

Adtraic Verity: Journey For The Truth - Chapter 3

A ceaselessly fleeting sky flew above their heads.

Smiles of excitement were plastered on both the siblings' faces as they sprinted across the open meadows with Akwan.

"Yes!" Aletha scrambled with a smile.

As she flew down the hills and passed a few huts bestowed among the trail, Asahi turned over to Akwan and questioned with an unsure tone.

"Are you sure that you're right?"

"I'm certain. Just don't fear, Asahi. I know what I'm doing." Suddenly, Akwan's lavender eyes quickly widened in realization, shocked that he almost forgot about something.

"Oh, wait! Before we proceed further, I have something to tell you."

Suddenly, a different voice whispered into Akwan's ear.

"What is it?"

Akwan was startled by Aletha's abrupt and nimbly quick appearance.

First thing he saw was Aletha standing way far in the distance, now it seemed as if she had teleported to him in the blink of an eye.

He wouldn't expect such a response all for it to just pry into a conversation.

Ignoring that, Akwan swiftly regained his composure, resuming his reveal.

"It's about... what happens after we use the device."

Aletha's eyes opened wide at his words. She knew full well what he meant when he mentioned 'after'. The girl didn't understand why this was such a big deal, but she had no intention of holding back her curiosity.

"Go ahead," she urged him.

"Well...ummm..." Akwan paused before speaking up. "Once you activate the device, I'll be gone. Not my presence, but my memories. That means, there's

a chance I may never remember meeting you two at all in this unknown world. And even though I have been teleported to the world, I might act as if I had never left the planet.”

The two looked at each other with stunned expressions. It wasn't surprising that Akwan would say something like that, but hearing him out gave them a sudden feeling of loss. They felt a deep sense of nostalgia whenever they remembered how they met.

Their first encounter with each other was not just some random event or coincidence; rather, it was the start of their journey together, the journey that made them who they were; a one free of constraints from their parents, the first time they were able to actually interact with the human world. The encounter that connected gods to humans in ways one would never expect.

And now that he was saying this, Aletha and Asahi realized they couldn't help but feel sad.

“We've been through so much together, haven't we?” Aletha spoke up softly.

“Don't worry.” Said Akwan with a relieved tone. “My memories of you two will still be in tact, it's just anything before the calamity, would be forgotten by me. You may even encounter me in the same area if we're lucky enough.”

A silence brooded in-between the three of them. It felt as though the suns had stopped moving in the sky, making them lose track of time.

Then, suddenly, Aletha broke the quiet atmosphere. As they were walking down the cliff, Aletha tripped over a branch and dived straight into the crater by accident, toppling down the cliff into the forest like a bag, before planting her face on the dirt.

“Uwah!” She cried out. “Ouch! ” Her voice echoed through every corner of the crater before slowly fading away into the wilderness.

“Heelp!”

Asahi facepalmed and sighed with a genuine look of embarrassment, treating the situation as if it was just another day.

Akwan, surprised, turned over and mumbled as they carefully crossed down the pathway of trees.

“Are you not worried about your sister? Because, it seems like you aren’t to me.”

“Of course I am,” Asahi answered bluntly, turning around to face him. “She’s my little sister, after all. If she gets hurt, then I get hurt too.”

“Ahh, okay. So like mentally, we’re speaking right? Because, I believe this sort of situation is kind of threatening your sibling more than mentally.”

Akwan nodded in understanding. He understood where Asahi was coming from, but he also wondered why she acted like she was fine. Maybe it was because she could easily forgive anyone, which was the exact same reason why he decided to trust her in the first place.

“Oh for goodness sake, if you say you are worried about her, then run down and save your sister for crying out loud!”

“Why do you think I’d do that?”

“Because you’re her brother! I’m sure if you grieve so much about your parents, you should care even more for the one that stood by you since the day you were born.”

“That’s true, but she can take care of herself, so there’s no need for me to rush down here.”

“But what if she gets lost?!”

“Then she won’t be lost for long,” said Asahi confidently. “And besides, I’m sure she knows what she’s doing. I’ve seen her do this multiple times back when we were in worlds prior to this one.”

Akwan let out a sigh of annoyance and walked towards the edge of the crater to search for Aletha.

“Honestly, I might have second thoughts about you now, Asahi”

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And so, after Asahi and Akwan ran down the cliff into the forest, and after they helped Aletha get back on her feet, Akwan showed her and Asahi the way toward the “place” he mentioned.

The crater itself felt way too humid, as if it was a microwave.

There were swamp-like areas scattered all over the place, coupled by bushes and thick jungle-like vegetation. But although floral life thrived here, not once did they find living creatures here. That was because...

“This crater wasn’t always this jungle.” Akwan explained. Matter-in-fact, it was an open chasm, but suddenly... after how long, it had been covered up by a layer.” He paused as they approached a vegetation-crowded area with stones circling each other, then continued. “That doesn’t matter. All you need to know is that everything is safe. Now watch where you step. I’m going to do something risky very soon.”

Aletha immediately sprang up while she held the scarf tightly on her arm.

“L-Like what?”

The ground beneath her feet tremored. Akwan smiled.

“You will see soon enough.”

(CRUMBLE)

Both the siblings screamed with fear as they saw the trees dance back and forth from the quake.

“W-What was that...?”

Their eyes broadened to the sight of Akwan forcing his fists through the ground.

Cracks emerged and spread out the dry and lush terrain, which forced the ground to tremble even more. Asahi raised his voice and grabbed Aletha by the arm.

“What are you doing?!”

“I’m opening the entrance.”

“What?!”

All three of them felt the pebbles beneath them shatter and break like delicate glass. Helplessness shocked the siblings as they noticed themselves sink

downward followed by Akwan whose entire arm was stuck through the ground.

Asahi felt branches scrape his legs, forcing an excruciating pain to exit him.

“AHH!”

And yet, he still desperately tried to pull himself up. But it was useless. He had been too low, so far where the grass couldn't touch his fingers anymore. Asahi and Aletha had never felt so confused about Akwan's actions before, but they couldn't even reach him because of how low they were.

The pure despair heard in Asahi's voice while the earth beneath them sank into a pit was something his sister had never heard from him before.

“I can't...”

He rolled over the breaking terrain and saw his sister's head gently break the water's surface. Even her frightful cries were enough to haunt her brother from those horrible memories.

“HELP!”

Akwan grinned. He knew that their frightful screams would urge the entrance to open even more, and continued to savor this moment.

Cracks scattered and formed everywhere on the crater.

Aletha and Asahi yelled so loudly that the tenuous ground beneath them trembled in response.

(CRACK)

“Watch your step!” Akwan said confidently.

After Akwan's body penetrated through the thin layer of rock, the entire crater split open like a cookie, which then created a massive circle-shaped trench. Boulders, tree branches, and other vegetation fell into the large pit like rain and vanished into the darkness, displaying to the siblings just how deep this hole was.

Now that they had fallen, the sibling's and Akwan's descent was accompanied by horrified screams.

“AHHH!”

A sense of suspense grabbed their chests and all of them watched as the sun's golden rays grew distant from them. But as they fell several kilometers under the world,

* * *

One kilometer, two kilometers, three kilometers beneath the surface...

They were so far from the surface that they wouldn't be able to reach it on time. Their voices echoed and bounced off the cavern walls, strengthening the earthquakes like an avalanche.

“Help!”

Second, by second, Asahi and Aletha felt like their bodies were floating in the air. They watched as rocks and stalagmites fell with them toward an even bigger area several kilometers under the surface. Aletha screamed as her hair went flying upward.

“Where are we?! Where is Akwan?!”

“I don't know. Just stay close to me, sis.”

. . .

Ominous, dark, cold.

His breathing stopped, silence surrounded him, and he felt pressure everywhere he moved. Asahi's eyes bulged out to a wet space surrounded with bubbles and covered in a clear turquoise color. He swam up and forced his head upward, popping his ears and inhaling desperately.

“Hey, grab my hand!”

Asahi turned to his left and saw a dark-haired man offer his hand out to him. He quickly grasped it and was pulled away from the pool, in which then he tumbled over and coughed out the water.

Before he could even ask, Aletha was the same to follow Asahi in his actions, getting pulled up the pool from Akwan.

“There you go, I told you to be careful where you step!”

“I didn’t think we had a choice.” Aletha answered sarcastically as she spat out water from her mouth. “Is this the “place” you mentioned?”

Akwan nodded.

“Indeed. This is one of the many underground nations that was left into ruin after age. Now, no more time to explain, we can’t waste ANYMORE time.”

As Asahi, Aletha, and Akwan passed through the bushes of this colossal underground area, curiosity and irritation bit up Asahi’s mind. He asked quietly.

“Why are you always so paranoid about time? We have all the time in the world, and you’re rushing us.”

Akwan gulped, sighed, and face-palmed.

“You... wouldn’t understand.”

Aletha crossed her arms.

“Yes we will.”

“Okay, fine. If you REALLY want to know so badly, there’s this thing called time-dilation. It’s an element where time accelerates differently in parts of the universe. Do I have to explain all of this to you?”

Asahi and Aletha backed away and shook their heads.

“No, I would rather just figure out how to return to the world.”

Akwan sneered at them suspiciously and mumbled.

“Goodness, for divine gods, these two can be hard-hitted.”

After the commotion that stirred up, Akwan led Asahi and Aletha toward a corridor that led toward the massive open-area of the cavern, where there were several kilometers of height and nothingness surrounding the place. They discovered trees the size of metal buildings, rusted-over mechanical gears attached onto solid earth, and lush vegetation everywhere among the place.

Although Asahi and Akwan were unable to detect the truth of what happened to this seemingly advanced and once-prosperous-place, Aletha, with her Truth Sight could process what happened.

She muttered as they passed through vine-covered metal buildings.

“Wow, so... this place was a kingdom before, that sheltered all of these people. There were factories, devices, everything here. But now...” Aletha gulped as she noticed thousands of spirits roaming around the place. “It’s nothing but ruins.”

Although the place was scrambled with ruins and debris, there was one, specially intricate, and polished device that stood among the light.

It was made of specially made transparent glass, with several gears, mechanical objects, and others of that nature on it. As the three approached it, they noticed that the sheer size of this was colossal. Their bodies were nothing but just a speck of dust compared to the cubical and sharp-edged contraption.

Akwan informed them as their bodies reflected against the slightly polished surface.

“So, you were looking for the thing to take you to your home world, right? Well, it’s right here!”

Aletha’s gray eyes broadened in shock.

“It’s huge!”

Asahi chuckled nervously.

“Indeed. It looks so strange compared to the rest of this world. All that I have ever seen when I wandered here was medieval buildings and castles, nothing of the sort of nature like this.”

As Asahi went over to touch the device, Akwan reached out and shouted.

“Wait, don’t touch it! I think it’s—

As his finger prodded on the black surface, suddenly, a white spark pulsed under his touch like a stone dropping into a calm body of water. Aletha raised her eyebrow and mumbled.

“Eh? What did you do?”

Asahi shrugged his shoulders while Akwan’s eyes were full with amazement.

“I don’t know. I never remember seeing a device like this.”

Akwan crossed his arms and coughed.

“Then why don’t you touch it again? When I used a device like this to find you two, I didn’t have to touch it. I guess this one’s older than the others.”

After Akwan informed, he backed away from Asahi and watched as he pressed his entire hand all over the black surface. Instead of just one tiny pulse, it was instead a large shockwave.

Glowing white lines extended out from the impact point toward the top of the device, a loud chime sounded out, and a deep robotic voice suddenly spoke from it.

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Akwan’s eyes shrunk in shock, he backed away, and shook his head.

“No, how is that possible? I thought that civilization was dead.” He mumbled as he heard a deep hum echo out of the activating device. Aletha turned over and asked Akwan with a genuinely confused tone.

“What are you talking about?”

“Who I am talking about is an ancient, powerful, advanced, prosperous human civilization that conquered every corner of this universe billions of years ago. I... thought they were gone, but... this device was the oldest one of their creations.”

He tilted up toward the glittering top.

“It’s not a travel contraption, but a navigation one. This is the first of its kind, it kept an infinite record of every single world the civilization artificially created in this universe.”

A look of bemusement and wonder came from Asahi and Aletha’s faces.

“H...Huh? A civilization that can create their own worlds?”

[BEEP]

As the device sprawled out several holographic white lines, Akwan pushed himself away, covered his mouth, and threw a cyan luminance at it.

“Yes, not just from resources, but from their imagination. Just from their thoughts. It was... amazing, revolutionary. And... now that I think of it.” Akwan shot his eyes up at Asahi and Aletha, specifically, their white hair. “Both of your appearances match those ancient drawings from that lost civilization. C... Could it be, that you two are—

Just before anything could be said, the device erupted millions of holographic white lines and dots and expelled a robotic voice out to the cavern.

[Host Detected]

With great anticipation and excitement, Akwan pushed Aletha against the wall of the device which created a massive pulse that activated it fully.

“W-What are you doing?”

“I want both of you two touch it. It appears that device recognizes you as that ancient race.”

[Second Host Detected] [Universal Scanning... Complete. Initiating World Navigation Protocol.]

Five black arm-shaped objects slowly emerged and folded out from the top of the device. It extended out to the ceiling and made circular motions, then proceeded to expand the hologram which represented the universe.

Akwan was awe-stricken by the device’s movements, as if he wanted to touch it too. But as his hands were about to gloss over the surface, he was propelled away from it by a blast. It seemed that he wasn’t compatible with it. Aletha shrieked as she felt the entire ground move.

“What’s going on?”

Asahi looked over to Akwan and saw him crawl in pain. He tried to detach himself from the device but couldn’t. And instead, his rapid movements accelerated the energy flowing in the device.

[Hosts’ Origin World Found]

A massive white light exploded from the device which unleashed yet another barrage of holograms. The siblings caught on that the white dots that encircled the contraption represented each individual world.

It was mind-blowing for them and especially Akwan.

“Wow...”

The device’s voice continued as Akwan raced back to it.

[World Name: Gincad. Hosts are rendered with familiar genes. Initiating Interstellar Teleportation Sequence.]

The moment that the device said that, all the holographic stars extended so far that what was left from the light was a colorful, three-dimensional hologram of their world above it.

Akwan’s eyes felt they were blessed by the beautiful sight, that all he did was stand and stare at the beauty while Asahi and Aletha did the same.

[10...]

The ground trembled, the device flickered, and their bodies rapidly moved left and right.

[9...] [8...]

Even Akwan’s body glowed with the chaotic shift of the device.

[7...]

An engulfing light flooded the colossal cavern.

[6...] [5...]

Suspense grappled onto everyone as each corner of the device was lit up with white.

[4...] [3...] [2...]

Although there was a shrouding memory introduced to the wanderers, none of that mattered as after the last second, all three would be transported to the world they thought they lost.

[1...]

At that moment, as their eyes were blinded by an engulfing white light, a loud sonic boom trembled and tossed the three upward. Asahi and Aletha were so speechless from shock that all they could say were...

“Woah...”

[0...]

Suddenly, the colossal sight of the cavern, the device, and the ruins vanished and eerily flickered to a vast white expanse like blinking with your eye.