

Enwa's Quest: The Cross of Ameran

Von Deamond

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Prolog:

*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.*

~Requiem of Mana

The 3 worlds of Asgard, Midgard and Utgard... Bond together by a history longer and darker than even the chronicles can tell.

Fighting each other in the 'Eternal War', the godly world of Asgard and the demonic world Utgard lived in war for what seemed to be eternity. Struggling for dominance amongst each other the world Midgard, located between the two fighting world, turned into their battle-field, making life impossible to exist on the wasted land, drained in blood of both fractions.

But one day, life returned to the lost world.

8 brave warriors, demons and gods alike, decided to end the meaningless fighting and sacrificed their lives, turning it into pure Mana, and binding it to Midgard, turning into the first 8 Great Spirits of Mana. With the new gained energy, the world buried the bones and corps under grass, oceans and forests, spreading with life.

Honoring their sacrifices, Asgard and Utgard worked out an armistice-treaty, that forbid them to fight on Midgard any longer...

Hundred-thousands of years this treaty kept the enemies away from each other until a new shadow rose over Midgard, almost causing a second Eternal War to start, but 7 heroes, known as the Heroes of Mana, stood united against the threat, unsealing the Great Spirits and returning Mana to the worlds. From this day on, the leader of the Heroes of Mana tried to bring peace between Asgard and Utgard...

And today, 500 years after the happenings on Midgard, he had achieved this goal...

"Don't make this harder than it is already, Ledah! You know I have to go! No one should

wield as much power as I and live in this world! I would use it sooner or later, causing nothing but harm!"

"Please, don't leave me...Ary!"

"With time you will understand that your place is in Asgard and Utgard... but I don't belong here any longer, Ledah..."

"I will go with you..." Ledah lay in his bed, turning from one side to the other. Crawling his hands into his wild golden hair as if he wanted to wake up, he kept whispering under his breath. His back felt like burning. An aching pain that shot through the parts where his wings were hidden...

Suddenly cold water ran over his forehead and he snapped out of the nightmare, ripping his eyes open. Gasping for air he started to realize that it had only been a dream...

"..." He closed his eyes again, calming down... It had been the fifth time this week he had dreamed of the one faithful day that had changed his life forever...

"Are you awake?" A sweet innocent voice right next to his ear made the man looking up again.

"Dane..." Ledah smiled at the small blonde boy with cyan eyes, looking at the wet fabric in his hands... "You spilled water over me?"

"Yeah, you looked as if you had a nightmare... I don't like nightmares... I don't want you to have them..." Fiddling with his fingers nervously, the freckled child looked up at the elder, receiving a smile.

"Thanks!"

"!!" Giggling in glee at the reaction, Dane stormed out of Ledah's bed-room, down toward the kitchen.

"..." Resting in the bed just for a bit longer, Ledah looked up at the ceiling... "500 years..." A sudden tickling feeling on Ledah's chest caused him to sit up, looking at the two pendants hanging down his chest. One was an amulet of a cross, golden with a red gem in the center and a scythe-like blade attached at the bottom... The second one used to belong to a certain human girl, that once had unsealed the 8 Great Spirits of Mana with this pendant's help. Ary's amulet... It was still connected to the spirits and as such sometimes tickled him, as if to remind him that it was still there... A golden moon with a sun at its center and an arrow pointing out of it...

He closed a hand around it, sighing deeply. Sometimes carrying this amulet was a harder burden to him than any duties he had to fulfill due to his special position in Asgard and Utgard...

"Mom asks if you want to have lunch or not before going back to Utgard?" At the

sound of the voice, Ledah looked toward the door. Issney, Dane's older brother stood in the doorframe, looking just as indifferent and uncaring as always... He had a tender face that caused many people to mix him for a girl at first, but his slender tall figure made up for it. Bluish black hair hang over one side of his face, hiding one of his aquamarine-colored eyes.

"I'll take the lunch I guess... When will it be ready?" The blonde grinned innocently, standing up and walking to his bag, taking out his formal Utgardian attire.

"It's 2 pm, Ledah!" Issney chuckled but regained his cool just a second later again. "We are done eating already."

"I see... Well, I will be down in a second!"

As Ledah entered the kitchen, a black haired half-demoness kept preparing a couple of toasts with pineapple, ham and cheese on a plate. Her golden eyes focused on the meal, she didn't notice the blonde man entering, followed by Issney.

"Looks delicious, Yuna!" Musing his meal from the side of the dinning-room, Ledah started walking towards her.

"!!" Jumping up from her work, she grinned wildly, hugging the man. "Good morning! Or rather midday..."

"Ha, ha..." The blonde rolled his eyes, sitting down on the table and starting to eat while the woman kept watching him. She looked like 27 maybe 28, but Ledah knew that it was her demonic blood that kept her young. Just as himself Yuna aged slower than humans, being only a year younger than Ledah. They knew each other for so long now, he hadn't to tell her what was wrong, she seemed to know already...

"Issney, would you mind leaving me and your uncle alone for a minute?" She looked up at her older son, smiling sheepishly. Grunting under his breath, the youth left the room, closing the door behind him. After a couple of seconds, Yuna suddenly took Ledah's hand. "It grew worse, didn't it?"

"..." Ledah nodded, avoiding her gaze. "The pain in my wings is growing worse, I can barely hold them hidden on my back anymore. Not to mention that I haven't had a night of decent sleep in almost a month..." He let out a deep sigh. "It's probably the stress. With the preparations and all, I've been under a lot of pressure lately..."

"Pressure or not, this is not usual! You should tell Ifrit about it! Maybe he can help!" She moved forward, placing her forehead on his, sending a bit of her demonic Mana into him, hoping it'd make him feel better.

"How should my brother be able to help me, Yuna?! He is a full god! I'm an enwa -half demon, half god. My powers are completely different from his!" Ledah closed his eyes, secretly enjoying the pure dark Mana that came from her, sucking it in as if he had

thirsted for energy for so long. "You know him. If I told him I felt bad, he'd start to panic and probably run against a door..."

"It could as well be something Ifrit knows about!" Yuna protested, defending her husband. "...But maybe you are right..." She sighed frustrated, remembering the many times in the past, Ifrit had tried to help his little half-brother, hurting himself in the progress...

"Is uncle Ledah sick?" Dane suddenly stood next to the table, looking with giant eyes at his mother. He had been so silent, they hadn't even noticed him entering. The boy's bright eyes started filling with tears, looking from his mother to his uncle, searching for comfort.

"N-no, I'm not, Dane! Don't worry!" Ledah chuckled, taking the boy up on his lap and cuddling him.

"Then it's okay!" The child whipped over his eyes to get rid of the tears, enjoying his uncle's hug. "Are you going to your kingdom again?" He chirped, looking into his uncle's blood-red eyes.

"Hehehe... It's not my kingdom, Dane! Galdor is a free country. The title of crown-prince doesn't make me it's owner, you know?" He smiled.

"But if you are a prince, then why Daddy isn't a prince too?" Hopping on his uncle's lap, the boy tried to grab the elder's hair to pull him closer without success. "We are one big family, aren't we? Then why Issney and me aren't princes either?"

"Dane, hun, I explained you so many times..." Yuna sighed, taking her boy back on her arms, freeing her brother-in-law from the curious little kid.

"It's because your father Ifrit has a different father from me, Dane." Ledah smiled. "But that doesn't mean, we aren't one family, right?" A grin lit his face. The boy was just as innocent as his older brother, if not even more...

"Awww..." The boy looked at his uncle disappointed, suddenly spreading a pair of small white wings from his back. "That's why Daddy and me have white wings and you have red ones, right, right? It's because you are a prince and we are not!" He chuckled, flapping a little, managing to lift himself from the ground already.

"..." Ledah only smiled, hiding his thoughts from the little kid... He didn't want to bother the child with his worries. He was still young, so why should he bother him with the true meaning of his crimson wings. "Dane, could you go out and look for your father? I need to talk with him before I leave back for Utgard!"

"Sure thing!" Overwhelmed by happiness that he had been elected to do such an important duty, the freckled boy rushed out of the house as fast as he could.

"Now back to what we've been talking about..." Ledah was just about to say something as Yuna interrupted again.

"It is hard enough to rule over a country, Ledah! Preparing a celebration for 300 years of peace between Asgard and Utgard as well as fulfilling your usual duties in the same time is just too much!"

"First f all..." The blonde leaned back in his chair, staring at the half-demoness with narrowed eyes. "I'm not ruling Galdor. My father was the real crown-prince of Galdor and after his death the country was declared a democracy, so it has nothing to do with ruling! I only take action in case of an emergency!"

"Oh pish-pash! You know that's--"

"Secondly..." Ledah interrupted her, having a hard time to suppress a chuckle. "I've been working on peace between the 3 worlds ever since we freed the Great Spirits 500 years ago. I've been elected representative of this peace, Yuna. I vowed I'd do anything to get the worlds closer to each other." His hand closed around the cross-shaped pendant around his neck. "They entrusted me to become the keeper of this symbol of peace."

"The Cross of Ameran..." Yuna sighed...

"Exactly, and I can't let some aching wings let me--" He paused, looking at the door. He could hear steps from outside, and a very familiar thud that announced his brother, tripping over the doorstep again.

"H-Hello..." Ifrit, a blonde, freckled man with cyan eyes, entered the kitchen, a few leaves and branches stuck in his hair. "Dane said you wanted to talk with me, Ledah?" He grinned just as brightly as his little son... The childlike behavior of his had often brought them into trouble, or causing people to think Ledah was the older of the Ainu-brothers, but Ifrit Ainu was over 1000 years old by now, and god or not, age slowly started giving him a more mature appearance.

"I just wanted to say good-bye until the festivities!" Ledah grinned, suddenly getting hugged by his brother.

"Wah, you leaving already?! No fair!!" Not wanting to let his little brother go, Ifrit crawled on the enwa's arm, looking from his wife to his brother. "C-can't you stay a little longer? You visited for only 2 days... We haven't even had the chance to fly a race..." His eyes seemed as if they were about to fill with tears as Ledah stepped in, knowing his brother way too well by now.

"Don't worry, If, I'll come and stay with you for a whole month as soon as this is over!" He grinned, knowing he would not be up for a race right now with his wings, not regarding the fact that Ifrit usually crushed into random trees or tripping in midair anyway...

"You have to promise..." The man snorted, giving his brother one last hug in good-bye, before Ledah headed for the Otherworld-Gate to Utgard.

Darkness... For too long he had kept staring at the skies outside the moon-palace already... Just gazing off into the streams of Mana in which giant almost marble-like shapes drifted through the air, he didn't even notice the light any longer, concentrating only at the black space between the giant prismatic streams... All the worlds surrounding them... He had been in so many already, and none had been like the other...

But who cared about the worlds... Mana itself was way more important... if Mana died, there was no way to restore it... and one day all Mana would be wasted. It was his duty to ensure this wasn't going to happen....

With a deep sigh, he turned his head, looking at the pink-haired cat-woman that had just entered his balcony.

Shivering in the cold air, she rubbed her slender arms, hurrying over to the brown-haired man who had focused her with his poison green orbs, giving him a couple of papers.

"T-the report you asked for, Master Deamond..." She trembled, breathing in and out heavily, white mist coming out of her mouth.

"Arisa, you could have just placed it on my desk..." Deamond smiled and took off his jacket, placing it around the girl. Wagging her tail thankfully, she snuggled herself into the still warm fabric, looking at the man in front of her.

"I wanted to talk with you about the report... I've read through the papers again and again, concerning the 3 worlds Asgard, Midgard and Utgard, and what's going on in Nayshir..." Her face took a serious expression, much to the man's amusement. "If you plan on traveling there, I must stop you! You are linked too closely with these worlds! I will not let you do this!"

"This matter is way too important to let anyone else taking over this duty." Deamond's eyes narrowed dangerously, though he didn't lose a certain grin on his lips. He knew that if he wanted to go, Arisa wouldn't have the strength to stop him. "I am linked to these worlds more than you can imagine... but it will need an Enwa to bring back balance!" Without waiting for an answer he hopped on the railing of the balcony, looking down the black abyss beneath his feet. A sad smile run over his face before he let himself fall forward, spreading a pair of silver-blue wings, flying off into the Mana-Streams.

"Utgard to Ledah... Hey.... Lord Ledarus, the audience awaits your delightful opinion on the matter... LEDAH WAKE THE HELL UP!"

"!!!" Snapping out of his nap, Ledah almost hit his head against the man standing in front of him. "I'm awake, I'm awake, Iska..." He shook his head, looking at a red-haired vampire with pale skin that had a hard time not to laugh at his sleepy prince. "W-what's wrong?"

"You napped off during Lord Yanem's speech about the problems concerning the festivities in Asgard..." The vampire rolled his eyes in a manner that didn't please Ledah at all... But he knew Iska.. he didn't mean it disrespectful, it was just the way the vampire was!

"W-would you mind repeating that, King Yanem?" The blonde felt his cheeks turn crimson. He still felt weird sitting in the Council of Utgard, a meeting of all demonic nations' leaders to discuss what was best for their world.

"Of course, Prince Ledarus." The elder looking demon nodded, eyeing the younger man bemused. "Asgard's capital Menel is usually laid out for... well... Asgardian festivities. They don't have the capacity to host an event that is open for their world as well as ours. Only few demons would be able to take part in the ceremony."

"I see your point, but the High Senate of Asgard already decided to move the angel-guard out of the Tower of Eternity for the time of the festivities, so at least a significant amount of demons can take their quarters there for the time being." Ledah nodded proudly that he had actually thought about that beforehand, discussing it with Asgard's leading power before heading back to Utgard. "It is all set already."

"Then how about the High Kings? You don't expect them to sleep at an ordinary guards-quarter, do you?" The demonic king rose an eyebrow, making the enwa feel utterly uncomfortable all of a sudden.

"W-well, I haven't spoken with the Senate about that yet, but I'm sure--"

"It is a matter of respect from both sides!" Another demon-king interfered, dangerously glaring at the Prince of Galdor. "We agreed on celebrating the 300 years of peace in Asgard, so it is only a matter of respect, that the Asgardians give the High Rulers of Utgard the same kind of quarters they'd give one of their highest gods!"

"O-Of course, and I understand that, but--" Ledah wanted to bring the situation back under control, but it was out of hand already. Most of the demons sitting in the council were a few thousand years old already, living in war with the Holy World their entire life. They still had trouble just accepting Asgard as their ally... Millenia of hate couldn't just disappear like this...

"You will have to travel to Asgard immediately and talk with the Senate about it, Lord Ledarus! This is not acceptable!" Another king grunted from the chair right next to Ledah... By now all eyes of the rulers of Utgard rested on him, making the enwa feeling like a little child, slowly sinking deeper into his seat, wishing to just disappear.

"I will set out for Menel as soon as the meeting is over..." He muttered under his breath... It has been the same game ever since weeks! From Asgard to Utgard, and

back to Asgard, back to Utgard, a side-stop in Midgard and back to Asgard just to return to Utgard again,... It made him insane... But what other choice did he have? He was the keeper of peace and as such responsible for the success of the festival... "Shall we continue then? The sooner we finish, the earlier I can travel to enel and talk with the Senate about it..."

Kapitel 1:

The days had passed way too fast for Ledah's taste. Yet he couldn't deny that he felt relieved that in 2 hours, the ceremony would finally take place... After that, he'd take at least 2 months of vacation! First visiting Ifrit and his family on Midgard, then a bit of time in Asgard at his grandfather's house and maybe one or two weeks at Iska's home, the house of the Zerin-Vampires, getting attended all day long... Yeah, he really deserved that after the past few months...

He had enough of being the playball for the Kings of Utgard, or the Senate-members of Asgard... As soon as this was over someone else could take over his duties for a while!

Clinging on that thought, he moved his fingers over his back slowly. It still hurt him, more than ever even, but as soon as he'd get a good handful of rest, his wings would turn back to normal for sure!

It was weird... Lying on his bed in Menel's center, the Tower of Eternity, and staring up the high roof, watching the veils slowly moving in the breeze that blew through the high building... From outside he could hear the noise coming from the plaza, where angels, valkyries, gods, but also demons from Utgard had started celebrating their peace.

"Led, you there?" A familiar voice rang through the thick wooden door that led out of the blonde's bed-room.

"!!" Jumping up, recognizing the owner of the voice right away, Ledah hurried to the door, unlocking it and staring at a giant god with grey hair and beard that grinned proudly down on him. "Gramps!" Giving him a welcoming-hug, he led the elder inside the room. "What are you doing here?!"

"I closed the smithy for today. You didn't expect me to miss your big day, did you?" Chuckling, he looked around the room as if looking for something... Finally he decided to place his giant hammer that hang from his back on the side, sitting down on a chair on the window, looking out. "You can be really proud of yourself!"

"I will be as soon as this mess is over..." Ledah sighed frustrated, moving his fingers through his hair before taking place next to the elder. "You know, Bel'Zath,... As soon as this is over I will take a looong break from all this..." He smiled, looking up at the bright blue sky. "Can I stay at the smithy for a while then? Just working next to you like in the good old days..."

"You know you are always welcome. I can use a helping hand..." Ruffling through his grand-son's hair, Bel'Zath stood up and looked at the amulet hanging around Ledah's neck. "Don't you have to bring that to Origin for the ceremony?" He pointed at the cross-pendant surprised.

"U-huh..." The blonde just kept staring out of the window, his mind at the small hood in the forests on the outer region of Asgard... He always enjoyed the time at his grandfather's smithy... Deep between the trees, hidden inside the woods and far away from all the hectic...

"Hehehe, I could smuggle you right out of here, away from the pestering servants and leeches here... Just have to hide you under my coat and no one will ever notice!" He smiled, placing a hand on Ledah's back. Twitching for a second at the pain, the boy turned swiftly, hoping his grandfather hadn't noticed it.

"Y-yeah, great idea!" He forced a laugh, avoiding eyecontact. "I better go bring the cross to Origin now..." He jumped up and hurried outside, leaving the elder behind.

"Something really isn't right with him today..." Bel'Zath wondered, watching him running towards the stair-way before heading for his hammer on the wall.

Origin, head of the High Senate of Menel... Ledah felt deep respect for the 4-winged goddess. She had been the first one to ever encourage him in his goal of bringing peace between the two worlds... and without her support he'd probably not be here today...

"You may come in." A soft voice rang through the marble-doors as they swung open, leading into a light-flooded room.

Ledah had to narrow his eyes as he stepped in. The wall, the floor, even the furniture seemed to have a certain gleam to it... Light was the essence of most gods' might here in Asgard, but for his taste it was way too bright. "Origin?"

"I'm right over here." A beautiful, green haired woman with two pairs of golden wings stepped closer toward Ledah, and now that his eyes got used to the light, he could finally see sharply again.

"I'm here to bring you the cross." He smiled friendly, handing her over the pendant.

"Thank you, Ledarus." She tilted her head, a few strands of hair falling over her shoulder. "Thank you for taking care of it up until now..." She turned and went deeper into the hall, signaling him to follow.

"..." The enwa frowned, but followed her. "It's not as if it's a big deal to carry a pendant..."

"Oh, not a regular pendant, Ledah..." Origin smiled, looking at the blonde with curious eyes. "This pendant is called the 'Cross of Ameran' and was kept as a relic of the demons ever since the time the Eternal War ended. Can you feel it? The immense energy pulsing through it? It is as if it lives on its own, leaving a trace of energy wherever it goes..." She smiled, giving the enwa a sympathizing glance. "It has been kept by the demons for very long, a treasure greater than any gold we could weight

up. The fact that they allow someone born in Asgard to carry it means more than you can imagine. You might be as much a demon as you are a god, but you were born in Asgard, and let's face it, we both know you feel more comfortable with light than darkness."

Gritting his teeth shamed, Ledah knew that she was right... He tried to use his powers balanced, but in most of the cases he cast light-spells... So maybe there really was more to it than he had believed.

"Don't forget to pick up the cross later again, Ledarus." Origin smiled, using the formal way of his name again... Ledah didn't like being called Ledarus, but by now he got used to it... With a nod he left the room, joining the festivities on the plaza.

"Oh and I want candy floss! And-and those chocolate-hearts! Can we have a ride on the carousel later? Pretty please..."

Yuna sighed frustrated... She would have expected this kind of behavior from her youngest son Dane, but right now it was her husband acting like a little kid in candy-land...

"Mom, can I go somewhere ELSE please?" Issney complained, carrying his little brother on his shoulders, looking embarrassed towards his hyperactive father.

"Only if you take Dane with you!" The half-demoness smiled, taking Ifrit's hand in the meanwhile.

"But I wanna go to the merry-go-round with Daddy..." Dane smiled while licking on a lollipop.

"Let's just have some fun, boys... You won't see it every day that two worlds celebrate such a long period of peace!" Yuna chuckled, suddenly spotting a familiar-looking pair of red wings in the crowd. "Hey, isn't that..."

"Ledaaaah!" Ifrit already ran towards the red winged person, ripping him from his feet with a tackle-glomp.

"Wah!" An angel looked at the god confused, unsure if he should scream, yell or show the god sitting on him his respect. "L-Lord Ifrit.. w-why..."

"Huh, you are not Ledah..." The smile on Ifrit's face disappeared, but suddenly it brightened again. "Are you an enwa too?! Wow! Ledah will be so glad to meet another enwa!! He has never ever seen one! ...Beside himself that is of course..." The god grinned sheepishly, suddenly hugging the angel as if he was a treasure.

"M-Milord! this is only paint! I'm no enwa!!" The angel gasped, trying to get away. "I-I only wanted to look like the leader of the Heroes of Mana, that's all!!"

"..." The god let go, disappointed. "Aw, man, that sucks..." Sighing he stood up, returning towards his family, determined.

"Pfff..." Almost unable to hold back her laughter, Yuna hugged her husband, giving him a kiss on the cheek to cheer him up.

"So embarrassing..." Issney snorted, looking up at his brother.

"Ahahaha, that was so funny!" Dane chuckled, still staring after the still shocked angel. "Are red wings rare? Only princes have them, right?"

"Are you stupid?" Issney rolled his eyes, receiving a smack on the arm from his mother. "Ouch..."

"If you are so much smarter than him, how about you explain him?!" Yuna lolled her tongue out, taking Ifrit's hand and leading him off towards a candy-store to brighten his spirits again.

"What did Mommy mean, Issney?" Dane asked confused, leaning on his brother's head.

"Wings of such an unusual color as Ledah's are a sign of mixed blood, Dane. A god with dark red wings is not only a god, but half-demonic as well!" Issney sighed, taking down his brother from his shoulders and sitting down on a bench with him. "Demon- and God-blood has to be mixed in the very same amount, no Mana of neither side must be stronger than the other, or it will erase each other. Only if darkness and light are put together in the very same consistence, they build the Essence of Time!" He smiled warmly. The Essence of Time and the Essence of Space... Issney had always loved it when his parents or his uncle had told him about the stories of old, how they had fought to free the Great Spirits and how Mana was way more complicated than most people thought... "And as such, enwas are very rare!"

"But then why aren't we enwas, Iss?" Dane tilted his head confused. "Mommy is a half-demoness too, so..."

"Oh Dane..." Issney grinned and ruffled his hair. "Mom's dark Mana got fully erased by Dad's light Mana... so basically we are one third human, two third gods. That's why you got these." He grinned and pulled Dane's small wings up, flapping with them playfully. "See?"

"Ahahaha, I understand!!!" Dane smiled and hugged his big brother in glee.

"..." Quickly looking around that no one saw them, he returned the gesture, patting the boy's back. "Wanna have some candy-floss, lil bro?"

"Yes!!" The blonde rushed after his older brother, happily as they reached a candy-shop finally. "I want a candy floss and... I want that chocolate-wolffy for uncle Led!!"

"No need to waste your pocket-money on me, boys. Though I appreciate it." Ledah suddenly stood behind them, his crimson wings spread to full glory while paying for

the sweets they had just ordered. "Where are your parents?"

"Out having fun... They can be so embarrassing at times!" Issney stuck his tongue out, preferring the presence of his uncle rather than Yuna's or Ifrit's...

"You know, you should be thankful you have them!" The blonde smiled, taking Dane up on his shoulders. "The ceremony starts at any possible second! How about it? Wanna come along?"

"Sure, but shouldn't you be with the Kings of Galdor?" Issney grinned, taking some of Dane's candy floss, eating it happily.

"I'm no king..." Ledah rolled his eyes. "Besides I'd feel old standing amongst all those millennia old demons... I will watch from the side-line!"

Nodding, the dark-haired youth followed along toward the crowd on the giant plaza in front of the Tower of Eternity.

Between the masses of angels and demons, Ledah could spot his grandfather from afar already, as the giant god outstood the crowd by over 2 head-sizes...

"Grangranpa!!" Dane waved the elder, almost sending his candy floss flying through the air.

"Well, if that's not my two favorite grandgrandsons..." Bel'Zath chuckled, greeting the two boys. "Ledah, aren't you supposed to be with--"

"No, I'm not!" The enwa grunted, setting Dane back to the ground and leading them towards the way the members of the Council of Utgard and the High Senate of Asgard would take for the ceremony. They waited a little, staring at the entrance of the Tower of Eternity.

Out of the giant tower a stairway led down on a way, covered with rose-leaves, leading to a pedestal in the center of the plaza where Origin would place the Cross of Ameran during the ceremony.

The sound of silver trumpets filled the air and a soft breeze escaped from the tower as the gates finally opened. The members of the High Senate and the Council of Utgard slowly walked down the stair-way, passing Ledah, Bel'Zath, Issney and Dane.

The enwa knew any single one of them, greeting whoever nodded or waved toward him. A few faces were more familiar to him than others though... Especially two very certain ones.

A brownhaired god with freckles and cyan-blue eyes passed them, smiling and waving towards Issney and Dane.

"Hello grandpa!!" Dane waved wildly towards Clarion, Ifrit's father, as he walked on towards the center of the plaza. Followed by Clarion came Ariia, a small darkhaired

goddess that used to be Ledah's teacher back when he was still a kid. She was too busy keeping her pace with the others though to notice her former apprentice in the crowd.

As the gods and demons finally all stood in a giant circle around the pedestal, anyone looked up at the gate for Origin to come and bring the cross. But almost a minute passed and she still didn't appear...

Carefully placing Dane on the ground, Ledah looked to Bel'Zath. "I will go look for her..." He spread his wings, flying up the stairs and into the tower. For some reason it was unnaturally cold in here... A small chill ran down his spine as he slowly walked toward Origin's room. Stepping into the bright room, Ledah had to get used to the light first again, slowly walking forward. With every step he took he got the feeling it grew colder around...

"Origin!? Origin, where are you!?" He grit his teeth, unleashing a wave of dark Mana through the room, dimming the light. Suddenly, the pain in his wings grew, making it hard to breath for a second. He fell forward on a knee, gasping for air. After a few moments though, the pain lingered and he looked up, ahead... almost stopping to breathe again. "ORIGIN!!" He jumped up, running towards a giant ice-pillar in the center of the hall. The ice was unnaturally clear, giving sight on the frozen goddess within the center of the pillar.

Placing his hands on the ice, Ledah called for his flame-magic, slowly melting the goddess out of her frost-prison. From behind, Ledah could hear steps and the sound of armors. A few angel-guards came running into the room, shocked at the image ahead of them.

"Don't stare like idiots! Help me!" The enwa barked, almost done freeing the goddess by now.

"L-Ledah... the cross..." Origin gasped, she sank forward into his arms. "...they stole... the cross..."

"!!" The blonde's eyes widened. He nodded toward the guards, leaving Origin in their company, running towards the back-exit of the hall. He tried to remember Origin's words... a trace of energy... he had to find that trace!

And to his own surprise... there was certain stream of Mana flowing through the air! Ledah spread his crimson wings, following the weirdly familiar aura.

As the wind rushed through Ledah's hair and he almost reached an Otherworld-Gate leading to Midgard, he finally spotted the thief he was chasing! Speeding up as fast as he could, the enwa saw the dark figure walking through the gate, disappearing in white mist. Gritting his teeth, the blonde closed his eyes, flying right toward the weird substance that filled the gate, feeling the cold almost liquid-like stream transporting him to the mortal world within seconds.

Arriving on the other side, the man opened his eyes, floating in midair... staring tight

down at the thief.

A caped girl with weirdly deformed legs and hands, almost rabbit-like, staring up at him with shocked brown eyes.

"N-no... get back... Don't follow..." She stepped back, frightened, crawling her paws around the cross.

"Give it back!! Now!" Ledah formed a fireball in his hands, ready to shoot it at her if she did not obey his command...

"!!" Her body trembling in fear, she suddenly swung the cross around her neck, running on all 4 paws as fast as she could toward the surrounding forest.

"Wait!!" The enwa fired the fireball, missing her only by a few inches, but his vision started blurring suddenly. Shaking his head and catching himself before sinking toward the ground, Ledah spread his wings, chasing after the thief.

The girl was incredibly fast! And all the branches that made it hard for Ledah to follow, gave her a clear advantage. Slowly but sure she got away further and further from him. This mustn't happen!!

"Stop! Or I will crush the very essence of time around you!!" The enwa yelled, concentrating his energy and forming a ball of pure light-Mana in the one hand and a ball of darkness-Mana in the other. "You last chance or I will--"

"Or you will what!?" A cold male voice above him warned Ledah just in time to turn his head before some tackled right into him, crushing him into a nearby tree.

Gasping for air and feeling an unbearable pain running through his whole body as his attack faded through his hands, unleashing an implosion right next to him. He could barely open his eyes, not to mention moving. From the corner of his eyes he could see one of his wings standing in an unnatural angle and moving it just a little, he could see parts of the bone sticking through the crimson feathers that now glittered softly in the sun-light, drowning in his own blood.

Someone was standing in front of him... and much to his anger it was the thief... Pulling her cape down, he could finally see her. She had dark green hair with two white rabbit-ears hanging down her head... and she still seemed to tremble in fear. The worry and sadness in her eyes made Ledah feel even worse. Was he so badly wounded that even a thief like her pitied him?!

Suddenly a second figure landed right next to her, staring down at the enwa with a cold smile. He was a birdman... but no ordinary one. His ice-blue-feathers and the unnatural cold aura around him made him different from any kind of birdman Ledah had ever seen in his 500 years of age. Without doubt, this man was the one freezing Origin and tackling him in mid-air...

"Well, well, well... Seems as if this isn't half a bad day for me. I traveled through

unknown worlds, froze a goddess and get to kill a... whatever you are..." The chilling tune made Ledah shiver. He wanted to stand up, wanted to defend himself! Fight the cross back at any cost! But it was no use. His body didn't react to any of his commands. "I will send you right to whatever might you believe in, in this pathetic world!" Chuckling evilly he came closer reaching for Ledah, but a sound coming from the bushes close the them made him stop. "Ugh, you are here already?!"

"Watch your tone, half-human!" A soldier stepped out of the shadows, behind him a whole troop of warriors. They were armored with fine steel-plates, wearing an emblem Ledah hadn't ever seen before. But what he could see clearly even with his blurred vision, was that this human was an experienced fighter. No matter what kingdom he served, but he had to be one of the leading guards. Ledah could tell by the way he moved alone... Arrogant, yet disciplined and ready to take any victim necessary to achieve his goals... "You take those beasts back to Nayshir! I will take care of this matter myself!" He ordered a few solders around him who grabbed the rabbit-girl and the birdman by their arms, leading them away.

"P-please don't hurt him! T-they can't follow us to Nayshir anyway! Please don't!" The girl turned, wanting to run back, but being stopped by the soldiers.

"If you hadn't let him discover you, worthless scum, he would not have to die. And now leave before you are the next one to fall to my blade!" Barking in annoyance, the soldier turned, taking out his longsword, pointing it toward the young thief.

With a last glance of sympathy and a whispered apology, she obeyed the commander's order and left with the small unit.

Burning in rage, Ledah tried to get up, pressing his hand against the ground, but he barely managed to lift his head to look straight into the eyes of the one who was going to kill him...

"Hmpf!" The human knelt down, grabbing Ledah by the neck and pulling him up before pushing him against the tree behind him. "I have killed many gods, and probably just as many demons... but to kill an enwa... that's indeed my first time... and I will enjoy it to the end!" He smirked evilly, loosening his grip on the blonde, making him sink on his knees. "But... you know what's funny? I don't even have to kill you. I will just sit here and watch how you die off on your own..."

"..."Ledah narrowed his eyes, unable to understand what this human was talking about. Noticing his questioning glare, the warrior smiled mischievously and knelt down to be on the same height as his prey.

"Can't you feel it? Your body is already falling apart. Your energies are so out of balance they started eliminating each other." The mocking tone in the man's voice gave Ledah the chills. Much to his shock, now that he had pointed it out so bluntly towards the enwa, he could actually feel it... Within him, his energy was running out of control. Like a whirl that ripped all his Mana into shreds, eliminating it within him. How could he miss this?! "It is so out of control, you won't last ten more minutes even... Now I leave it up to you little enwa... How do you prefer to die? By my sword? Or your

own ignorance?" He did not wait for an answer... The commander stood up, placing his blade on Ledah's neck.

The blonde didn't even notice anymore... His mind was so puzzled... How could he have missed this? How was it possible he hadn't noticed this mess within him?! ... Smiling at his own naivety, he knew that his time had come. He thought about his brother, his friends,... but most of all, he thought about the two companions he had lost almost 500 years ago... He was going to join them now... Finally seeing them again... 'Seems as if I'm going to join you earlier than expected...' A weak smile lit his face at the irony of this thought.

"Prepare to die, enwa!" The commander brought his blade up, ready to slash it down. Ledah's eyes closed. Not because he feared what was going to happen now, but because he didn't want to see the triumph in his enemy's face. He didn't want the last thing he saw to be the victorious grin of a coward that brought him down at the edge of dying anyway.

Ledah waited... waited for the thrust...

Suddenly, the earth started shaking beneath him, the sound of breaking bones and flesh ripping through the air. Opening his eyes slowly, he saw but a pair of white wings, closing around him, and the familiar scent of ashes and metal he knew from only one person... Bel'Zath!

"Dare touching him and I will bring you down just as this scum!" The giant god swung his hammer over his head, making the soldiers backing off away from them.

Ledah slowly sank forward to the ground, a smashed red mass in front of him where just moments ago the commander had been standing. Ary's amulet lay in the mud before his eyes, gleaming weakly as if trying to keep him awake.

Ledah tried balling a fist... He had to fight... Giving up was not an option, he had to try at least!

"Great... Spirits..." He started muttering weakly under his breath, his eyes focusing the amulet. "...dark... powers... light..." He pressed his eyes shut, trying to collect the remaining strength within him to finish the summon. "...Seek your... aid... summon you..."

A missive aura of might lay around the enwa like a blanket, as the Great Spirits of Light and Darkness appeared in the small clearing in the forest.

Ledah however didn't notice any longer... He lay there, motionless in pain, his life passing by like a last uproar of memories before everything broke down around him. Was it dream? Was it reality? He couldn't tell, but he was losing anything in this moment, the world fading into a dark sphere that locked him into slumber.

Kapitel 2:

<u>Chapter 2: Another World</u>

Silence... Silence was his enemy has he tried to break back into life, but without getting through the thick coat that embraced him in this deadly silence, he fought in vain.

Was it like this to be dead? A restless soul that tried to break out of this shell? No, he couldn't believe this. His body was light. So much lighter than all over these past months. Was this really a prison that kept him? Locked away from the world? ... It wasn't but the darkness embracing him, spending him comfort and strength, but he knew it was time... Time to wake up again!

Light streamed into Ledah's eyes as he tried to open them ever so carefully. His body still hurt, but it felt as if a giant weight had been taken off it. As he blinked carefully, the blurry world around him started to take shape. The familiar wooden roof was enough to tell him where he was...

This was his room at his grandfather's smithy. Not a majestic chamber as he had in the palace of Galdor, or in Menel's Tower of Eternity, but this room was more home to him than those others could ever be.

With a quick glance around, Ledah hoped to find a clue how long he had been out. The windows were all closed though, so he couldn't even tell if it was night or day... However he spotted some very familiar faces in the small room...

On the side of his bed, Ifrit, holding his little son Dane, was taking a nap. In front of his closet, a blue-haired and teal-skinned woman floated, smiling softly as she saw he was awake. Long fins instead of ears and eyes as deep as the ocean itself were the trademarks of Frotsa, Great Spirit of Water. She nodded gently towards the enwa before disappearing in a splash of water drops. Now that she was gone, Ledah's eyes fell on the small table with two chairs next to the closed window. He had a hard time not to grin like an idiot as he saw who was sleeping there, leaning on each other as if it was the most natural thing on earth.

A red-haired vampire in dark leather-cloths with a crimson cape and blue marks on the face. Iska, his right hand in Galdor, and to his right, Gawain, his right hand in Menel... An angel-warrior with light-blond hair, blue eyes and clad in silver armor that was unmatched in loyalty and compassion alike. She was like the perfect knight, and Ledah was more than thankful that she stood in his service. However... seeing them both like this was really amusing... Iska and Gawain hated each other. They both were as different as night and day. While Iska took everything lightly, having an uncaring personality for politics or proper manners, Gawain would fulfill each and any of Ledah's orders without doubting or hesitating.

Something tickled on his chest... and looking up a bit, he could see Ary's amulet glowing softly.

"You woke up? Finally..." Ariia's voice made Ledah turn his head. The small goddess with the black marks and the long dark hair eyed him curiously from the doorframe. She carefully walked over to his bed, checking on his wings. Now that Ledah looked at them, he noticed that they were splinted and covered in bandages... but all in all they seemed to be fine again. A healer had done a really great job on him, that was for sure... "Your Mana was almost eliminated. Luckily you managed to summon the Great Spirits of Light and Darkness in time. They stabilized you, but we were frightened you wouldn't make it..."

"How long have I..."

"Almost 4 weeks." Ariia smiled softly, placing her hand on her former apprentice's shoulder to keep him from standing up.

"F-Four weeks!?" Ledah tried to get out of the bed, but the small goddess kept pressing him down. He was still too weak to struggle against her grip. "Ariia, I need to see the High Senate! A-and we have to get the Cross of Ameran back! Let go of me!" He hissed to not wake the others up.

"We are taking care of these things already, Ledah. The thief of the cross has been found and we will regain it as soon as possible." She looked right into his eyes, but Ledah knew that she was way too good in lying to be trusted... "Rest now. In this condition you are of no use to anyone..." Without waiting for further complain, Ariia tapped her fingers against Ledah's forehead, casting a sleep-spell, making him drift off into slumber again.

The next day, Ariia had left for Menel already. Ifrit kept running through the house trying to help his wife cooking something for his beloved 'baby-bro', making a bigger mess than helping anyone... Issney and Dane had kept Ledah busy the whole morning, telling him how they had visited every day since the ceremony or how Bel'Zath had kept away any god or demon intruding with his hammer,...

"Yeah and when we found out grandgrandpa has brought you to his home and that you were hurt, Daddy cried so much, it was scary..." Dane cuddled a pillow to comfort himself, sitting on Ledah's bed, hopping up and down.

"Dane, stop hopping, you will hurt Led!" Issney grunted, leaning forward on his chair.

"It's okay, I will tell him if it annoys me." The enwa smiled, his gaze drifting over to the door. Iska was leaning on it, yawning unimpressed. "Would you mind leaving us alone for a bit?"

"..." The dark-haired youth nodded and took his little brother up on his shoulders, passing Iska and leaving the room.

"Bye uncle Ledah!" Dane's voice echoed from the staircase.

"Finally alone~" The vampire grinned and was just about to close the door as Gawain stopped it with her foot. "Dammit..."

"Lord Ledah, you are awake!" The woman smiled warmly, ignoring Iska completely, kneeling down in front of him out of respect.

"Oh come on, Angy, stop that, you drive him crazy with your--"

"How about YOU show your prince some respect?!" Gawain barked, beaming at him. "And don't call me Angy!"

"Report?" The enwa was too tired to listen to their fights, so he went straight to the point... "How is the situation in Menel? Have they regained the cross yet?"

"W-well, Milord,..." Gawain started stuttering, avoiding his gaze.

"Tell him already, he will find out anyway!" Iska shrugged, receiving a smack from the angel.

"We have not the slightest clue where the cross could be..." She sighed and rubbed the back of his head ashamed. Ledah's eyes narrowed as he had to hold back cursing at Ariia for lying on him once again. "The soldiers that attacked you are all dead. Either killed by Lord Bel'Zath, or... committing suicide once we were able to capture them. They were without doubt elite-soldiers, fighting for an emblem that belongs to no kingdom in either of the 3 worlds."

"What about Origin...?" The enwa sighed deeply, feeling rage rising more and more within him.

"She is fine and returned to her duties already." Gawain nodded and stood up again. "She does anything in her might to get the cross back. The representatives of Utgard reside in Menel to help as well."

"There was this girl among the soldiers... She was a rabbitorian, I'm pretty sure of that but... I thought they were extinct." Ledah closed his eyes, remembering the body-built of the strange girl and her ears. She was one... without doubt.

"That is correct. The last committed rabbitorian died over 3000 years ago."

"I need to talk with Origin..." The blonde pushed the blankets aside, standing up weakly and heading for the smithy.

"No."

"B-but..."

"What part of NO didn't you understand!? The N or the O!?" Bel'Zath grunted, blocking the door.

"But I have to go to Menel!" Ledah whined, trying to get past the elder without success.

"I didn't carry you all the way here so you rush away right into your doom again!" The god barked. "This breakdown should have shown you how much you overworked yourself! I brought you here so those pesky senate-members or leeches of demons can't disturb you!"

"..." Iska glanced nervously through the door, tapping his fingers against the frame.

"I'm not talking about you!" The elder barked, looking back down at his grandson. "You stay right where you are!"

"Don't force me to fight my way past you, old man!" Ledah grunted halfheartedly, knowing exactly that Bel'Zath's hammer would kick him into the wall before he even had the chance to summon his flame-sword...

"... You kiddin', right?" Now the god couldn't suppress a grin anymore. The efforts of this boy were just too pathetic and amusing... "You will stay here for at least 10 more days! If I see you try sneaking away I will personally chain you to your bed!"

Gulping and knowing that his grandfather wasn't joking, Ledah gave up, returning to his room, cursing under his breath.

Bel'Zath has kept his word. 10 days long Ledah had to stay in the smithy -one evening chained to his bed for real after he had tried sneaking out the window on the 6th day... But now he was finally allowed retuning to Menel...

His wings were more or less back to normal. They carried him at least over short distances, so he couldn't complain...

As he reached the Tower of Eternity, the angel-guards were already awaiting him, leading him towards the senate's conference hall where most of the senate's members as well as the members of the Council of Utgard awaited him, eager for answers.

"..." Sending a dangerous glare to Ariia before turning to Origin, Ledah bowed, greeting the audience.

"We are glad to see you recovered, Ledarus." Origin smiled friendly, leaning in her seat, her hands folded on her lap.

"Origin, I need to talk with you alone. It is none of the Senate's concern."

"As long as it involves the Cross of Ameran, it IS the Senate's concern." The goddess's voice sounded awfully demanding, yet Ledah could feel that she would probably prefer talking alone with him as well...

"Very well... Then please answer my question. Have you ever heard of a place called 'Nayshir'?" The enwa rose his voice as well now. "The soldiers stealing the cross talked about it as if it was a place they came from, yet I never heard of any town, region, country or village by that name."

For a short moment, nervousness blinked through Origin's eyes, but she hid it well under her monotone, unimpressed voice. "It is as you said. There is no place like this in Asgard, nor Midgard and neither in Utgard!"

"Well, since you don't seem to know anything, let me tell you what I do know!" He stepped forward. "The Cross of Ameran has been stolen by a birdman with ice-affinity, and a rabbitorian which are supposed to be extinct since 3000 years. A unit of about 20 elite-soldiers fighting under an unknown banner tried anything to protect what- or whoever is behind the theft by committing suicide once they were captured. The only clue what exactly is going on, is the fact that they kept talking about a place called Nayshir they wanted to return to." Thinking for a second, Ledah also remembered the words of the blue birdman... "They said something about... traveling unknown worlds... Is there a world beside the three?"

"Maybe I can help in this matter..." A very old looking demon of the magefolk-race smiled softly, sitting in the ranks between the other demons of Utgard. His long beard hang to the ground and the dark horns that stood off his head were worn by age...

"Lord Virren?" Ledah turned surprised at the old demon. He was not a member of the Council of Utgard, but he had been the former guardian of the Cross of Ameran before this duty had been passed on to Ledah. "I'm glad about any clue that might lead me to the cross."

"Well then... I was the previous guardian of the Cross of Ameran before it turned to become the symbol of peace between our worlds." He closed his eyes, sitting there as if he had fallen asleep...

"..." Ledah frowned, getting more and more impatient. "Lord Virren, we all know that!" He barked angrier than he had intended to.

"Ah... excuse me..." The old demon smiled innocently looking into the round. "But if there is something I learned in my 40000 years of age, then it is that patience leads to a longer life, little enwa." He smiled, coughing a little but then finally continuing. "The history of the cross goes far back to the early days of the Eternal War. Gods and Demons fought each other on Midgard but conquering each other was impossible. While the gods of Asgard were helpless in the embracing darkness of Utgard, Utgard's demons were unable to fight in the purifying light of Asgard. The demons of old wanted to finally succeed over the gods though, searching for a way to create a being that united all the energies of the worlds within itself. They knew if they were able to

combine the 8 flows of Mana within one creature, the war would be as good as won. A fighter that is not restrained by any of the worlds."

"You are talking about... an enwa?" Ledah frowned. "Enwa hold the Essence of Time or the Essence of Space within themselves. They are combinations of either light and darkness or water, fire, earth, air, metal and plants." The blonde explained as some of the present gods and demons looked rather confused. "Enwa used to be an insult as they were children of gods and demons alike, but that is only half the truth. An enwa can as well be any other being as long as they fit the part with the Essence of Time and Space." Much to his amusement, some people looked even more confused now. "But... look, Virren, enwa's might be rare, but that's only because most gods and demons still remember the hatred between our worlds, that's all there is to it!"

"That's not entirely correct, Sire." Gawain stepped forward, looking at her master. "There are reports of other 'enwas' but... usually the fetus and mother die during pregnancy. We know of no confirmed case beside you, that any of them ever survived birth."

"Enwa are indeed very rare, my dear Ledah. To be exact, I know of only 3 ever existing..." He smiled softly, musing the confused man below. "You and the summoner of the Heroes of Mana, Ary who was considered one as well as she wielded the combined powers of the Great Spirits within herself even while being a mere human... and Ameran." He paused for a few moments. Ledah's crimson eyes focused him intensely... Much to Virren's bemusement doubt was written on the blonde's face. "After millennia of experiments the demons of Utgard finally managed to create a being that was as well male as female, god as well as demon, human, elf, monster,... It called itself Ameran and neither demons nor gods were able to control its immense power. It opened a gap between time and space and disappeared, leaving nothing but rumors about its existence. For so long, Ameran had been forgotten, but almost from one day to another the worlds' Mana changed. It disappeared from the lands and both armies were weakened." Virren stopped for a second, looking from Origin to Ledah. "A foreigner who didn't seem to belong to either of the armies talked 4 demons and 4 gods into following him and thus turning their bodies into pure Mana."

"The Great Eight? This can't be..." Whispers went through the ranks of the Senate... Ledah stared up at Virren, still unable to believe the words he had just heard.

"Nonsense!" Origin suddenly stood up, eying them with angry eyes. "The archives of Asgard don't report of anything that you mentioned just now! Neither did it report about a change of Mana, nor any kind of experiments from Utgard! And besides, if there was someone who led the 8 generals, then he had to belong to an army! There was only either Asgard or Utgard!"

"Well, and this is exactly what I try to explain to you, my dear Lady. Do you honestly believe Utgard would have let Asgard know anything about what they were doing during the Eternal War?!" Virren stood up now as well, but his voice remained calm. "The stranger carried the Cross of Ameran, apparently a pendant Ameran's might was locked in. This man ordered my ancestors to take care of the cross and defend it. In return our kind was granted a longer life than any other demon on Utgard. He

disappeared in a gap between time and space, just as the legends told about Ameran. If that is the case, then we can be rather certain, that there has to be at least one other world beside our own."

"You mean this place... Nayshir... could be another world?" Ledah started to understand. A bad feeling rose within him. He had seen someone opening a gap between time and space 500 years ago... Ary had disappeared through it along with her guardian Callo after their journey had come to an end... An idea spread within the enwa's head... a silent little thought that slowly took over his mind, spreading within him. "Then I know what I have to do." He turned, leaving the hall and the surprised audience behind.

"Ledah, please open the door! Let me in!" Ifrit's whiny voice rang through the door of Ledah's room in the Eternal Tower. The blonde sighed but didn't bother standing up from his bed. He stared at Ary's amulet. Today so many things had been answered, but it had confronted him with even more questions than before...

Was it true? Was Nayshir another world? And maybe... just maybe...

"Impossible you stupid fool..." Ledah grit his teeth, balling a fist around the amulet. Ary was human. Even if she had gone to Nayshir back then, her life would have ended due to age long ago. Callo however was a desert-elf. He could still be alive... What a childish thought... Smiling at his own naivety, Ledah stood up, looking around. He had packed anything he needed for his trip. His red flame-sword hang on his belt, spare-cloths and blankets were in the back-pack, supplies, a compass, a few grindstones and enough gold to buy a house with was in his second bag. Pretty much for a single person but he knew that he didn't have to carry it... That was the great thing about being able to summon spirits... They could take his bags with them to the spirit-dimension, rematerializing it if he needed anything! The only thing left to do was summoning a spirit and abuse them as baggage porter...

"I call for the dark prince of hell, the emperor of the night. Come forth by--"

"Ya, ya... I am here..." Suddenly dark mist filled the room as a man appeared in front of him. A pair of dark wings with golden eyes that focused the young blonde intensely hang on his back. The Great Spirit of Darkness... "What do you need?"

"Could you please...?" Ledah grinned sheepishly while pointing at his bags.

"You know that I'm a Great Spirit, and no attendant of yours, right?" He frowned but already took the bags, disappearing with a small 'plop' into dark mist.

"Hehehe, sorry..." The enwa grinned bemused, feeling almost guilty... but only almost!

Something knocked on the window all of a sudden. As he looked aside, his eyes grew wide. There was Gawain outside, carrying Iska who wildly knocked against the glass while the angel seemed to drop him at any possible second if he kept dithering

around like that.

If Ledah hadn't known that Gawain actually would drop Iska if he got too heavy, he wouldn't have opened the window...

"What do you want?" Ledah tried to sound as serious as possible, but the sight of Gawain stumbling over Iska was just too bemusing.

"We want to help you prepare for your take-off!!" Iska exclaimed excitedly while trying to get away from Gawain.

"Yes, and we want you to leave us orders of what we have to do during your absence. Politics and such..." Gawain wanted to bow as usual, but her hair was stuck on Iska's cape. "Ouch, watch where you are going, stupid leech!"

"How did you know I planned to..." Ledah blinked confused at his two right-hand-servants.

"Because we serve you since almost 500 years, Ledah! Though I can't understand how you were able to bear angy's presence all those years..." Iska received a smack for that addition.

"He is right! You don't want the others to come along, that's why you want to keep it a secret, but we will help you nonetheless!" The angel-guard smiled happily, finally freeing her hair and stepping away from the stupid vampire.

"Very well..." Ledah smiled. "Then let's do this!"

Kapitel 3:

Midgard, the world of humans, elves, orcs and all other kind of beings. Located in the center between Asgard and Utgard, the once wasted world is now the center of life. Hundred-thousands of years, Mana created all kind of beings... but the crown of Midgard is Twila, the floating city in the center of the world. It used to be a hiding-place for refugees from Asgard and Utgard alike, angels, gods, demons or devils that grew sick and tired of fighting each other, living united in the unique city, building the first step towards peace between Asgard and Utgard...

Surrounded by the floating plateaus, the Chapel of Time rose into the skies like a watchtower to guard the people living close to it. A giant crystal hang on top of the chapel, sending the clear sound of an orchestra of bells through the air whenever someone dared entering the divine building.

During the journey of the Heroes of Mana, this chapel had been the final seal to be removed to save Midgard... As temple of the Great Spirits of Darkness and Light alike, time seemed to run unnaturally in the sacred chambers.

Ledah landed on the steps right in front of the chapel, looking up the giant building in awe. It impressed him every time he saw it. The Tower of Eternity was higher than this building, but the ornaments and the strange aura that floated all around the place were unmatched in all three worlds.

Gawain slowly descended from the sky as well, now standing next to her Master. She looked up bemused, seeing Iska riding on a dragon, trying to find a spot to land, but the arcs all over the place made that a harder quest than he had expected... much to Gawain's bemusement who had told him to better take a smaller dragon... Well, if the vampire didn't want to listen, he had to learn the hard way.

Giving up, Iska just jumped down the dragon's back, using his vampire-abilities to float down to the stairs. Hopefully he'd find a way to get on his dragon's back again later, or he would have to ask Gawain for help... No way, he'd rather jump than asking that stupid angel!

"Do you have anything you need?" The blonde woman asked worriedly, holding her spear.

"I think so. My bags are with the spirits, and I have my sword right here with me..." Ledah smiled, patting his favorite weapon. This sword was not an ordinary one. It grew with its wielder's experience and power... Once belonging to his father it had been Ledah's weapon for half a millennium, never failing him. He was able to make it disappear in flames, but since about a century he had started carrying it with him all the time. He had grown more comfortable with it this way... "How about you. You remember what I ordered you to do in my absence?"

"Yes, Sir. I will do as you ordered!" Gawain nodded. For her, the enwa wasn't worried

at all. He knew that she had written down every single word of what he had ordered her, probably starting to work on it the second she returned to Menel. It was Iska he had to be worried about.

"Ya, I know, I know..." The vampire grunted, rolling his eyes. "B-but this is so hard!! Those nut-brains will never get it!"

"Iska, you helped me bringing peace between gods and demons, two forces that wanted to obliterate each other since the very beginning of time... and then you fear working on an armistice-treaty between vampires and werewolves?!" Ledah had to laugh at that one.

"Well, you see, if a god doesn't agree with you, he won't bite!" The red-head stuck his tongue out, slowly walking towards the gates of the chapel. "So, this is where it all begun, huh?"

"Rather where it all ended..." Ledah sighed, closing his hand around the amulet again, climbing up the stairs toward the giant gate of the chapel.

"Idiot!" Gawain hissed, smacking Iska on the back of his head while hurrying after the blonde.

"Ouch, what did I do wrong now?!" The vampire barked, rushing up the stairs as well.

As Ledah opened the giant gates, the crystal above sent out a wonderful melody. They could only guess that the fragments of the crystal formed the different tunes as it sounded like at least 100 different bells ringing at the same time...

The cool air within the chapel-hall pulsed with energy. There was no place Ledah would ever feel stronger in than here... Light and darkness, the essence of time itself... the same energy that moved through his body.

Taking a deep breath, the enwa closed his eyes, feeling his body relaxing.

"You have finally arrived?"

"Frosta?" Ledah looked at the Great Spirit of Water who was sitting on the stairs that led to the altar. Her liquid hair waved softly through the air, giving a feeling of no gravity. The pure water-maiden watched him curiously with her ocean-deep eyes, remaining silent. "You expected me?"

"I did indeed." The spirit smiled and stood up. "I knew you'd come."

"..." He nodded. "Then you probably know what I have to ask of you... right?"

"I do indeed... but you have to speak it out loud for us, the Great Spirits, to accept your plea." She closed her eyes, disappearing in small little water drops, leaving them behind seemingly alone.

"Very well then..." Ledah grit his teeth and stepped forward towards the altar, leaving Gawain and Iska behind at the entrance. "Great Spirits! I am Ledah AINU, descendant of Asgard and Utgard!" He rose the amulet around his neck up as if he wanted to show it the invisible people watching them. "I seek your aid! I need you to create the same kind of gap you created 500 years ago! A gap without time or space! Come forth and help me, in the name of the pacts you once swore on this amulet!"

Wind rushed through the chapel all of a sudden, almost blowing Ledah against the altar behind him. All around him, the Great Spirits started appearing.

In an outburst of flames, Flamera, Great Spirit of Fire, appeared. Next to her the earth started forming a giant cocoon, Ambard, Great Spirit of Earth, breaking out of it. A white flower started growing in one of the corners, surrounded by ivory as Weyards, Great Spirits of Plants, appeared. And so it went on. Windy, Great Spirit of Air. Azarath, Great Spirit of Metal. Frosta, Great Spirit of Water. And the two Great Spirits of Light and Darkness that floated above their heads in all their glory.

"We heard your request, young enwa." Weyards smiled, hopping off her flower and flying towards him. He was incredibly small, not much taller than the blonde's head, but she was just as strong as any other of the Great Spirits. "And we will do our best to fulfill it."

"Thank you..." Ledah smiled, looking at the mighty beings around him in gratitude.

Gawain had taken a kneeling position again, paying her respect towards the mighty creatures. Iska however had a hard time holding back and not running over to Flamera, that 'hot chick' as he used to call her for a flirt... He still remembered too well how she almost fried him last time...

"What you are asking for is very dangerous..." The Great Spirit of Light looked at him, a hint of worry written on her face. But the enwa only shook his head.

"I know it is, but it is our only chance! Please open the gap!" Ledah stepped back from the altar, pointing at the empty space ahead of it. "You created the gap right there. Please..."

"..." Without further complains, the spirits flew towards the spot, starting to drown all energy out of the area. Without neither the Essence of Time nor the Essence of Space present, the gap looked like a giant black crack... The room around it seemed to try getting back to the empty space, filling it with Mana again but the Great Spirits held it back.

"Good luck, Ledah!!" Iska cheered from his spot close to the door. Next to him, Gawain spoke a silent prayer, hoping everything would go well.

Staring at the emptiness inside the gap, Ledah started to doubt it was such a good idea... But it was too late for turning back now! He had to go!

"I will return with the Cross of Ameran! I promise!" Ledah grit his teeth and stepped

inside the gap.

The feeling was incredibly intense... It felt as if life itself was drowning out of him, ripping on him with immense force. He felt as if he heard his friends outside calling for him, but it was just a mere whisper, consumed by the emptiness around.

He did not fall... There was no up or down, right or left, front or back. There was no space so how was there supposed to be directions?

Ledah tried his best to keep his eyes open but he felt so tired all of a sudden...

Seconds passed, minutes... to the enwa it felt like hours... until finally it seemed as if light returned, shining brightly on him. He was looking at the sun... or was it the sun? It seemed so different from the giant golden ball that moved over Midgard's skies, led by the Great Spirit of Light... Staring at the shining circle, Ledah was certain: this was not the sun he knew... As he floated there on the spot, feeling Mana returning around him, he slowly felt gravity nagging on his body as well.

"!!!" Ledah tried to spread his wings as fast as possible as he started falling towards the surface of the world. He spun around, unable to catch his balance for a few dozen meters until his wings finally pushed the air away, catching his fall just a few meters above a sea of trees. For some reason, he could barely move his wings... but at least gliding worked without problem...

As he reached the first branches of the trees, the enwa slowly tried to find somewhere to stand. He wouldn't be able to glide in the trees.

"C-come on..." Ledah grabbed for a branch, but it broke, causing him to completely lose balance. "WAH!" The blonde landed right in a small stream, being completely soaked... "Oh great... ouch..." He sighed deeply and leaned back in the water... It was nice feeling the water streaming around him... But he had no time for such things! He had to find the Cross of Ameran! "Hey, I need my compass..." He grinned, looking around. "Hm? Oh right... I call for the dark prince of hell, the emperor of the night. Come forth by our pact!"

...

No black mist, no dark Mana,... Ledah blinked confused, looking around. "I call for the divine priestess of heaven, the empress of the sun. Come forth by our pact!"

...

Nothing!

"Where are they!?" Ledah looked down at his amulet, searching for an answer. His eyes drifted over to his sword, causing him to choke. "W-what the-!?" He unclipped the blade from his belt, staring at it with unbelieving eyes... The blade had changed once more... Not as usual when he grew stronger, giving it a sharper blade, more ornaments, a better balance and grip,... no, this time, his sword had changed to a

simple, blunt blade, almost the same it had looked like 500 years ago when he had been at the beginning of discovering his own abilities...

"This is not good at all..." He looked up, scanning the area around. He tried to feel Mana, but it was nothing like back in Asgard, Midgard or Utgard... The world around him looked almost the same as his home... yet it was so different. And he was lost in this new world. Without supply, compass or gold...

Kapitel 4:

...

Grumble...

.....

Grumble grumble...

"Ugh... I'm going to starve here!" Ledah whined, holding his belly. He had been in this strange world for almost 2 days now... without anything to eat. There were lots of fruits hanging on the trees, but he would not dare trying them... Some of them looked really familiar, close to the ones growing in his home-world... yet they differed in size or color... How was he supposed to know if the things here were eatable?! He could not just risk setting all his luck on one card, trying some fruits and maybe ending up dying due to poison! Not to mention that he did not plan on dying now, but if he failed, who would get the cross back?!

"No way... I must... stay... strong..." Ledah's eyes fell on something that looked like dark blue raspberries... His fingers reached for the fruits slowly... Now that he was hungry they were even more delicious looking than usual... But... but... "In Mana's name, Ledah, restrain yourself!!!" The blonde barked to himself, pulling his hand back. He couldn't use his wings for some strange reason so he had hid them in his back again, following the small river ever since he had landed on Nayshir. If he didn't find a village soon, he had to eat these fruits, but as long as he still had strength left within him, he had to fight the urge!

Far in the distance, a dark clad man looked over the wide plains of Suuna, the human country of Nayshir... Something was wrong with this land... He couldn't quite point his finger on it, but there was something horrible going on here...

"If you could see this, I bet you would regret sacrificing your life for them..." Deamond's poison-green eyes narrowed, focusing on a giant tree, growing in the center of Suuna's capital, like a crown to the giant city.

However he got distracted... From behind the hill he was standing on, he could smell the scent of blood, slowly reaching his nose. Turning his head, he felt the dark presence of death lingering behind a small forest.

Attracted by the familiar feeling, he started walking towards the source of the smell, patting the hilt of the scythe attached to his back... and after only a few minutes he could hear the sound of metal and the screams of agony coming from behind the trees.

A small elven unit was surrounded by an army of human fighters. This wasn't a fight, it was a slaughter. The barely 100 elven soldiers were almost annihilated, while the over 600 men of Suuna shot through their lines with horses and lances, slowly killing the remaining elves.

In one last desperate try to escape, the remaining half dozen elves rushed towards the trees, hoping to find shelter between the leafs to hide from the bloodthirsty humans.

Deamond watched how one single elf managed to reach the trees alive, still being chased by soldiers. He knew, if there was no miracle happening now, this last elf-warrior would die just as his unit did.

A young human commander noticed the man watching them, calming his horse.

"Hey you!" The soldier slowly rode over to Deamond, rapier drawn. He was in his early twenties, if not even younger... probably the son of a general and as such able to achieve such a high rank in his young age...

Smiling innocently, Deamond walked on towards the man, unimpressed by the weapon.

"Who are you?! Introduce yourself, stranger!" The commander demanded with an arrogant tone. It was as the brown haired man had expected: The kid of a high general or aristocrat that had no clue about the true terrors on a battle-field... The way he held his weapon left so many spots to attack. The view on his saddle's belt was open. It would take Deamond not even a second to unzip it and so causing him to fall off the horse... Not to mention the way he held the rapier. Grabbing the blade and pulling it forward and the 'fearsome' warrior in front of him would be unarmed...

"May I ask for your name first, Sir? It's a matter of attitude to introduce yourself before asking for someone else's name..." He smiled sheepishly, unimpressed by the blade pointing at his face. The commander almost fell from his horse at this answer. Anger was well written on his face as he made a few movements with his rapier, as if to frighten the other man.

"Do you have a clue who you are talking to, scum!? I am a commander of Suuna's divine army!! Kneel in front of me and I might forgive your rudeness!" He hissed, making some more random, probably supposed to be cool looking movements with his rapier. Almost unable to hold back his laugh, Deamond only kept smiling innocently. He tilted his head, acting confused and clueless.

"Is that so? Well then, my name is Deamond, it's a pleasure to meet you Sir commander of Suuna's divine army!" He offered him a hand in greeting, once again paying not the slightest attention to the blade pointing at him.

"What the--?! Are you a madman!?" The soldier pushed the strange man's hand away, but placin his rapier back in its shelf again as well. "You are lucky I am in a good mood today, or I would chop your head off for your manners!"

"In a good mood?" Deamond kept smiling. He was used to wear this kind of mask no matter the situation... and this human bemused him all the more... "I guess you mean because of your great victory over there?" He pointed at a field of bloody corps. The elven soldiers that had lost their lives in the ambush lay on the soft grass, painting it red with their blood while Suuna-knights walked around, picking up their belongings to fill their own wallets...

"Yes, we defeated a unit of elves just now. Those ridiculous beings had dared entering our borders. We showed them what we are made of!" The human grinned victoriously. He moved some of his hair out of his face, awaiting praise for their brave deed from the foreigner.

"And you are actually proud of that? Interesting... So basically you are saying that it needs six times as many humans to defeat an elven unit?"

The commander almost dropped from his horse again at this statement. He snapped the rapier off his belt again, pointing it at the stranger. "How dare you!?" He grit his teeth. "Are you calling us cowards?!"

"I never said that. I merely stated the facts, right?" Still hiding behind his mask of innocence, Deamond was prepared for what came next...

"You little bastard!!" The commander wanted to bring down his blade, but Deamond simply stepped forward, loosening the belt of the saddle with a simple move of his fingers, watching the human fall forward right on the ground. Gasping for air after the hard landing, he tried to reach his blade but Deamond had already took his scythe from his back, standing above the younger man. The innocent mask was gone. Cold eyes pierced down at the soldier while a bloodthirsty grin curled on his lips.

"Listen, little boy." The grin on his face grew wider. Slowly but sure other soldiers around started noticing them and walking over in case the commander needed help. "When holding a rapier, don't wave around with it too much... It is a weapon for precision, not for brainlessly swinging around. Secondly, never let the belt that holds your saddle show this openly. Or at least secure it with a second clip. You saw what it will lead to... And look at someone first before attacking... If you had paid closer attention, you would have noticed my stance. That of a swift fighter... and as such making a wild swing from over your head gives someone like me more than enough time to kill you three times before you can bring down that weapon..."

"I-I see..." The commander gulped, scared to death while his eyes focused the scythe on his throat. "I-I will try... to remember that for next time!" He shivered slightly, trying to get away, but each movement would cause the scythe to cut into his skin.

"Very well~ Then I guess you learned your lesson." Deamond laughed, his innocent mask back in place. He offered the young man a hand to help him back on his feet... "I should be on my way again then... It was nice meeting you!" He bowed slightly, simply turning and walking away.

"..." The commander stared after him, still unable to understand what had just happened...

"Sir, are you alright? Should we hunt this man down?" A soldier asked, but he did not receive a response from his puzzled superior.

"Oh this can't be happening!!" Ledah had followed the river for over three hours now since he had restrained himself from eating those raspberries... and by now he was surrounded by what looked like small pinkish apples... The all shimmered in the light of the sun, as if they wanted to mock him...

He was really close to just ignore any logic, eating whatever these fruits were!! He wanted something to eat... and he wanted it now...

Fried chicken with vegetables, steak with fries and chili-sauce, salmon-gratin with backed potatoes and salad...

The images of the wonderful dishes danced around in front of his mental eyes... Heck, he was so hungry he could even smell the salmon...

Wait...!!

"That's salmon!!" Ledah gasped, starting to sprint into the direction of the wonderful smell.

"I'm done with the potatoes, Daddy!!" A little black haired girl smiled towards her father. From his greenish-brown skin he probably was a half-orc from the mountains. He wore the typical cloths of a farmer: A straw-hat, baggy, dirty trousers and a sleeveless linen shirt. His wife, a dark haired human woman in a long green dress prepared a piece of fish on a camp-fire, throwing a couple of fresh herbs over the meal.

"The salmon is almost done as well, Martin." The woman smiled softly. Her husband was already placing plates on a giant piece of fabric on the ground that gave a wonderful atmosphere of a picnic...

"I'm done as well. Ena, please bring me the potato-salad, will you?" He smiled at his little daughter who happily ran over to him with a large bowl. Suddenly, they could hear sounds coming from the trees close to the shore. Martin jumped up, covering his girl while signaling his wife to stay where she was.

The branches of the bushes moved slightly, announcing the intruder... Only a few seconds later, a blonde man walked out of the woods into the clearing, staring at the little family with a weird expression on his face. His long white coat made Martin

guess he was a noble, as usually only aristocrats wore these kind of cloths in Suuna...

"Ah..." Ledah looked at the family in front of him. They looked exactly the same as farm-folks on Midgard... But... now that he saw them here... and now that he recapitulated the situation he was in... He was in another world! How was he supposed to talk with these people? They probably didn't even speak his language... but it smelled so delicious here... His eyes drifted over to the human-looking woman that sat next to a campfire with a frying-pan in hand. No doubt, this was the source of the delicious smell! He had to somehow communicate with them... but how? "Do... you... understand... me?" The enwa spoke extra slowly. Maybe the language of this world was close to his own? That would be too great to be true...

"..." Martin rose an eyebrow confused. "Why shouldn't we understand you?" He frowned, not letting his eyes go of the sword attached on Ledah's belt.

"Oh, ahahaha..." The blonde chuckled, feeling his cheeks turning pink. "W-well... My name is Ledah and..." He kept staring at the frying-pan as a loud growl escaped his stomach.

"I am Martin... and this is my daughter Ena and my wife Laura." He followed the man's gaze and had to suppress a chuckle. "You seem hungry..."

"Please, I'm begging you, I'm starving! I'd do anything if you give me a bit of your meal!" He bowed again and again before placing his sword and a couple of throwing-knives hidden under his jacket on the ground. He wanted to reassure them that he was no threat to them... but if they didn't give him any of their food, he felt it was more secure to not have any kind of weapon close to him...

"Ahahahaha..." Martin laughed, now certain that the blonde really was no danger to them. He nodded happily. "Sure, I can always use a hand on the farm. Especially since I wanted to start the harvest tomorrow..." He smiled and stepped aside, offering the stranger a place on the picnic. Laura smiled and stood up, offering Ledah a couple of slices from the apples hanging all around them...

Mentally slapping himself, the enwa took them thankfully, starting to eat.

As they sat on the picnic, eating the salmon and potato-salad cheerfully, Ledah took his chance asking Martin and Laura a few questions that burned within him and had to be asked.

"So, these fruits are apples, right? And those are raspberries... They are all eatable I guess?" He smiled, taking another apple-slice.

"Yes. Of course they are, dummy..." Ena interrupted before her parents even had the chance of answering.

"E-Ena!" Laura shrieked, taking her daughter on her lap. "You can't just call Ledah a

dummy!"

"But only dummies don't know what apples are..." The girl stuck out her tongue and hugged her puppet, a small wool-puppet with a red dress and yellow straw as hair.

Ledah had to chuckle. If someone on Midgard had asked him what an apple is he'd probably reacted the same, so he couldn't quite be mad on the little girl...

"You see, where I am coming from apples look a little different... they are green and not pink... Plus they are a bit bigger." He grinned innocently, taking another bite from the salmon.

"Interesting, so you aren't from Suuna?" Laura smiled, giving him another serving of potato-salad on his plate.

"Excuse me, but... what is Suuna?" Ledah blinked confused. Martin bursted out laughing now. How could someone not know Suuna?!

"Suuna is everything here! This whole country is called Suuna!" He finally regained his cool, whipping with his finger over his eyes. "How did you even get here if you don't even know what country you are in?!"

"That is a very long story..." The enwa muttered under his breath, taking another bite. He couldn't possibly tell them the truth... Hello, I'm a world-traveler that is lost and can't use his wings at the moment, searching for an ancient relict while I have no clue where in Mana's name I am... Ledah shook his head at the stupid thought.

"You look like a noble to me..." Laura nodded, letting go of Ena again. "Did you lose your memory? I mean, I heard from travelers before that got robbed and due to injuries lost their memories about anything that happened before the incidence!" She looked at him worried, giving him another portion of potato-salad on the plate.

"..." Ledah gulped... by now he felt rather stuffed even... but the story with the memory-loss was perfect! That way he could ask them the weirdest questions without making them suspicious at all! "I really barely remember anything." He smiled innocently. "But I guess I'm... something like a noble..." The prince of the most giant demonic country on Utgard to be exact...

"Aw, that's too bad... If you want to know something, you can ask me!" Ena chirped, hugging her puppet happily. The enwa smiled and nodded at the offer. Perfect.

"Thanks a lot. Uhm... First of all... what is this world called?" The blonde grinned, knowing how dump this had to sound. But it was the most essential question of all!

"Ahahaha, they must have hit you really hard..." Martin held his belly again. "This, my dear Ledah, is the world of the Great Trees of Mana, Nayshir."

Bull's eye!!

Ledah's face brightened so much all of a sudden that the little family really started worrying about the mental condition of their guest...

"Ehehehe, great! If you don't mind, I have a couple more questions..." Ledah was certain: Luck was on his side, no matter what... He couldn't have possibly stumbled into any nicer people!

In the capital of Suuna, Kaaren, a blonde freckled girl with glasses rushed through the streets. On her heels a couple of soldiers followed, weapons drawn.

"Lady Nima! Stop running away and we will not harm you!" One of the soldiers yelled, gasping for air in his heavy armor.

"..." The blonde girl didn't dare slowing down or answer... She knew that the king had ordered her to be arrested... and even more to be executed! She would not let them get her! No way! She'd either die trying to escape, or somehow getting away...

All she had to reach was the stables. Only a bit more... Luckily, the masses of people in the street slowed the soldiers with their thick armors down...

Finally Nima reached the stables. Ripping the doors open, she jumped on a random saddled horse, hoping it would obey her commands. "Hiya!" She shouted, feeling the giant animal under her towering up before sprinting out the stables and towards the forest.