us ways to live even with poor supplies." Callo prayed they wouldn't find anything to tease him with that too... Nuramond was gone to get them some drinks, but in the meantime her so called friends had just plenty of time teasing him all along...

"So, if you have to over-spice your food all the time, I am sure you lost sense for the fine differences between tastes, unable to enjoy the variety of nature's rich table." After that comment Callo really wished he hadn't left his rapiers with Grenlin in the Inn...

"If you want to say with this that I am unable to differ between the taste of an apple and a raspberry, I have to correct you. I am very well able to enjoy more than just over-spiced food." Sighing he looked around. Where was Nuramond when you needed her?! She would have kicked them for that comment! And as a forest-elf she didn't have to fear to get kicked out for it...

"You are all followers of Sol?"

Callo's gut felt like twitching. If he dared saying something about his faiths now, the boy was dead...

"Yeah, but that doesn't mind the desert-elves are single-minded, right Master Moerbin?" Shade popped out of nowhere, bowing respectfully in front of her master. She heard a silent 'thanks' coming from him before turning towards the forest-elf again. "My master is one of the high-ranked Lord-Knights of Yora and I am very proud to serve him. After all he was able to form a pact with me in the young age of 9 years, defeating me in fair combat to gain my full trust and power." Callo snorted at the 'combat-comment'... "You see, it is an honor for a simple spirit as myself to serve even under the flag of Sol as a servant of the honorable desert-elves. I'd give my life and Mana for my Master."

"..." The forest-elves blushed, unable to retort anymore. "W-well... I... better fetch us something to drink. Come dear!" They escaped.

"How did you know they-"

"These are forest-elves, Callo." Shade grinned. "They think of your kind as brainless barbarians that try to act intelligent... no matter what you would have said, it wouldn't have kept them from mocking, but they believe in the might and honor of spirits. A forest-elf is said to be only grown up when having formed a pact. So hearing me say you formed one with me in such young age, and I'd even serve under a light-banner kinda took the wind out of their sails!" She grinned evilly, letting herself fall into her master's arms.

"You saved me there." The desert-elf grinned, patting his friend.

"I'd do aaaanything for you, Master Moerbin!" She rolled her eye playfully, totally overacting. "Oh, look! There is Nuramond!"

Raven and Allen in the mean-while had found a nice table at the balcony, enjoying a formidable meal.

"I got to remember that. Salmon in saffron-risotto... I have to try that out next time!" Allen took another bite, overwhelmed with happiness.

"Have you tried the grilled bananas with honey? They are awesome too!" The mercenary chuckled, taking another piece. "Mhhh, have you tried the tiramisu?"

"Yeah, but... it's nothing special. It's lacking cognac. And the biscuits are drowned in cream..." The summoner nodded towards the brown mass in front of him.

"Hehehe..." Raven chuckled and leaned on the man's shoulder. "You are such a gourmet."

"Indeed, I have an exquisite taste, y'know." He giggled and continued eating more of the different desserts.

The dance-floor was rather full, but still anyone had enough place to dance.

Whenever someone dared stepping on Narwa's long dress, he or she earned a dangerous growl from the demon.

Narwa's face was rather red the whole time, but Zeyir guessed it was just from the heat.

"So..." The goddess started, looking deep into the demonic crimson eyes ahead of her. "I thought you couldn't dance?"

"I pretend I can't dance to avoid being asked to dance with the princesses and ladies of other countries on demonic balls. However, pretending and being is something completely different." The prince of Galdor avoided the goddess's gaze, looking around them whoever else was dancing next to them. Narwa noticed his tries to avoid her however...

"I understand. You don't like dancing then?"

"Yes. I just prefer the art of fighting over the art of dancing, but as a demonic leader, this is not a bad thing, in fact it would be dangerous if it was the other way round for me." He sighed and finally looked into her blue eyes.

"You sound so different today." She giggled, noticing how Zeyir had put a perfect

mask on, one he would show as Prince, but she knew it wasn't his real face.

"..." Once again he turned his face from her, pretending to watch a couple next to them.

Narwa sighed. Zeyir just couldn't be helped... But why did he avoid her? She knew he'd never accept her feelings, but being ignored was even worse than being rejected!

"Z... Zeyir?" She started shily. The demon was looking at her again, focusing her with his deep crimson eyes. She could stare for hours into these deep eyes, seeing the little golden parts flicker in the candle-light... "I was... wondering if... well..." She felt her cheeks turning red again. Why had SHE have to fall in love with a demon?! Why?!

"Hm?" The demon's eyes were just about to wander off again, as she took his hand tighter, stepping forward closer to him, lying her second hand on his shoulder. Zeyir looked at her nervously. Now they were really close... what was she thinking?! He had tried avoiding too much contact over all of the evening, just because he knew she'd go all crazy if they had to stay together for too long and now she was even coming closer?! "Wh-what are you-"

"I want to dance with you, and it just feels odd dancing with so much distance." She replied flatly, now ready to really dance with him, enjoying the warmth from his body.

"As... you wish..." Now it was Zeyir's turn to blush. He bit his lips nervously while stepping on.

After a while of dancing in silence, an elven lady suddenly stepped next to them. After a few seconds in which she didn't say a word, Zeyir decided that he was annoyed by the stranger...

"May we help you, Milady?" He asked in a mocking tone.

"Indeed." The lady smiled softly. "My husband and I were wondering if you wanted to continue your dancing on the upper floor with the elven lords and ladies of the Forest-Temple?"

Zeyir was just about to say no as Narwa stepped on his foot, reminding him what they were here for.

"We would love to join you. However we are here with our friends..." Narwa smiled warmly, bowing politely.

"Of course." The woman smiled back, getting along with her right away. "I will tell the guards to let you and your friends up to the higher floor."

"Thank you very much." The goddess cheered, taking Zeyir's hand, pulling him off the dance-floor. It took them only a couple of minutes to pick annoyed Callo and happy Nuramond, and Allen and Raven from the buffet up.

"I knew you would do it!" Nuramond smiled, Raven agreed with a cheery hug. "Wow, I have never been in the second floor." She took Callo's arm a little tighter.

"..." Zeyir just rolled his eyes. "It was just because we had the right outfits, that's all. Nothing can compare to a prince-suit and a goddess-" Again Narwa kicked his foot. Now that she didn't have her staff with her, that seemed to be her new favorite weapon against him...

"Prince?" Nuramond chuckled, thinking it was a joke. "Anyway, there is a girl named Himikea. If she is here, ask her for permission to enter the Cathedral of Nature... She is responsible for the keepings of the altar and has the most influence in that matter."

"Himikea... alright, I will remember that name." Allen smiled, laying an arm around Raven. "Is there a way to recognize her?"

"I haven't met her in person yet..." The greenhaired elf placed her hands on her hips, thinking for a second. "But I heard she had hair like leaves and long fox ears... I can't really imagine that but... Oh well, that is how it was described to me..."

"Then we will have an eye on that." Callo stated while looking around, hoping the elves up here weren't as picky and mocking as the ones in the lower hall...

"We will go dancing a little more then, okay?" Narwa smiled, taking Zeyir's hand who just looked at his two best friends desperately.

"Eh... you know, now that we are in here, we don't have to-"

"And if I want to?" Narwa turned on the middle of the dance-floor. Zeyir blinked confused, his cheeks turning red. The goddess just smiled and leaned on him a little more, closing her eyes.

"Excuse me? We are looking for Himikea." Nuramond asked an elven woman with a long white robe. She Gazed at the small group confused and surprised, eyeing especially Callo from foot to top... Why did he feel like the black sheep here?!

"She is over there, I think..." The woman said without looking away from Callo, searching for weapons of any sort...

"Thank you very much!" Nuramond bowed gently before following the shown direction. Allen, Raven and Callo just trotted after her, grateful she was the one leading through the 'pointy eared mass'...

"Kinda hot here..." Zeyir sighed after a while... Up here it was really hotter on than on the lower floor...

"So sensitive today?" Narwa chuckled playfully, her hair waving around loosely.

"I-It's not really the heat, but the thick air that bothers me..." The demon looked away ashamed before returning his gaze to the white beauty.

"Do you want to go out and get some fresh air then?" She smiled and lead him from the dance-floor, not awaiting an answer.

The fresh air outside streamed through their lungs, giving them a refreshing feeling. Some other elves stood outside on the balcony, chit-chatting with each other. Narwa looked around... she'd prefer being alone with Zeyir though...

"Would you like going up there?" She smiled softly, pointing at a thick branch leading upwards into the crown of the giant tree. Zeyir followed her gaze, seeing only the thick green leaves, softly lightened by the light of fireflies. "I would like talking with you..."

"Well... I... guess that'd be a good place to talk..." The throat of the demon-prince was all dry. He could feel his heart racing and his stomach switching in nervousness. Why was he so nervous?! And why did he feel like his knees were giving in at any possible second?!

Narwa just smiled, taking his hand. "You are pale...?" She stated while climbing over the railing, on the branch. Zeyir followed her nervously, passing by her, making his way up the branch.

"Well, I... uhm..." He swallowed a few times. His mouth was all dry. He bit his lips while looking from the top of the branch back to the white witch.

"I will go and find us some drinks. Why don't you go up on top in the meanwhile?" She giggled at his nervousness. She could feel it on his very aura that he was insecure about the situation. Then again she could understand his feelings very well... the whole situation was weird... for both of them. If she hadn't experienced so many times in her life already that going forward is better than remaining with old habits, she wouldn't have probably went this far...

"..." The demon only nodded, walking farther up while Narwa returned to the balcony.

"Are you Himikea?" Raven blinked nervously as she tipped on the shoulders of a green-haired figure in front of her. The woman turned her head, her long brown furred ears moving back slightly. Her hair fell in many strains, reminding the mercenary of leaves while a black dress covered her slender body.

"Yes, indeed, I am Himikea. Pleasure to meet you." The woman smiled softly, nipping on her drink. From what Allen could see it was honey-water... The elves around her eyed the small group curiously. Nuramond felt their gazes resting on her especially, since she was holding Callo's arm, shyly.

"My name is Allen van Tirith!" The summoner decided to make the first step, offering her his hand. A grunt was heard from an elf standing next to her.

"And I am Raven. Raven Izuka!" The mercenary grinned cheerfully, giggling. She looked over to the two elves next to her.

"My name is Callo Moerbin." The desert-elf was just about to offer his hand as well, as one of the forest-elves stepped in between him and the keeper of the Cathedral of Nature. Callo grit his teeth, growling almost Zeyir-ish while sending deathglares at the interferer.

"Lord Raphel, would you mind stepping aside?" Himikea smiled, pushing the elf gently away.

"B-but, Lady Himi-"

"Aren't you a little racist here? Anyone of you?" She turned, her glass on her lips. "I am not an elf either. Is that reason for you not to welcome me here?"

"B-but he is a barbarian from the desert! He does not appreciate the beauty of nature!" The blonde man snorted almost destroying the glass of wine in his hand. As Allen looked over to his tan friend, he grew pale... He knew that face way too well... Callo couldn't hold back anymore! What a great moment for bursting out...

"I really had enough of this! Ever since I arrived in at this ball people keep telling me a barbarian, trying to find any possible reason to pick on me!" The desert-elf growled with a deep dangerous voice. "It is true that we appreciate Sol's power over Weyards', but that doesn't mean we don't honor him as well! I think we take him more seriously than anyone of you, after all-"

"Indeed, Lord Moerbin. I agree with you." Himikea caught the ex-moonguard so off-guard he totally lost track of what he was just about to say. The woman received weird glances from all watchers... Allen, Raven and Nuramond were just glad she had been able to prevent anything worse from happening...

"B...but..." Callo shook his head as if he tried to get rid of a thought.

"It must be hard living in a desert. Yet you and your race manage to survive in these rough conditions." The green haired girl leaned forward, smiling softly while taking another nip on her drink. "You must pay very close attention to your crops and farming there... I could never do that! We are living in richness here, but you manage to survive with so much less than we do... I am sure we'd be able to learn a lot from your kind!" The surrounding elves almost dropped their glasses at Himikea's words. Callo felt his cheeks turning red. The last thing he had expected was someone defending him or his tribe here... "Anyway. You wanted to talk with me right? Why else would you know my name." She smiled, looking at Raven and Allen again. The summoner got the hint, changing the subject again.

"Yeah, right!" Allen scratched his goatee. "See, I think it'd be best if we talked somewhere else."

Zeyir sat on a branch, staring down at the thousands of lights beneath his feet. He watched the flickering fires on the streets, as nightguards crossed through town, ensuring safety in the elven capital. The sight was breath-taking... yet it reminded him so much of Galdor... He loved watching the capital from his tower at night... not that it was very light in the underworld during daytime anyway, but when the pitch-black cloak covered the houses of Galdor and only small lights shimmered through the blackness of the night, it was as if the stars had fallen from the sky, sharing their light on earth now.

"What a wonderful sight, isn't it?"

Zeyir's face grew white at the familiar voice. Shivering slightly he turned towards the source of the voice... A pair of white wings gleamed softly in the dark, while a golden spear was pointed directly on him.

"!" The demon jumped up, his eyes wide in shock.

"The trick you sued there in the forest was really nice, but did you really think you could fool us for that for long?" Marduck spinned his spear a little while flying right in front of the demon-prince, not taking his eyes from him. "This time... you are all mine... And not Yarna nor your summoner-friend will come in my way."

"What?!" Zeyir blinked confused. What was that guy talking about?! Wasn't this all because of Allen?! Why was Marduck after him?!

"You escaped me as a kid... but this time you won't be that lucky, brat." The god summoned a light-ray in his hand, ready for a bloody fight.

"What's your problem with me?! What have I done to you that you are trying to kill me?! You can't tell me it is just because I'm a demon!" He snapped, summoning his flame-saber now as well... Even though it was dark, he doubted he was a match against Asgard's holy General...

"You dare asking...!? YOU DARE EVEN ASKING?!" He rushed forward, stabbing his spear right into the spot Zeyir had been just a second ago. The demon jumped backwards, landing on his feet almost cat-like. Yet, he was well aware that if he made only one false step, he was going to fall down... and that was certain death!

Marduck rushed after him, making use of his wings. Yet again they slowed him down in his movements as he had to take care of the surrounding branches. After a sidekick, hitting Zeyir right in his legs, causing him almost to fall down, his wings got stuck between two branches. The demon-prince took advantage of the situation, slashing his claws down into the god, hitting him on his left arm.

"I will show you how I handle your kind..." Marduck hissed, taking Zeyir by his cape, throwing him away. With a gasp, Zeyir clashed at a thicker stump, feeling dizzy after it hit the head. "This is it! Justice will be served!" Marduck turned with lightning-speed, throwing his spear at the paralyzed demon.

A rush of white was seen just when Narwa stormed between them, stopping the spear with her light-magic.

"Narwa! What are you doing here?!" The god almost fell forward in shock.

"I ask you the very same, Marduck!! You are supposed to be in Asgard!" She snapped dangerously while taking out her wings.

"Step out of the way, Narwa! I will do what is necessary!" He hissed, re-summoning his spear to his hands.

"Why?!" Narwa was almost crying. "You are not used to be like that! You were always so pure and strong-spirited!" Her sapphire eyes focused the god in front of her, gleaming with desperation. "If you are going to attack, it is my duty to stop you! Please don't force me to fight you. We are friends!!"

"If you don't step aside, Narwa, I will have to forget about that fact!" Marduck growled. "This demon deserves judgment. A verdict... And the verdict for murder is death!"

"What are you talking about?!" Zeyir held his head, still feeling drowsy...

"!" Narwa suddenly stepped back, shielding the demon even more. "No!" She summoned light in her hands. "That's not right, Marduck! He didn't do a thing! I know what they did to you, but he is not responsible for the deeds of his ancestors!"

"They killed them! And I don't care which Grozen it was, but one of them has to pay! And only this one is left!" Marduck growled. "I will revenge my two sons, Narwa! No matter what!"

"You are mad!" Zeyir growled. "I have nothing to do with that!"

"That's right! That was over 200 years ago!" Narwa shouted. "He was not even alive then! You can't make him responsible for the fact a demon killed your sons! Of course it was horrible, but what you are doing is only going to spread the hatred!"

"I wonder what you'd do if someone killed Ifrit..." Marduck just stated, emotionless. "Weren't you the one telling me you'd hunt anyone down daring to hurt those you love?"

"..." The goddess looked away nervously. Zeyir was already back in fighting-stance, gritting his teeth and summoning some darkness around his fingers. Narwa's words were a mere whisper, so only Marduck could hear them... "And this is exactly why I won't let you hurt him..."

Narwa and Zeyir both dashed forward, ready to attack.

"So, you want to see the altar at the Cathedral?" Himikea smiled softly while leaning on the window.

"Exactly." Callo stated calmly. He felt much more comfortable, now that none of the forest-elves dared to say anything against his kind anymore... Even though he was not proud of what his tribe did –or more precise what it not did- he still felt linked to the desert...

"Precisely, it is necessary for us to get there. We cannot leave without visiting it before." Allen sighed. If Himikea really was the guardian of the cathedral, she'd find out about their plans anyway...

"I see. So I guess you are here because of Weyards then?" She rubbed her wrist while staring at nothing in particular. "Do you know she has been gone for a long time by now? She won't show her face to anyone anymore... It is as if her power has been sealed away."

"!!" Allen's eyes widened. Callo had said something close to this the first time they had met... He once mentioned Sol had disappeared all of a sudden as well. So it was like this for all Great Spirits? "This is, why we are here."

"I see..." The guardian sighed and looked outside the window. "... hm?" She blinked, pressing her nose against the window. "Is there... someone fighting?!"

Narwa was sent back by a light-beam, gasping in pain as her slender crushed through a couple of branches, ripping her dress. She fell unconscious from the hard hit.

"Narwa!" Zeyir gasped, grabbing her hand, pulling her up again, before she fell down the tree. "Stay with me..." He whispered out of breath while placing her between two thick branches. Marduck hesitated. He waited for Zeyir to ensure Narwa's safety... After all, his entire grudge went against the demon alone, not against his former friend...

"Are you done now? Fine, then let's end this!" He barked while spinning his spear over his head.

"Grrrr..." Zeyir held his left leg. Marduck had managed to hit him there before and it slowed him down in a way that made this whole fight pointless. He had no chance against the god!! But then again... When he was a child he had managed to get himself out of Marduck's hands too... All he needed was a miracle...

Moving his fingers slowly over where he knew his scars were, he unsummoned his sword. His claws were the weapon of choice in this fight.

When Marduck came, Zeyir had almost no chance of dodging, preventing the pointed blade with his bare hands only.

"Dammit..." The demon growled angrily as the hilt of Marduck's spear hit him against

his already wounded leg. He sank down, gasping.

"I will give you at least a few seconds to think about your corrupt kind before you die." The god said emotionless, the blade of his spear resting on the demon-prince's neck... He had finally revenged his sons... He switched his spear, hitting the hilt right into Zeyir's back.

"AAAAAAH!" The demon fell forward, hitting his claws into a close thick branch, but he didn't have the strength anymore to keep himself from falling... He was going to fall down at any second...

"..." Satisfied, the God stared down the tree, waiting for his victim to finally lose the last strength left in him...

"By our pact, I summon you! Steel! Shade!" Callo's voice echoed through the leaves, giving Marduck a chill. Suddenly, two small spirits appeared close to Zeyir. Gasping, he took his spear tightly in hand, throwing it at the demon to finish him off, but Steel shielded him.

"Shade, now!" The little creature shouted. The darkness-spirit nodded and summoned an invisible-seal, making herself, Steel and Zeyir disappear in the shadows.

"What the-!?" The god growled in frustration, just about to fly down as suddenly Raven kicked him right into the back. "You little—"

"Allen, hurry! Summon Luna! I will keep him busy!" The mercenary shouted, ripping her dress on the hip to move quicker. Nuramond joined her, breathing heavily in nervousness. Kisu sat on her shoulder and a middle Light-Spirit floated behind her.

"I call upon the Midnightqueen, the—"

"Not so fast!" Marduck spread his wings, flying over the girls' heads towards the summoner, making it impossible for him to summon anything...

"Ugh..." Zeyir hissed in pain. He was unable to hold out any longer.

"Hang on!" Callo's voice entered his ears softly, as a warm invisible hand took his own, pulling him up on the branch.

"You should really... think about your choice of words..." The demon sighed, relaxing now. They were a couple of levels beneath the others and the branch was about to break at any second... Callo needed to stay with Zeyir just in case, but he sent his spirits up to help the others.

Allen had a rather hard time as Marduck saw him as the main-threat. His agility was slowed by the branches but the god still was a tough enemy... Even with Nuramond's and Raven's help it was unlikely they managed to beat him here!

"By the power of nature, hear the voice of the forest and clear cry of trees." Himikea spread her arms from the beginning of the branch Allen and Marduck were fighting on. She had seen enough to tell who was the bad guy in this fight, and she was not going to let anyone spoil the festival! "I call upon the mighty force of nature itself, the flower of the eternal tree and the keeper of the forests!" As he heard this chant, Allen felt his heart beat with double the speed. He turned his head towards the green-haired woman, eyes widened. "I summon you! Weyards!!"

Marduck's face turned white all of a sudden. The tree seemed to move, seemed to turn alive as the branches, leaves and robes hanging on it moved towards the god, ready to attack him. And then it started... Allen felt himself sinking on his knees as Marduck was forced back by the tree, fearing for his life there. Defeated, he had no other chance but escaping.

He spread his wings and summoned a light-orb, sending it towards the sky. With all his might he sent it flying against the attacking branches, while following it out of the mess.

"Finally..." Callo made himself and Zeyir visible again, taking the wounded demon's arm over his shoulder while the branch they were on moved slowly towards the upper level where the others were.

As they finally were all together again, the tree seemed to be left by life again, returning to its previous state. Himikea shivered and sank down on her knees exhausted. A green glow surrounded her and now her hair seemed even more 'planty' than before...

"Are you okay?" Allen came running up to her, helping her up again.

"It is... okay... Calling up Weyards' might just... costs me a lot of energy..." She sighed, whipping the sweat off her forehead.

"But how did you do that?!" He watched Raven and Nuramond helping Narwa up as she slowly regained consciousness. "I thought there was... no one able here to form pacts with Great Spirits!"

"Says the one with a pact with Luna?" Himikea chuckled.

"That is... different."

"I see... So you are from the van Tirith-clan then?" She smiled softly, earning a confused gaze of the summoner. "I have a pact with Weyards because... I am a half-spirit..." She smiled and patted the dust off her dress. "Only because of that, I am able to have a close bond with her..."

"..." Allen took her on his arms, carrying her. He could feel she was too weak to walk.

"We should get away from here before someone notices what we have done..." Raven

bit her lip as she helped Narwa walking over to them. She pointed at the hole in the tree nervously.

"There is a hidden stair-way at the backside of the tree." Himikea closed her eyes exhausted, relaxing in the summoner's arms.

"Then let's hurry back to the Inn. We can discuss the rest there!" Callo summoned Drop to fix at least the worst of the group's wounds before they followed the branches towards the back of the palace.

Kapitel 35:

Chapter 35

The sun was rising already when the small group finally arrived at the Inn. Tired and powerless they made their ways into their rooms. Raven and Narwa shared a bed so that Himikea and Nuramond could rest as well. Grenlin was in such a deep state of sleep that she didn't even notice the girls entering... The boys stayed in their room, not talking a word. Zeyir just fell into his bed, sleeping immediately. Callo watched the young demon drifting off into slumber while he opened his shirt, throwing it and his jacket over a nearby chair. With shoes and trousers still on he let himself fall into his soft white bed, his golden hair falling loosely over the pillow and blanket. Allen chuckled and took off his boots, sitting down on a nearby chair. Even though he was tired from carrying Himikea he was still wide awake.

Marduck would have killed them if it wasn't Himikea summoning upon Weyards's powers... He was way too slow! And after all, if there was a second God, they were chanceless! They needed a strategy just to make sure for next time.

In the morning, Grenlin awoke with an awesome mood. As she looked over to the other bed she had to giggle. Narwa and Raven lay in the single-bed, side by side, their dresses still on. The dwarf had to wonder if Raven had lost her room-key... She didn't want wake them up, so she just remained in her bed, reading a book she had bought the day before.

It was around 9 am when it knocked on the door suddenly. Narwa and Raven both blinked and sat up, rubbing their sleepdazed eyes. Grenlin expected the boys so she just asked them to come in.

As Nuramond and Himikea opened the door though, she almost dropped her book in surprise.

"Moi'ing..." Raven yawned, pushing her hair back in order. Narwa's hair was an even greater mess with all the little knots in it. After a couple of seconds the goddess gave up untangling them and just sat down on the bed.

"Good morning. My name is Himikea." The green-haired woman offered her hand to the dwarf politely.

"Grenlin." She grinned brightly. Even more lovely girls around now!

After a couple of minutes of talking about the happenings on the previous day, Himikea started a very delicate subject...

"So, this winged person... was he an Asgardian?" The mood sank all of a sudden. Especially Narwa seemed depressed about the subject. She bit her lips and crawled

her fingers into her dress.

"I think he is a god from Asgard, yes." Raven answered for her friend. She didn't know who the attacking guy really was but after all Allen had told her...

"He used to be a good friend of mine..." Narwa suddenly started. "He was always so open minded, defending his family to all costs..." The goddess looked at the others in concern. She just had to tell them the truth! Marduck wasn't a bad person! At least not to her...

"He tried to kill Zeyir!" Raven snapped. What was wrong with Narwa?! "And he would have killed you too, not to mention Allen and us others!"

"He was one of Asgard's highest ranked generals, loyal to no end." The white witch didn't seem to even listen. "He married an angel-guard and as he became father he was so happy... His two son's and his one daughter entered the angel-guards as well to make their father proud but... one day there was a small demon-attack on one of the outer areas of Asgard. One of the closed Otherworld-gates had been re-opened and Marduck's two sons wanted to prove that they were just as skilled fighters as their father... but they were killed. As far as I know someone had carved the emblem of Galdor's royal family, the Grozens, into their corps, leaving them behind in front of the gate..." She closed her eyes, tears forming in her eyes. "Ever since then he felt such deep hatred against the demon-kin that... He scared me so much I tried to stay away from him..."

"..." Closing her eyes, Raven leaned back. She had learned early in her life that the simple believe of black and white was nonsense, but she for some reason she had problems feeling sympathy towards someone that was trying to kill them...

"I don't get it..." Grenlin sighed. She was never very confident with anything that had to do with Asgard or Utgard and since she had been told only a couple of minutes ago that Narwa was a goddess –which was kind of a shock for her anyway, but whatever was going on with this little group was just too high for her...

"I will explain it to you in detail later, okay?" Raven smiled. She liked the dwarven-woman already really much so she had decided for herself that she was going to fill her in, even if that meant a fight with their desert-elf-companion again about how dangerous it was filling so many people in...

"I'd love to listen to that as well as I still don't really get what's going on myself!" Nuramond chuckled and looked over to nodding Himikea.

"Alright, alright, I will explain you..." The mercenary sighed and hopped on her bed, starting from the very beginning.

"Hey guys!" As Raven and the others came down from their rooms, Callo, Zeyir and Allen were already in the dinner-room, waiting tiredly for their breakfast. Zeyir was leaning half-asleep over the empty plate before him while Allen yawned every couples

of seconds while Callo was busy whirling his golden hair around his fingers in an almost trance-like state that was only interrupted every once in a while when he seemed to snap out of his 'half-sleep'.

"Oh my..." Narwa had to laugh at the sight. "There is a serious need of coffin here."

"Not really..." Zeyir yawned and looked frustrated over to Allen. "Our dear friend here has kept us up the whole night, telling us his plans for a strategy next time we meet grumpy Marduck and..." He yawned again. "... that pest of a god called Yarna..."

"Hey, at least we are prepared now..." Allen leaned on the table, his goatee hanging over an empty cup.

"Man, who do I have to kill here to get something to eat?!" The demon snapped, hopping up while slamming his hand on the table. Callo snapped out of his sleep, falling backwards from his chair in shock.

The whole group was laughing, even Callo couldn't suppress a chuckle.

"Haven't your parents taught you not to seesaw with your chair?" Grenlin grinned and helped him up, offering a hand.

"Parents? What parents?" The summoner smiled sheepishly. "Does that mean even you were a kid once?"

"Oh, what a miracle!" Callo rolled his eyes. "Indeed, I had to be born once as well!"

"I thought you came to Midgard riding on a comet from outer space!"

"Haha, nice one Zeyir!" Raven held her belly while Callo had no other choice but rolling his eyes and sitting back down again.

Nuramond chuckled bemused while taking a seat next to the sleepy desert-elf.

"You are really an interesting little group." Himikea's eyes shone brightly. She moved her fingers through her green, almost leaf-like hair while watching Allen almost falling asleep over his empty cup. "So you have a pact with Luna and Sol?"

The guys snapped up. How did she know—

"RAVEN!" Callo and Zeyir both snapped angrily.

"Woah, guys, you know I'm still hearing on the other ear, so could you yell again?!" Allen stated sarcastically while rubbing his right ear. "Yes, I have, but I'm still very slow in summoning them..."

"Great Spirits are harder to summon than normal spirits. I doubt you will ever manage to shorten your summoning-time with your short lifespan." Nuramond stated from the side, not even noticing that she had hit bull's eye.

"Yeah, I'm sorry I'm only human." Allen rolled his eyes while lolling his tongue out. "However, you have one with Weyards, right? How is Weyards?"

"Weyards is the source of life for us elves." Smiling, Nuramond summoned Kisu into her arms, patting the little creature playfully. "Where Weyards sets foot, blooms and grass are spreading. When Weyards sings, the trees rustle with their leaves, birds start singing and crickets play their music, celebrating nature."

".... Sure..." Callo rolled his eyes.

"Is Weyards really like this?" Narwa noticed how her cheeks turned red slightly in excitement. This spirit sounded so wonderful...

"I haven't met Weyards directly when forming a pact with him..." Himikea closed her eyes, trying to remember what had happen so long ago... "I couldn't even hear his voice, but when he was talking to me, he spoke with nature's voice, giving me the might to summon his might."

"The voice of nature. How wonderful!" Nuramond's voice was filled with glee. "To understand the rustlings of the trees and the language of flowers,..."

"And I always wondered why the desert-elves use to call your kind flower-sniffers..." Rolling his eyes, Callo leaned forward. He was still tired and this made him rather grumpy... Man, he was even more tired than Zeyir?! Where was his constitution?! He just hoped he wasn't going to turn into one of these stargazing weaklings called forest-elves... He shook his head. Dammit, now he started thinking as if anything was black and white again... "Ugh, sorry, I apologize. It is just... hard coming along with forest-elves for someone like me..."

Nuramond's face turned totally crimson.

"Woah, hey Allen did you hear that? He apologized! Can we have this on paper?" Raven chuckled, mocking the poor man even more.

"Show some respect to the elders, Raven!" Zeyir laughed and stood up. "Okay, if I don't get my coffee until I found the cook, I will have a vampire-breakfast ..." He walked off.

"What does he mean?" Narwa blinked confused.

"If I got him right..." Allen started. "What does a vampire drink again?"

"Oh..." That answered Narwa's question. "I better go after him, cause I prefer tea over... you know what." She stormed after him into the kitchen.

It was a quiet day in Titania, the elven capital. Allen and his companions followed Nuramond and Himikea through the streets to a town-exit behind the giant tree they

had been fighting on the previous night. Noticing the hole in the leaf-crown, the whole group fell into an ashamed silence.

"We need to go through the forest to reach Weyards's temple. Please be careful. This area is extremely dangerous." Nuramond sighed, waiting at the exit. "I wish you the best of luck!"

"Aren't you coming with us?" Raven blinked confused. Why should Nura stay here in town?

"Well, you see... the area the temple is located is the Sacred Grove of Titania-Forest... Without the allowance of the Elven Sovereign or at least a Guardian of the Forest, this part of the forest is forbidden to us ordinary elves." She looked aside ashamed. She was just an ordinary girl amongst her kind. There was no way she was allowed to go to this place...

"You have my allowance, so there is no problem with it!" Himikea took the elf's hands, looking deep into her sapphire eyes. "Come on with us, Nuramond. I am certain you will like Weyards's Grove." Nuramond's cheeks turned red because of the offer. Her heart was beating against her chest wildly. That she had the chance to see this place was an honor she would never be able to pay back in her whole almost eternal life!

"So it's decided! You come with us!" Raven chirped, hugging the green-haired women.

They had been walking for over an hour already when Zeyir noticed the forest was changing. He was pleasantly surprised that the woods grew thicker and darker, not letting light shining through their leafs anymore. Every once in a while a beam of light was falling through the dark green of the forest, shining on the ground. On these spots, small plants tried to reach for the light, growing through the blanket of fallen leafs they were sleeping under usually. Fireflies filled the air, giving the woods a touch of midnight-fantasy.

"Can you hear that?" Suddenly anyone turned to Callo.

"Hearing what?" Zeyir snapped out of his thoughts, concentrating on the sounds in the surroundings. There were the sounds of... weapons?

"Someone fighting in this holy grove?! How horrible!" Nuramond looked towards the direction she could hear the noise coming from. Kisu sat on her shoulder, squeezing angrily in agreement. She started running towards the source of the sound, but Himikea stopped her.

"The sovereign and his hunters tend to hunt in this forest. Besides, this forest is -as you said yourself- extremely dangerous. We need to be prepared for whatever they might be fighting as it might attack us as well." The half-spirit looked over at the warriors in their little group. Grenlin held her ax in hands tightly while Raven loosened her saber from her back. Zeyir summoned his flame-sword at first but then decided that his claws and dark mana was his weapon of choice in this fight... Allen followed

Callo's example, taking a dagger in each hand while the desert-elf moved his thumbs carefully over the hilts of his rapiers while holding them tightly. Narwa took her staff, even though this wasn't really a strong weapon... A thing Zeyir couldn't really agree... her rod was the torture-instrument of hell's worst headaches in his opinion...

As they followed the sound, they speeded up. There seemed to be several people in desperate trouble from what they could tell from the noise.

"Ugh!" A group of elves –on the edge of breaking down already- faced a giant green dragon. There were at least 4 hunters, 3 druids and a couple of elven-guards trying to defeat the mighty creature, but the emerald scales of the beast were too hard for their arrows and reflected any kind of magic casted by the druids of the group.

"T-that's the sovereign!" Nuramond gasped and wanted to run forward, being stopped once again, but this time by Grenlin.

"Don't just run ahead! Wait for us others to help you—" The dwarf gasped as she saw Callo running forward, totally ignoring her.

"Oh great..." Allen sighed and ran after him, just in case.

"And I always thought I was the impulsive one..." Rolling his eyes, Zeyir followed them in. The girls could only shake their heads.

Callo shielded an elven hunter with his rapiers as the dragon was just about to bite at least his arm off, if not worse... The teeth of the monster crawled into the metal and Callo really had to wonder that his favorite weapon wasn't breaking by the immense pressure this jaw was causing. Pushing the monster back, Callo managed to break free, rushing forward after the dragon. Shrieking, the green creature swung its tale at the desert-elf, razor-sharp blades on its scales. Dodging, Callo swung himself up on the neck of the creature, not sitting on the dragon's back.

Zeyir tried his best, getting to the backside of the beast, but to his annoyance, the druids stood in the way all the time, almost getting killed, so he just had to kick them out of the dangerous area... Allen however came to the back-side of the beast with ease, running around between the beast's mighty claws, trying to slam his daggers into the softer areas here and there. His position was more dangerous than just staying outside, but the others were way too slow to damage the creature from the down-side...

Callo in the mean-time almost took a ride on the dragon. He held himself on the neck, waiting for a good moment to call for his spirits. Suddenly an arrow flew past him, missing his face by only a couple of centimeters.

"HEY!" The desert-elf snapped, deathglaring the hunter he had just saved, seeing he was the one, giving away the shot. "Next time try it a little more downward! Then you would have hit me on bull's eye!" Grumpy he shook his head, while the beast

underneath him was giving him sort of a rodeo-ride.

After a couple of seconds, the dragon calmed down, concentrating on Allen as he had just managed to cut the beast deeply on the left front-leg. Callo took his chance and summoned Steel and Shade.

"Remember what we've been talking about yesterday night?!" He shouted while nodding at the demon in front of the dragon. His little spirits nodded and started concentrating. "Let's hope this works...ZEYIR!" Callo jumped off the beast's back and into the air.

"Gottcha!" The demon jumped up as well, meeting the elf in mid-air. He took his arm, while summoning his flame-saber on the other hand. Shade and Steel concentrated their might on Zeyir's weapon while Callo gave the demon a spin, sending him with full force down towards the beast.

It didn't even take a blink of an eye as Zeyir's weapon cut through the flesh of the green dragon, separating head from shoulders. A giant flash of fire rushed over the ground, burning the surroundings of where Zeyir landed. As the head of the monster hit the ground, everything around them grew silent. The only sound heard was when Callo landed not too far away from the dead dragon-corpse in the soft grass.

"Milord, are you alright?!" Nuramond rushed forward, followed by Kisu. She stood in front of the elven-hunter Callo had saved before, using Kisu's power to heal some of his wounds.

"Let me try it, Nuramond." Callo sighed, summoning Drop. Kisu was a cute creature but as one of the smallest existing spirits, it was a waste of Mana letting the 'pet' heal them.

"...saved by a dust-collector..." Callo ignored the comment while healing the sovereign's wounds. A victorious smile however made its way up to his face.

"Don't dare touching the sovereign!" A druid snapped, running forward between his ruler and the stranger before turning and healing him himself.

"Y'know, if you would have learned how to use spells correctly instead of writing poets and hugging trees, I wouldn't have to interfere at all!" Callo snapped at the druid angrily.

Zeyir and Narwa looked at each other, slightly uncomfortable. Whenever gods and demons met, they seemed to act the exact same way... And seeing the desert- and forest-elves fighting like this made them think of the hatred between their worlds as even worse than before. Why was there so much hate between them if they never even met? Only a hand full of gods ever had seen a real demon in their life and it was the same the other way round, but the disgust lingered so deep within them, as if they knew anything about each other already...

"What are this barbarian and this torching underling doing here?!" Another one of the

druids snapped at Nuramond, demanding an explanation.

"This barbarian and torching imp just saved the sovereign! Maybe you should consider this!" Himikea stepped between them, hissing dangerously. She wasn't the elven leader of Titania, but her close bond to Weyards made her just as honorable and respected as the sovereign. "Besides, they are my guests, so if you don't mind..."

"You know, in Utgard they'd be already dead for the imp-comment..." Zeyir whispered towards Allen who just giggled at this... How well he could imagine Kyrin chopping someone's head who dared insulting Zeyir...

"Milord, we are on the way to Weyards's Temple." Nuramond played with her fingers embarrassed. The hunters and guards were nervous at the sight of the dark elf, resting their hands on their weapons' hilts. Callo did the same. For some reason he felt always the most comfortable with his fingers tightly around his rapiers.

Allen had enough of this. It was time to get this situation cleared out if they wanted to reach Weyards' Temple anytime soon... And as it seemed, Nuramond, Callo and the others were unable to speak clearly with each other.

"I call for you... by our pact..." He muttered to himself while the elves ahead continued exchanging deathglares.

A dark ray announced the appearance of Luna, the Great Spirit of Darkness. Her night-sky-like dress fell loosely on the soft ground. The red horns and empty eyes gave Allen a chill anytime he summoned her.

Caught by the immense Mana of the spirit, the elves stopped arguing, showing their respect towards the Midnightqueen.

Callo just stared at the maiden. He got used to her presence, but he was just glad Allen had decided for her instead for Sol... Who knew if they rejected worshipping the Spirit of Light, just because a desert-elf was present...? This human was way smarter than he acted!

"Now that I got your attention..." The summoner started harshly. "We are on the way to Weyards and I cannot say that I have that much time than in contrary to you, my time is limited, so if you don't mind, I'd rather prefer traveling on than arguing who is better, tree-huggers or dust-collectors."

"He is pissed..." Zeyir chuckled. It was really rare seeing his friend mad, but they had certainly reached the limit of his temperance.

"Indeed..." Raven moved her slender fingers through her hair baffled.

"W-well..." The elven sovereign watched Luna in awe. It was the first time he ever got to see a Great Spirit in action beside the sleeping body of Weyards inside the Temple... "We better get back to Titania then..." He closed his eyes and summoned his guards to his side. Shooting one last angry glare at the desert-elf, he and the

hunters disappeared behind a couple of trees.

"Am I of any need any longer?" Luna watched her pact-maker with eyes that broke through any mask, watching only the deepest of one's soul... This was exactly what kept Allen so nervous in the spirits' presence... They knew him better than he knew himself...

"You are dismissed..." Allen sighed. He felt his Mana trembling again. Why did summoning make him so dizzy?! Callo never had a problem with his spirits...

"..." In a cold breeze, the spirit faded away, visibly disappointed.

"So... this was Luna..." Himikea gasped, her hands covering her mouth in shock and surprise. "Feeling such a Manaflow right next to you is something completely else than what I share with Weyards..."

"Apropos, can we walk on before our dear friend here freaks out?" Laughing, Zeyir patted his companion playfully before following Himikea towards the forest-temple.

It took them another hour until they finally reached the Sacred Grove. Hundreds of smaller trees formed a gate leading down towards a wooden gate. A worm-like dragon with trees and plants on its back was painted with oil on the surrounding walls. Flowers and bushes grew to the sides of the long stonewalls they were following. Zeyir looked up towards the roof, but there was none. Nothing but roots and leaves covered the Temple. Golden fireflies lit the way down the path and they could all feel the Mana flowing through the flowers they had to step on to get to the inner area of the temple.

Allen couldn't believe his eyes as they walked over sea-rose-leaves over a little lake inside the grove. They were strong enough to hold them even though they were not much bigger than ordinary sea-roses...

Finally, Himikea stopped in front of a giant green gate made of dragon-scales and golden ornaments.

Pushing it open they entered the altar-room.

It was like a grassy hill on which stairs lead up to a white altar on which rays of light shone through the thick leaf-roof. The golden lights of the insects floating through the air gave the grove an additional mysterious appearance. As they came closer though, Narwa stopped the group.

"Guys, wait a second! Something is wrong here!" She whispered towards the others, taking out her staff.

"And... what would that be?" Zeyir rolled his eyes, but summoning his flamesaber just in case.

"Look!" She pointed at the flowers and trees behind the altar. The rest of the group looked at them, but they didn't notice anything strange... Raven had to even admit, that the flower growing right behind the altar was the most beautiful one she had ever seen... "Can't you see it?! The trees are moving!"

"Hahaha..." Himikea laughed and gave the goddess a comforting hug. "Your eyes are sharp. That is Weyards you see sleeping there. He has been asleep for thousands of years behind the altar."

"I gotta see that!" Zeyir started running towards the Great Spirit in curiosity.

"Hey, wait for us!" Callo barked, following his friend.

As they stopped in front of the altar they saw him...

A giant wyrm asleep with trees and flowers spreading all over its back... It was the same dragon they had seen on the wall-paintings before!

"..." Allen watched the Spirit breathe in and out slowly... He didn't know what it was, but something was different here than when he had summoned Sol and Luna the first time... but what was it?!

"Are you ready?" Callo grinned. "Another pact for the books!"

"Alright..." The summoner sighed and spread his arms. "Holy Spirit of Plants. Lord of the –"

"What is it that you want?" The dragon suddenly rose from the ground even though Allen was not done yet.

"Eh... ehm..." Allen kinda lost track on what he was about to say due to the interruption... "I... seek a pact?"

"Then prove yourself worthy as a pact-maker!" Suddenly the dragon charged towards the summoner. Allen had not even time to react. He only felt how he was ripped off his feet from two different directions.

"Ouch..." Zeyir and Callo, both holding Allen down felt rather dizzy from clashing against each other to save the summoner.

"Next time if I try to save Allen, stay out of my way!" Callo barked at the demon, rubbing his aching forehead. Zeyir just snorted while picking himself up from the ground.

"Yeah, but if I run towards him, how about you leave it to me next time?!" He prepared his blade while stepping backwards a little. The dragon was turning again, ready to charge once more.

"Thanks... both of you..." Allen looked at his two friends. They both had stormed

forward, getting him out of the way just in time... A small smile formed on his face.

"Watch out!" Narwa shouted, taking Nura Mond and Raven by their hands and flying up with them. Himikea jumped up as well, holding herself on a branch while poisonous flowers started growing beneath their feet. "Those are river-deaths! Their needles are absolutely deadly!" The goddess shouted towards the guys.

"Oh great..." Callo sighed, whipping his golden hair out of his face. "Who's more barbarian now..." He muttered to himself. "Are you alright? Summon Sol while we keep him down!"

"While we TRY to hold him down you genius!" Zeyir grunted, watching the dragon yelling. More of the poisonous flowers spread all over the terrain... This wasn't going to be fun at all...

"Here he comes!"

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 yaw 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 yaw, 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 Nura Mond, 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 Nura Mond 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?" Grenlin 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.

Kapitel 37:

Chapter 37

„No, I haven't!"

"You have!"

"Hey, if you need someone to pick on, go up and annoy Zeyir!" Raven barked while trying to steal Callo's piece of apple-pie. "You don't like it anyway!"

"Yeah, but you had two already! Besides, this is not mine but Zeyir's piece of pie!" Callo lifted the plate up as high as he could effort, causing Raven to try to jump up on him.

"And? He is asleep! If he doesn't know there was pie, he won't care!" The girl grit her teeth... Did she really have to use her secret weapon on the tan man again? Concentrating, she relaxed her face, preparing her ultimate weapon. Tears already started forming in her eyes as...

"Oh come on, you two!" Allen entered the dining-room of the Inn, followed by Nuramond, Narwa and Himikea. Kisu sat- napping on a cookie- on Narwa's shoulder.

"He started!"

"Huh?" Callo only rose his eyebrows, placing the piece of pie on the table. "That's Zeyir's desert. The bonehead of a mercenary here wants to steal it all the time!"

"Raven, leave it to Zeyir." Allen rolled his eyes... What a kindergarten... and Zeyir wasn't even around! Sighing, he left for the kitchen. The cook had agreed with him that the young summoner was allowed to cook in the Inn's kitchen...

"Yeah, run to daddy and go squealing..." Raven hissed towards the dark elf, hopping after the other girls.

"Hmpf." Callo's eyes wandered to a clock on the wall. Already 3 pm... Even for Zeyir that was late to wake up... He had felt tired after their return from Weyards' Temple.

Biting his lip, Callo took the piece of pie and walked towards the stairs up to the rooms... He couldn't explain it to himself, but he had a bad feeling... It was as if a shadow hung over the upper floor as he walked up the stairs. He slowly opened the door of the guys' room, finding Zeyir still asleep in his bed.

"Hey, Zeyir." Callo leaned against the door-frame. "What's wrong? Get up already! We are even done eating lunch by now!" Grinning, he stepped inside, pulling the blanket away from Zeyir.

"Hmmm..." The demon lay in his bed, rolled to a ball, holding his arms as if he felt cold. Even with his usual almost grayish skin, he looked damn pale right now!

Callo leaned forward, looking at the demon with a worried expression. "Hey, what's wrong?"

"Don't know..." Turing around and around again, the demon tried to find a comforting position. He felt so sick at the moment... and cold... "Would you mind... bringing me my vest?"

"Sure." Callo stood up again, turning towards the chair on the side. He carefully took the green vest and was just about to turn again as- "Hm?" He lifted his shoe... He had just stepped on something...

His face turning pale, Callo recognized the small red thorn lying on the ground.

"What's wrong?" Zeyir blinked from his bed, his blankets wrapped around him.

"Gosh, dammit! Misfortune really HAS her target pinned on your back!" Callo barked, throwing the vest on the ground before turning and running out of the room.

Clueless what the problem of the elf was, Zeyir only rose an eyebrow, snuggling himself into a ball again, trying to warm himself.

"NARWA?!" Callo sprinted down, taking the whole stairway with only one giant jump. Without losing a further second, he turned towards the dining-room, rushing inside.

Narwa sat on a table along with the other girls, enjoying a cup of tea. Staring at the intruder in surprise, the girls only stood up from the table, knowing there had to be something wrong.

"Narwa! Do you know how to cure the poison of the flowers in the temple?!" The tan man walked up to the goddess, taking her hand, dragging her towards the stairs.

"U-uhm... there is no cure for river-death-poison. I told you it was deadly!" Suddenly her eyes ripped open. "Who!? Who is poisoned!?" She already knew the answer... their whole group was down in the kitchen beside... "Zeyir!" She sprinted past Callo, leaving the elder behind.

Callo waited for a second, unsure what to do. He only bit his lip and looked aside.

"What's going on?" Allen walked out of the dining-room, looking at Callo confused, his frying-pan with vegetables still in hand.

"Zeyir managed to get himself into trouble again!" The elf barked angrily. By Sol, this boy was going to drive him insane one day... if he had long enough to live that was... "He managed to get poisoned by these river-death-flowers!"

"!?! " Allen almost dropped his pan.

"And Narwa said she doesn't know about a way to cure it! Dammit, I can't even be mad on him right now!!" Crossing his arms, Callo shook his head. This felt so unreal! The boy was not healthy, that was for sure, but deadly poisoned? He didn't seem like that at all...

"..." Allen thought for a second... "Maybe if Narwa doesn't know a way to cure the poison..." He placed the pan on a cupboard on the side. "How fast are spirits in traveling?"

"Depends. They can travel to the spot their summoners are in an instant, as well as to their temples or to places they are absolutely familiar with, other than that they have to travel just as anyone else... Why are you asking?"

"No time to explain!" He started running outside the Inn, followed by the elf.

"You stupid idiot!" Narwa barked at him with such a fury, Zeyir only tried to get a little further away from her, but as she was sitting on his bed and he didn't feel like walking at all, that was a rather hard task. "I told you to stay away from the flowers! I told you not to get close to them!"

"W-would you mind... explaining me what's wrong?!" The demon tried to escape the goddess's grip, but she had already wrapped her arm around his shoulders, holding him down while feeling his temperature and pulse.

"Hm, weird... By now the poison should have infected you much more... It is a miracle you are even awake!" She blinked confused before searching through her bag for some herbs...

Zeyir gulped at the sight of the weird liquids and pills... Seemed more like a poison-factory to him...

"Take this... This might help slowing the process down..."

"Which process?!"

"The one of the poison, you moron!" She hit him with her staff again. "Don't act so stupid all the time! I need to go to the library! Maybe the elves know about a way to cure you!"

"And why should-"

"River-death-poison is deadly... They are growing on Asgard too, and, even though they are rare, they cost so many angels and gods their lives... There is no medicine against them in Asgard... but if the elves are familiar with them, maybe they have one..." Without a further word, she stood up and walked out of the room, leaving a shocked demon behind.

Zeyir's eyes were widened in shock. Deadly poison?! DEADLY POISON!? Oh great! Not again! He really was a bad-luck-magnet!!

Lying back down, he thought through all of this again... He felt sick, he felt cold, he felt weakened... but deadly poisoned? It didn't feel that bad to him...

Outside the room, Narwa stood next to the closed door, sobbing silently into her hands. Why wasn't she a better healer? Why couldn't she protect the people she loved? Why couldn't she even protect the man she loved...?

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" Callo hesitated nervously. "The Great Spirits aren't your footboys, you know..."

"Sure, but I don't care. If Zeyir is in trouble, I will help him! He saved my life often enough!" Allen barked, starting his chanting.

"But sending Sol to Yora and then to Nihil to find Morgana..." The elder gulped. His kind worshiped Sol... to think of him as Allen's gofer was really hard... "And Luna to Galdor? Are you sure? Don't you think King Kyrin will come right after us again, taking Zeyir back again?"

"Do you prefer telling him his son died because we were too afraid to ask for help of him??" Allen rose an eyebrow after finishing his chant. In the meantime, Luna and Sol appeared in their usual manner in front of their summoner.

"I... guess not..." Sighing, Callo rubbed his ankles... He just prayed no one of his former tribe was ever going to find out...

"Okay guys... I need your help! Luna, you go to Galdor as fast as you can and ask in the castle if there is a way to cure the poison of river-deaths!" With that, the Great Spirit of Darkness disappeared without a further word.

Sol already looked down at Callo and Allen with a gaze that told them, he wasn't very bemused about being a messenger for the summoner...

"I am doomed..." Callo only turned around, hiding his face behind his hands.

"Sol, you go to your temple in Yora! Fly to Nihil as fast as you can and find out if there is a demoness called Morgana still in town! If so, ask her the same, okay?" Allen grinned. The Great Spirit looked at him unimpressed before disappearing.

"I bet when telling them you needed pacts with them to save Midgard, they imagined something else than this..." Callo grunted while leaning on a tree. They were outside town to not attract too much attention... But then again... Callo imagined Sol flying through Nihil asking the people where Morgana was... What a grotesque thought. Shaking his head he tried to get rid of the image.

"Shade would do the same for you, right? So why shouldn't they do it for me as well?" Smiling sheepishly, the human turned and returned to town. This was all they could do right now...

Zeyir lay in his bed, staring at the roof in thought... Could it really be?! It felt so unreal...

Looking aside, his eyes fell on his hand... He summoned his flame-sword, looking at it in sympathy... The red sparkles fell around his fingers, tickling him when they touched the skin. The sword once belonged to his father... If he would see him aga-

"GRA!" Zeyir snapped up from his bed, gritting his teeth. "Come on, Zey! You can do it! You are a royal demon! A little poison won't throw you off your feet!!" He shouted at himself aloud. He was not the kind of person to give up! He would never give up to something like illness or poison! If he was going to die one day, it would be during a battle or because of his age, but never because of illness or poison! Not him!!

He jumped up from his bed, ready to get down to the others and travel on!!

The second he landed on his feet though, he felt them giving in... Landing on his knees, the demon prince had to admit to himself that even though he already had the spirit, staying in bed was probably the better choice... Pulling himself back up, he wrapped himself into his blankets, taking a nap... but as soon as he was awake again he was so going to kick that poison's butt and prove that he was stronger than this! ... uhm, yeah!

The library of the elves was indeed fascinating! So many books... It wasn't as huge as the library in Menel, but the fact that the bookcases were growing trees inside the giant tree in the center of the city gave the whole place an atmosphere of myths and fairytales...

Narwa searched through so many books now... but anyone of them said that the poison was incurable with midgardian or asgardian herbs. What made her wonder though was... an old book in an ancient demonic language. She could read very few words of it... and she was certain there was a recipe of how to cure the poison... but she just couldn't read it! Dammit!

"M-Milord?" A blue haired vampire came into the great hall, rather frightened and clueless what to do... King Kyrin sat on his throne relaxed while going through some reports about the latest attacks of the surrounding kingdoms.

"What is it, Will?"

"Uhm... There is... a Great Spirit with a message for you..." The vampire-knight

opened the door to the hall, revealing the sight on the Midnightqueen of Midgard. Kyrin blinked confused, gulping nervously. How was that possib-

"Zeyir!" The king jumped up, remembering the fact that his beloved son was with a summoner!!

"Lord Kyrin, my oath-master sent me to you to ask you a question." With her unnatural voice, Luna seemed to fill the hall with darkness with every word she spoke. Kyrin only nodded, now just as confused as Will. "My master wanted to know of you, if there is a cure for Riverdeath-Poison for demons."

Kyrin almost got a heart-attack at these words. "W-well... No, there isn't, but..."

"I'm back!" Narwa came running into the room, pushing Allen and Callo aside. Zeyir lay in his bed, looking up at her in a way that reminded her more of a hurt fawn than a proud prince...

"... Did you find something?" He blinked tiredly while holding his belly. "I feel so siiiick!"

"Stop acting like a little kid! And you two guys get out now!" The goddess barked at the two 'friends' of Zeyir that had a hard time to decide between being totally worried or laughing at the whiny demon... "I think I found something, but you need to translate it for me! Maybe I can cure you!"

"That would be awesome..." The demon turned around in his bed, looking at the roof.

"I'm just glad you are still in such a good condition..." Searching through the book, Narwa tried to find the page she had seen about the poison... "Here it is! Can you translate it for me?!"

Zeyir tiredly took the book. Narwa held it for him carefully as she was afraid he might drop it... He was weakened without question...

After a couple of seconds, Zeyir started chuckling. He even had to laugh all of a sudden.

Allen and Callo waited outside the room nervously, along with Nuramond, Raven and Himikea, as suddenly darkness filled the corridor. Luna appeared in the shadows, unimpressed as always. Only a couple of seconds later, Sol, appeared next to her in a flash of light. It was funny watching Callo to suppress the urge to kneel down just the way he had learned it all his life long...

"We... did as you ordered us." Sol started. Callo shot another deathglare at his companion...

"The current ruler of Galdor told me the answer to your questions." Luna's calm voice

gave them all a chill...

"So did the demoness you sent me to."

Allen nodded, praying there was a way to cure Zeyir's poisoning. They needed him! Not only as fighter, but as a friend!

"There is no cure for river-death-poison." Luna stated uncaring. Allen sank to his knees, his throat closing slowly. No... not him...

"However..." Sol continued. "Demons seem to have a certain kind of resistance against the poison. A little fever and sickness, but it is more like a cold. With enough rest, it will go away after few days."

"W-What?!" Callo took a couple of seconds to realize what they had just told them as-

"YOU STUPID LUCKY DEVIL YOU!!!"

They ripped the door open just in time to see Narwa smacking Zeyir with a book while he laughed so hard he had to hold his belly.

"Zey!" They all ran inside, filled with glee and joy.

"Bad weeds grow tall, guys!!" The demon grinned and pointed at the book Narwa had just hit him with.

"We heard demons are resistant against it already." Callo leaned forward, smacking his friend. "No matter how much misfortune you seem to have, luck is on your side none the less, huh?"

"Luck is with the stupid!" Narwa grunted while mixing some other herbs again. "If I knew that before, I wouldn't have had to be so worried!" She tried to bark but in between her words, they clearly heard her suppressed sobs... Allen looked at the others and showed them with a nod to get out.

"Don't tell me you were worried." Zeyir stated as the others were out again. He watched the goddess making another medicine for him while he leaned back into his pillow again. He felt hot and cold at the same time... ah great... "Admit it, you would have run around in joy if I had died."

"You stupid idiot..."

"?!" Zeyir snapped up as he saw tears rolling down the goddesses cheeks.

"You honestly think I would be happy to lose you?! You really think so!?" Staring at the demon with her deep blue eyes, she let go all her emotions, breaking out in tears.

Zeyir was totally helpless. What... what should he do? He suddenly felt his arms closing around her. It almost seemed as if his body reacted without him thinking

even...

"I'm sorry..." Holding her in his arms, the demon felt his heart beating with the exact same pulse as Narwa's. For the very first time in his entire life... he wouldn't have wanted to change anything. Not being anyone else, Not being anywhere else... Just right here, right now...

Kapitel 38:

Chapter 38

The days that passed until Zeir was finally back on his feet went on rather slow, especially for the taste of the very enervated desert-elf of the group...

It took Callo all of his mental strength not to kill every forest-elf passing his way, starting to whisper about his weird looks or about the 'desert-barbarians'... Even the demon felt pity for him by now.

"Is he back on his feet yet?"

"No, he isn't!" Narwa hissed at Callo as he entered the Inn again, coming from a trip through town with Allen in which he had bought supplies for their journey –which they would start as soon as Narwa gave her 'ok' on Zeyir's condition... Weird though that even though she was responsible for his condition –after all she was a healer- she barely dared entering the demon's room...

"Hey, I got you the herbs you asked for." Allen smiled softly and handed her a couple of leaves he had brought from the market. Their sweet smell filled the whole room. Smiling happily, the goddess took over her herbs and started working on them right away. The guys didn't even dare asking what she was preparing... When they had asked two days ago, she had given them a lecture full of enthusiasm for over an hour about the healing-theory of some of the greatest healers of Asgard and how this one special potion was created by them and that it was one of the strongest potions against neck-aches that existed in all three worlds –whatever they needed that for anyway... They wouldn't do the same mistake again for sure!

As they continued into the kitchen, Raven sat on a giant piece of cake already, licking over her lips while staring at the delicious looking sweet.

Allen sat down next to her, taking a fork from the neighbor-table, targeting Raven's dessert.

"Don't you dare even thinking about it, Mister." The young mercenary chuckled and took away the plate from the curious hunter.

"..." Callo only watched the two of them while leaning back, relaxing. He'd never get humans... Why fighting over a piece of sweet cake?! Besides, if Allen really wanted one he could easily order one... Himikea had managed that they stayed in the Inn for free, meals included...

"Hehehehe, ah, come on! Just one bite!"

"No way!" The human girl laughed and pushed the 'thief' away again and again.

"Oh wait now I get it!" Callo suddenly looked at them with widened eyes. "It is not because of the cake, it's because of the fun!"

"Wow, did you find that out all by yourself, Mister Genius?" Raven rolled her eyes and took a last giant bite of cake in her mouth, leaving Allen with a disappointed face-expression.

"Hm... Humans are truly weird..." The elf rolled his eyes while leaning back into his chair.

"I could say the same about you." Allen chuckled and ordered a piece of cake for himself.

"Huh? What do you mean?" Rising an eyebrow in confusion, Callo deathglared the young summoner, just in case of course...

"Ah, well, first of all there is this habit of yours." He grinned. "I already gave it a name! The Callo-stare... But deathglare matches it pretty well too... Secondly... You live the dream of 90% of male beings on this world and don't even notice it!"

"Huh?" Now the elder really was confused.

"You can't go through a crowded street without at least a half dozen women turning their heads for you. Any of them would sell a limb for going out with you and you wouldn't notice if they came running to you flowers and heart-shaped pralines in hands." Allen had to laugh at that one. But it was true! Callo was clueless in such things! It was as if he had never ever met another female being on this world but Serena! He wouldn't even notice anyone else! "You are kinda helpless in heart-matters, that's for sure."

"Suuure." He rolled his eyes. "You are just kidding me, right?"

"You think so? Then I bet with you that you haven't notice that someone from this little group has a crush on Zeyir. If you give me the correct name, I owe you 20 Gar, otherwise you owe me 20, deal?"

"Huh?" Callo rose his eyebrows so high, they disappeared behind his hair. "Uhm... sure... Grenlin?"

"Are you kidding?! Come on, I give you a second try!" The human's grin grew wider. He was sooo going to win this bet!

"N-Nuramond? Come on, don't tell me it is Raven!"

"See what I mean? You didn't even notice Narwa had a crush on Zeyir, but that's soooo obvious!"

"W-w-what!?!?" The desert-elf yelled and jumped up in shock. "You MUST be kidding! This is just not possible... Zeyir and Narwa?! That is like... like... Ugh, there is nothing

like this!"

"You mean like day and night, fire and water, darkness and light?" Raven stated from aside. They hadn't noticed she was back again...

"Y-yeah." Callo added hesitantly.

"I can assure you, it is the truth." She sighed. "Though I didn't get it in the beginning either... But by now... I think they are a great match! If you get to think about it, they are so sweet together! Narwa, the silver flower of the Holy World and Zeyir, the dark Prince of Asgard. It is like this old story from two families that hated each other but their children fell in love and all hate was forgotten and... ah, I love this story!"

"Didn't... they both die in the end?" Allen added, receiving a smack for the comment.

"Well, we won't let THAT happen of course, but it is about the idea! The spirit within the story! Love can make the impossible possible!" Clapping her hands together, Raven started day-dreaming...

"Ya, sure..." Sighing, Allen stood up. "You owe her 20 Gar by the way, Callo."

"Huh?! Why her?!" The elf's ears snapped up.

"Because I bet with her that you would get it was Narwa..." Grinning, Allen left for Zeyir's room.

In his bed, Zeyir played poker with Grenlin, Himikea and Argon while Nuramond kept complaining about how bad Argon was in playing this game... It was really bemusing! And if it went on like this, Zeyir was sure they could head off tomorrow! If Narwa didn't interfere that was of course... The demon had to wonder what was wrong with her anyway?! Why didn't she keep bugging him in every free minute about how stupid he was?! ... Ah right... Blushing, he lowered his head as the memory of three days ago entered his mind... He could feel his heart racing with two times the speed than before!

"Are you okay? Are you feeling worse again?" Himikea asked worried.

"Ha, that is because he is afraid of loosing against me of course!" Grnelin laughed and played out a royal-flush.

"Haha, sure thing." Argon rolled his eyes. Beside Callo, he liked the little group... They were fun to talk with...

"Y-ya... of course." The demon rolled his eyes and threw his cards on the pile.

Suddenly they heard heavy steps from outside the room, followed by the sound of metal...

"Where is my son!?" A deep voice growled from outside the door.

"That's not funny anymore, Allen..." Zeyir shook his head and looked unimpressed at the chuckling human that stepped inside.

"Oh, but it was two days ago!" The summoner laughed and patted his friend.

"I have to wonder what kind of problem you have." Himikea started shuffling the cards again. "Why should your father come here to get you anyway? Did you do something wrong?"

"No, but this genius has sent Luna herself to my father informing him that I was poisoned by river-deaths!" The demon barked annoyed. Ever since Allen had told him, he had been nervous... He was really wondering why his father wasn't here already with an army to get him back to nice, save Galdor...

"Hehe..." Chuckling innocently, Allen sat down next to Zeyir on the bed, taking some cards as well to join the game.

"I still don't get it... But you should be really happy that your father is worried about you. Well, at least I guess he is if he'd take the journey to this place to pick you up..." Smiling, Nuramond sat down on Argon's lab, participating in the game now as well. "What is your family's job anyway? I mena, yeah, you are from Utgard, but do they have the same jobs there as here?"

"Ah, right you don't know!" Allen blinked, realizing.

"Know what?" Everyone got curious now... Ah great...

"Uhm, I'm the son of... a diplomat from Utgard. I'm not supposed to be here anyway! That's why!" Rubbing over his forehead, the demon lowered his head again... He couldn't dare letting people know who he really was... If it came out, not even he was endangered, but his whole world... A royal demon interfering in matters of Midgard... a real disaster if someone wrong got to know!

"Uhm, may I come in?" Narwa appeared on the door-frame, nervously holding up a few herbs, showing that she just wanted to check on Zeyir.

"Alright, time to go, everyone!" Allen hopped up from the bed, taking the cards and leaving, followed by the others. Only Himikea remained in the room.

"Phew..." The demon stood up from the bed, stretching his limbs.

"Can I assist you in any way?" Himikea smiled. After all, she was a healer too.

"Thank you very much. I'd be glad for any advice." The goddess smiled. She was a great healer herself, but she was more specialized on Asgardian plants than Midgardian ones.

Preparing a crème made of herbs, Narwa was glad Himikea looked over her shoulders, giving her advice every here and then. Zeyir felt rather useless, watching the women mixing different herbs together, but he wouldn't interrupt their chit-chat... He even enjoyed seeing Narwa a little more relaxed around him... After the incidence from before, she... seemed to be just as nervous as him when they were together in one room...

After a couple of minutes, the girls were done. Happily musing their work, Himikea complimented the goddess about her mixing-technique... How could these girls actually getting so excited about these things?!

"Well then... I will join the others now. As soon as you are done I guess it is time for dinner." Smiling, the half-spirit left the room.

Silence fell in the room again... The seconds passed, slowly turning into minutes... Until finally...

"Uhm, ya, the herb-crème." Zeyir stuttered, pointing at the green substance.

"R-right..." Narwa almost dropped the bowl, catching her just in time before it hit the ground. "Uhm, would you mind turning? I... need to... well, you know..."

"Y-yeah. Same as yesterday, I know." The demon turned, taking off his shirt while sitting on his bed again. Narwa started slowly rub the green liquid on Zeyir's back. The silence grew heavier again... Only the sound of soft breaths filled the room...

"Zeyir?"

"Yes?" Turning around fast, the demon hit the goddess's hand by accident, sending the bowl with medicine right on the ground. With a loud clang, the green liquid was sent all over the ground. Cursing mentally, Zeyir wanted to fix the mess, leaning forward... in the same moment as Narwa...

"Ouch! Hey, watch your head!" The demon hissed while rubbing his forehead.

"Says the one with the melon-head!" The goddess hissed in return. Though suddenly, both had to start chuckling. What an awkward situation!

"I'm sorry..." Sighing, the Prince of Galdor rose from his bed, picking up the remains of Narwa's bowl while she got a towel from the bath.

"You don't have to be. It wasn't your fault... At least not alone." She smiled softly while joining him on the ground.

"You know... if I didn't have to save you all the time I might even start liking you."

"Hehe, says the right one." The white witch smiled and smacked the man kneeling next to her. "If I remember correctly, you are the one poisoned, right?"

"Ah, well... but I survived without your help, right?" Grinning, he leaned forward, looking right into Narwa's deep blue eyes.

"..." Trying to avoid his gaze firstly, Narwa decided that it was no use... She faced him eye in eye, staring at those deep rubies that focused her.

"What is it?"

"Was that... that embrace... Did you mean it or did you just... wanted me to stop crying?"

Zeyir blinked, wondering about it himself... now he was the one turning away... Staring aside he asked himself the very same question... What had gotten into him three days ago? Was he really just unable to stand Narwa crying or was there more to it?

"Please..." The goddess bit her lip. "I need an answer, Zeyir. If you can't answer me now, I am just... unable to travel with you any longer. But no matter what your answer will be, I will be able to stay with you, as long as you can just... tell me... if it was real or not..."

"So... you feel... for me?"

"I do."

Balling his hands into fists, Zeyir couldn't stand it any longer. He had to risk it all. Reaching for Narwa's hand, he pulled her towards him, proving the truth of her guess with their very first kiss.