

Adtraic Verity: Journey For The Truth - Chapter 2

“Why do you look so surprised? Don’t you remember my appearance?”

The more his hood slipped off his head, the more that Asahi and Aletha could recognize the “thief”.

He had long lustrous midnight hair with thick eyelashes fringed above his jewel-like lavender eyes. His skin was light and creamy, and the attire he wore as he stripped off the ragged thief wear, was as dark and celestial as the stars; like what the attire Asahi and Aletha wore. Immediately, the sister jumped out and screamed in confusion.

“Hey, you look like someone I know.”

Her eyes bulged in realization, knowing exactly who this dark-haired man was.

“Wait a minute, Akwan?! How did you get here?! I thought... you joined the... other gods.”

Despite hearing Aletha’s saddened tone in her voice, Akwan made a prideful chuckle, straightened his posture, and replied as if he hadn’t heard her.

“It’s been awhile since we have last met, hasn’t it? I can’t believe I could put up an act of being that wretched thief for such SO long, I almost broke character.” Akwan shook his head and continued. “Anyways, yes... that IS my name. Surprising for you to remember it after all these years.”

He paused, taking a sigh, and staring at the brown scarf clutched on Asahi’s hands. Immediately, he bolted up and continued.

“Look, I apologize for stealing that scarf. It was the only way to grab attention from you two.”

Asahi backed up in shock and approached closer. Even he couldn’t figure out and believe that the “thief” they have been chasing, turned out to be—

“Aren’t you one of the gods from Cleira? I... I thought the world was destroyed. How did you even arrive here?”

Akwan pushed his dark hair back.

“It’s a long story. Out of all the years I have been living, never would I ever predicted that you two would simply abandon your world.”

Asahi added with a frozen face.

“Yeah, but here’s the thing, we never HAD a choice! Our only option was to leave the world, or else we would get k!lled!”

Akwan delivered a cheeky snicker and played it off as if Asahi’s reply was some sort of joke.

“Oh, please... there was still so much left! Did you REALLY believe that out of the thousands of gods among the kingdom, you two were the only ones standing? Ha, I pity you two and your ignorance. Of course there are survivors. But I guess, since you lost your parents, I understand why you two wanted to leave.”

He grabbed the drawing held from Aletha’s dumbstruck hands and complimented as he noticed the lines and figure on the paper, followed by the slightly embarrassed look on the siblings’ faces.

“Wow, I commend your achievement in your ill.ustrations. Each line is so precise and intricate. Honestly, this looks better than those that you have done back in Cleira.”

Aletha and Asahi sneered at the dark-haired man, furious about him mocking them. It’s as if he was completely oblivious to their world-traveling and the calamity.

After moments of uneasy silence, Aletha shook her head, and tightly caressed the brown scarf on her pale hands. She spoke with a tone so trembling, that even Akwan could feel emotion in her.

“You know why we are angry right now, Akwan?”

“No... not at all.”

Aletha sighed and suppressed her frustrations away. She continued as they gathered up in a circle, while both the siblings touched the scarf.

“It’s... because... we thought everyone died in our world. We... were sure of it, and we have held onto that idea for years. D-Do you know what it feels like to lose everything you own? It’s a horrible feeling...”

She tried not to draw a glistening tear.

“That scarf... it’s the only thing we have left from our family.”

Asahi and Akwan fell silent as they heard Aletha explain everything that happened years ago.

* * * * *

Years ago, the night before all fell down, Asahi, Aletha, and another of their family were just waking up from their beds and had not known what happened outside their castle. But as they raced across the hallway, they knew something was wrong. When they tried to enter their parent’s room, the three felt even worse as they did when they saw the fire burning out their window.

“N...No...”

A boy knelt down at the sight and cried shining tears.

The room was supposed to be as pure and white as the clouds, but all of it looked like it was coated in dust. Dust, those small particles that rested on everything that aged, was what replaced blood for the race of Gods.

So when they found out that their parent’s room, of whom they thought would hold a fight against whatever it was that ambushed them, scattered in dust with barely anything trashed, gave them a sense of pure dread.

Asahi was the first one who had entered the room.

His sisters hadn’t known because they were confident that their mother and father would defend themselves. But as Asahi walked over to a glittering brown scarf on a chilly marble surface, it would be the first time that his sisters would see their brother’s tears.

A juvenile white-haired girl rushed over to him, knelt, and asked him in a shaking voice.

“A...Asahi, what’s wrong?”

His hands touched the pile of dust and the scarf, his body trembled in utter panic and fear. Tears spilled across his pale skin. The stern expression of terror flooded those watery gray eyes.

Suddenly,

(BOOM)

The parent's room's wall collapsed which had allowed the moonlight's glaring beams to shine and blind their eyes. The cyan glow of outside faded into one of crimson. Aletha continued to query even as the palace shook.

She thought their parents were still alive, escaping and fighting off what it was that ambushed their city.

"Asahi, please answer."

Asahi turned his pale face toward her and spoke in one low, trembling, and scared voice.

"We... lost... our parents."

* * * * *

Dust, upon dust was seen from each area of the platinum streets. The excruciating amount was almost sickening for them to think about. Thousands upon thousands of powerful, friendly, and blessed gods were slaughtered by an unknown entity.

Only the blue sparkles remained.

Their only question for that concealed enemy is...

Why? Why would anyone do such a thing for no apparent reason?

* * *

And then came the present, where it would be known for the first time in the siblings, that a god from their world had survived this calamity.

And to think that even though they had escaped and gone to several different worlds, it made them fall into disbelief after they knew that it was possible to

track them, let a lone witnessing a being from their world appear in such a distant one such as the one they were in now.

Absorbed in a stream of thoughts and reminiscences, although Aletha was the one who had reminded everyone about the disaster, Aletha sniffled and tried to stop from balling out.

“I-I...”

Asahi and Akwan sighed.

They knew it was evident that if one were to remind another about a traumatizing, destructive event, one would almost consider reacting just like Aletha was.

Yet, unlike Asahi, Akwan never expected Aletha to break her attitude so suddenly.

Akwan’s smile gradually dropped to a pitiful frown, realizing what he had said before was inconsiderate of him. He had realized what he had triggered when he stole that scarf, but knew that the only way to grab their attention was snatching something that was connected to a person they have loved so much. As the feeling of guilt enveloped him, the dark-haired man knelt down and closed his eyes, mumbling with a tone of guilt and remorse.

“I... entirely forgot about that. It had been so long since I had experienced that calamity, that I lost what it felt like to see all our allies slaughtered without a care. I’m... sorry for stealing your scarf, Asahi and Aletha. I’m dearly... dearly, sorry.”

...

After moments of thoughts, recollection, and guilt, Asahi finally answered the dark-haired man.

“My apologies for the breakdown we had earlier. You are forgiven. I know now that you wanted our attention. If it wasn’t for you... we would have never thought our world was still alive.” But in reality, the emotion of anger still bit and nagged his calmness.

Asahi shook his head and turned away from his sister, unable to suppress his rage as he tightly clenched his fists. Just to establish a point to the man one

more time, in hopes for making himself feel better, Asahi showed the scarf to Akwan and informed him.

“Do you see this? That’s the reason why we’re so mad about you stealing that scarf. It was the only relic we had from our parents. It’s a comfort object.”

Akwan nodded his head in guilt and understood.

“I understand you, entirely. And, no matter how many times I have to say it, I apologize.”

As the sunlight blocked from the clouds, both started hearing Aletha cry.

“W...Why...”

A painful feeling stung Asahi’s heart as he heard the distant weeps from Aletha. He couldn’t ignore it– he felt like he HAD to turn back to Aletha and stop her from sobbing.

He passed through the bushes, back to the canopy of lush vegetation; he noticed that Aletha’s legs were pressed against her face– in the position of closed chopsticks.

A sweeping crop of disappointments flew in Asahi.

“Sis, it isn’t that....”

“NO! Get away f-from me. I want to be alone!”

Trails of clear tears slid down Aletha’s pale face, her legs trembled, and her long white hair covered her face.

Akwan wanted to intervene, but he was afraid of worsening the situation. He instead hid behind the bushes and continued to hear her muffled sobs.

“A... Aiyana, father, mother, they’re all... gone.”

Asahi closed his eyes and grabbed a twig from the bottom of a trunk. He began cruising around the corridor of trees, dragging the twig; like a cane. He led Akwan outside the forest to which their eyes were greeted by a blazing blue sky pouring down torrents of light.

“Do you know what it’s like to lose your parents? To be the only ones left of our family?”

Pine trees danced with the cool breeze, and flowers bloomed under the glistening honey-combed ball of light.

“It’s... painful. I even had confidence that they would defend themselves, but they didn’t. We’ve been trying to ignore that memory all this time by traveling to other worlds.”

Asahi grasped at the light outline of the vast panorama of the landscape ahead of him.

“But... it just wasn’t enough. Nothing could match the happiness we felt when we were all united.”

Akwan sighed and shut his eyes. He heard birds caw over his head and saw them glide toward the white puffy clouds drifting over the horizon. Although he had an idea on what the siblings were talking about, Akwan couldn’t truly establish a connection with them since it had been so long since that calamity. And so, in response, Akwan uttered.

“I wish I could understand you two, but it just seems I can’t connect to your situation at all, because there’s something I am also deeply fond of. Listen, even if I feel this way, there is one thing I could say that may redeem what I have done to you two...”

He ensured himself to look directly at the white-haired boy’s gray eyes before continuing his words.

“Asahi, have you ever had hope that your parents could still be alive?”

As the wind blew across his hair, Asahi shook his head and sighed, trying desperately not to draw a tear.

“No. I lost hope the moment I saw that room in the dust.”

Akwan clenched his fists and took a sigh of pity.

“Then that’s the mistake you made.”

The wind blew over his dark hair and pointed toward the hopeful sun that glittered in the distance. Even if he were to commit such an heinous act as

being a thief from another world, Akwan still had some sort of glimmer of hope burning in his mind. A rare occurrence for superior beings such as Gods. He objected to Asahi's response and returned with a loud voice.

"You should NEVER lose hope on anyone or anything. Even if you see them die, always have faith that the love carried for who you love is carried, in here." Akwan pointed to his head as he spoke, trying to stay stable.

"The people that you grieve about the most, are the ones you had truly loved. There's more happiness in the memories of that love, than there is sadness."

A long and brutal silence came after hearing those powerful words Akwan had just uttered.

"There's no reason why you should have to bear such pain. You are too young to have to go through such a terrible ordeal losing all you love dearest. But know this, Asahi, pain is only remembered only if you allow it to. While happiness... happiness is remembered forever."

Asahi was taken aback by the fact that Akwan could be so compassionate.

"Yes, okay, but how do I forget about the pain? It's like a knife stabbed into my heart every time I think of them!"

Akwan shook his head and patted Asahi's shoulder, smiling as he answered.

"You forget that pain.... by making even better, and happier memories."

"How can I do that?"

Akwan pointed toward the horizon.

"Just look at that beautiful landscape, and feel the wind blowing against your face. Take it all in. The beautiful scenery will remind you of the beauty of life and of the people you love. Say, do you remember that pain you felt earlier?"

Asahi stood still and stared at the sky.

"No. I was completely taken off-track by this... wondrous sight."

"That's the way it should be. If you don't allow yourself to forget the pain, you'll never be able to move forward."

Akwan looked down and took a deep breath.

As the man paused, Asahi fell into the non-existent pool of wonder. His eyes savored the treat of this gorgeous sight, and his voice remained quiet with the wind, contemplating Akwan's consolation. He would have never believed a man that acted like a scheming-thief, could have also been so wise. Yet, that wasn't even the end of it, but just the beginning.

"Look, If you really want to know..."

A peaceful silence emerged from his quizzical stare.

Akwan sighed deeply and resumed as they saw a small brown town that stood behind a thick forest of trees and daring winding mountains.

"Just because you have despair, doesn't mean you have to give up. It's the feeling of hope that motivates and urges you to push forward, not despair." Akwan snapped his fingers. "If you two never left your world, if you two have stayed and been patient, perhaps both of you would understand and find out the truth of your world?"

A sigh of contentment slipped out his mouth, and his eyes slightly widened in shock.

"W-What do you mean?"

A grin emerged from Akwan's face.

"What I mean is... that you shouldn't give up on anything you want to achieve. Because no matter what you do, the thought and dream of you achieving what you want to achieve will always linger in your mind until you die." As he stared into the clouds and the alien blue sky from up above, Akwan turned to Asahi and resumed. "If only you two had just enough patience to descend back to world and find other gods during that calamity, if you had waited for the flames to burn out, perhaps you two could have restarted your lives again and become even stronger?"

Asahi covered his mouth and tried not to draw a glistening tear as he remembered the beautiful sight he once had when their world was still at its greatest.

But when he tried to imagine that sight, it was always interrupted by the view of flames and that same, lethal white luminance he had little time to witness. In fact, just thinking about the past world just made Asahi even more desperate.

With a tone of despair, Asahi turned over and stared at Akwan's lavender eyes, and expressed.

"Do you know how painful it is to restart again? To lose everything and start back from square one? I never even considered that option because, well..." He explained as he did a little gesture with his hands, summoning a faint white luminance.

"We were born with powers. We never got to experience that moment where we start weak. I rather not return. There is no point on returning to a world with nothing in it, out of our control. And besides..." A small smile beamed on Asahi's face as he took in the view of the foreign world in front of him.

"I like the feeling of discovery and adventure of wandering from one unknown world to the next. Meeting new people and new creatures we couldn't even begin to imagine is an amazing experience. It just really shows us just how tiny we are in comparison to the vast expanse of our universe."

After taking a breather, he noticed Akwan remaining silent. A light grin emerged in Asahi, feeling though as if his words were enough to impact him. Looking back onto the glittering horizon, Asahi continued with a slightly more confident posture, directing his message to the dark-haired man specifically.

"Akwan, I never even thought it was possible for you to find us, being so distant from the past world and everything. I think it's almost guaranteed that even if we used our most powerful traversal magic, we still wouldn't be able to return to our world. After all, the speed of light is the fastest we can go."

Akwan nodded his head and chuckled, scratching his chin, and fixing his monocle.

"I guess you're right. The cosmos is a vast place that can't all be discovered. But let me tell you this, sometimes, the best places to focus on are the ones you are familiar with, not the ones you don't know. There's only so much one individual could know."

Asahi couldn't help but smile at Akwan. There was just something so remarkable about the words that he spoke, that it almost made him see his life into a different perspective. The only thing he could really respond after all of what he said were...

"Thank you."

But just before Akwan could share his thoughts anymore, a distant, high-pitched voice interrupted him.

"Asahi, what are you talking about with him?"

Immediately, Asahi turned behind and saw a white-haired girl emerge from the bushes, wiping tears off her face. A calm wistful smile shone on her, most likely informing Asahi she had finally calmed down.

With a humble tone, Asahi stepped forward and replied to Aletha.

"We were just talking about... stuff."

Akwan facepalmed and ran to the siblings. He pointed out as Aletha nodded her head silently.

"Your brother and I were speaking about the cosmos and the unknown. It's nothing major. "

After he said that, Asahi sneered at Akwan and squeezed his fists, grumbling.

"Hey, you don't have to reveal everything."

Akwan turned his head away from Asahi as if he wasn't there, and continued along with what he had to say. "But what really is MAJOR, is that ever since that calamity that you two mentioned that happened all those years ago, I invested a quarter of my life to study and find methods on tracking you two down."

Akwan snapped his fingers, smiling as he, Aletha, and Asahi took a stroll along the forest. It was apparent to him that they were listening to every word he said, amplifying his confidence. Straightening his posture, Akwan continued.

"It took me exploring the most deepest parts of Gincad, to scavenging abandoned worlds just to find you two. And now that I found you two, after all

the studying of the ancient race that predated our births, I'm proud to say that I know of a place... or rather, contraption that may be sufficient and stable enough to transport all of us back to our world, at the speed of a blink."

Asahi raised an eyebrow. He couldn't possibly believe what Akwan was speaking was true. But now considering what Akwan had said about the known and the unknown, Asahi kind of shrugged it off and went with it.

Aletha gasped at the reveal. Never would she believe that she could return to her world. Immediately, Aletha turned over and tried to find the place while on top of a cliff. But all she had seen were seemingly endless hills of greenery, forests, and mountains. She scratched her head and turned over to Akwan, asking him.

"Where is it?!"

Without hesitation, Akwan hurriedly pointed his finger at the large vegetation-covered crater, beneath and behind a wall of rolling green hills.

"There!" He exclaimed. "The crater you see right there, is the entrance to the device I mentioned. Well, it may not look like an entrance to us right now, but I CAN make it one."

The siblings' eyes narrowed downward to the slope. Aletha shook her head and replied.

"Yeah... I see it..." Her voice was a lot more gentle and soothing.

Now, it seemed that Aletha was completely relaxed, brushing off the trauma that came with her recollection of that awful memory, followed by the sheer excitement she felt for what was to come.

After a moment of silence, Aletha squinted her eyes out to the distant crater and muttered.

"Hmm, I don't know.. It looks pretty far. I don't think we could go there without falling off this cliff. Akwan, what makes you think it's some sort of thing that can take us back? What if the device doesn't work? Oh, and Asahi, I thought you said our world is in shambles!"

Asahi pivoted his view to the crater and scratched his nervously.

“I... uhh...”

Akwan chuckled.

“He was lying. The World of Gincad may have experienced destruction, but in the end, it is fine. Well... fine as it is... “living.” Per say. I can’t guarantee you two would be satisfied at the result of your absence once we return.”

Aletha nodded, pretending to understand whatever complicated stuff Akwan was talking about.

The only thing that came out of Akwan’s mouth that thrilled her the most, was Gincad (her home world) was... alive; giving her the idea of the possibility that their parents and Aiyana could be alive as well.

Without anymore to say, Aletha replied as she tried to suppress her excitement.

“Wow... even my own brother lied to me! How is it that I can see through other people’s lies, but not my own brother? Pfft, whatever. I trust you, Akwan.”

Suddenly, a loud growl sounded from Aletha’s stomach. Her face turned pink, she fiddled with her white locks of hair, and Asahi’s eyes widened.

“W-Was that you?” Asahi asked with a genuine look of shock.

Aletha rubbed her tummy and slowly nodded her head with a look of guilt.

“Y-yeah...”

Asahi facepalmed and stepped forward, responding to Aletha with a loud and confident tone.

“Then we should get going. I’m sure there’s plenty of food in our world. We have already wasted so much time chasing and talking with Akwan.”

“Yes. I will follow through on what your brother said,” Akwan added. “The more we stand here in this unknown world doing nothing, the more time that will elapse in our world.”

Eager and impatient, Aletha nodded her head and expressed with a hurried voice.

“Okay!”

And so, the three immediately rushed down the natural rock stairs, through the slopes, and toward the green meadows. Aletha was so quick that it took Asahi and Akwan a few seconds to realize she was gone.

As he and Akwan raced down the stairs, carefully protruding over the rocks, Asahi screamed as he saw Aletha rush up the hills.

“Sis, wait up!”

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