

## Adtraic Verity: Journey For The Truth - Chapter 6

“Oh, well...” Aletha panicked to find any method of transportation. From left to right, it was just a wild forest and hills.

Nothing around her genuinely gave off an aura of civilization except the city she saw in the distance. The white-haired girl scratched her head.

“Umm...”

She always had difficulty thinking, especially regarding navigation, so this was no surprise for her brother. Asahi raised a brow and mumbled, waiting for his sister to reply as the cool breeze pushed his hair back.

“So...”

Aletha nervously bit her lip and tapped her fingers at the bottom of her chin, tremblingly responding to her brother while glaring at the bright sunlight shining and illuminating the sky.

“M...Maybe we can go to that road over there?”

Asahi’s brows drew together and made a fake smile.

“Alright... I trust you.”

They approached the road, their stomachs growled, and the heat from the sun cooled off with the breeze.

Nothing exciting happened other than a faint screech from a squirrel. Aletha’s thoughts wandered off, thinking of what to do now that they had returned. But only silence met them.

...

Not long after, Aletha grew impatient.

(I can’t take this silence anymore.)

She pushed Asahi down the round grassy hill and pointed to a wide dirt road that extended kilometers toward the distant city. Though it was fairly bruised,

Asahi noticed wheel tracks strongly engraved onto the ground, signifying that some vehicle had passed there.

Provided that thought, Asahi told Aletha to wait in this spot, hoping to catch a ride.

It wouldn't be long for them to realize that this wait might be more extensive than they had once thought.

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Aletha jolted up another grassy hill and leaped over stones, mostly because she was bored. As she bumped into a rock, the cheery girl tilted her head and analyzed her surroundings, seeing a circle of tall pine trees near her. Aletha shuffled her feet through the leaves and found a log resting on a dirt patch at the center.

"There it is!" Aletha hollered.

She knelt and grabbed the thick wooden log with her bare hands, swiftly running down the grassy hill and hollering back to Asahi.

"Hey! Look at what I found!"

Asahi didn't deliver any reaction other than a shrug.

It made Aletha feel like her brother ignored her.

Unexpectedly, Aletha lobbed the log toward her brother, bonking him in the head and rolling back to the center of the dirt road.

Asahi turned red with fury along with his bruise, shouting.

"AH!"

Immediately, he sprinted to his sister and delivered a slap to Aletha's head, complaining as his red bruise blistered under the sunlight.

"What was that for?!"

Aletha pushed her hair to the side and crossed her arms, stomping her feet and whining like a little child.

“You ignored me!”

But just as they could see it, a golden carriage passed by them, brushing its dirt all over their faces and chiming its bells as it slowly vanished into the distance.

Asahi’s blood boiled in a fury, sweat slid down his face, and frustration burst down his body.

Despite what he had said before, it seemed as if he ignored that thought altogether, not noticing that another carriage was approaching behind his back.

“SERIOUSLY?! After all the things I did for you, this is how you repay me?! I saved your life, you know! If it weren’t for me, we would be dead!”

His whole face lit up as Aletha stepped away, hearing loud croaks behind him. The last thing he heard before Asahi fell unconscious was a scream.

“BEHIND YOU!”

\* \* \* \* \*

The first sound he heard was the quiet rustles of leaves, wind howling against trees, and chirps from birds. His eyes moistened, the sounds of the forest surged into his ear, and the dense earthy smell tingled in his nostrils.

The fresh smell of new land.

The boy extended his arms and released a soft yawn.

Flickers of bright amber sunlight fluttered through the obstructed horizon.

His heart thumped rapidly.

“W-Where am I?” He mumbled.

After realizing this, he immediately pushed himself up and analyzed his surroundings.

(Wasn’t I just in a field with my sister?)

The boy saw he was surrounded by a thick patch of green trees, large bushes, moss-covered boulders, and worn stone structures.

The shadows from the treetops slowly formed a canopy of light, spreading mildew everywhere in the forest.

He heard squirrels chattering, birds singing, and insects humming over him.

The calm silence and the riveting breeze gave him a brief sense of peace. He hurriedly raced to the stream and saw his reflection casting over the surface.

Bright white hair, gray eyes, and fair skin.

It reminded him of his sister.

Concerns quickly bloomed in Asahi.

“Oh... no... I remember I heard a scream.”

Asahi forgot that he had lost his powers, forcing his confidence to bloom and sprout.

A loud screech resounded over the treetops. Asahi’s head pounded, and he thought the scream was from Aletha.

Without hesitation, Asahi followed the screeching noise, sprinted through the canopy of light, and passed through the thick dangling moss, blankets of flowers, and withered logs.

“SCREE!”

A sudden pain lashed across his lower back. He felt the brown scarf on him slip away from his back.

Asahi bit a cry; he fumbled and staggered across the dirt, rolling through the bushes and feeling the grass scrape his skin. A flash of sunlight temporarily blinded his eyes, a painful burn stung his right leg, and amethyst sparkles surrounded his face. His eyes flashed with anger and resentment.

“NO!”

Asahi painfully dragged himself through the bushes; his heart stopped, noticing the vast panorama with green mountains, trees, a vegetation-infested stone tower, and a blue sky.

Tears painted his skin dry; he struggled to stand up and felt a murky substance grappling on his leg.

Asahi's vision blurred; he suddenly heard a rupturing scream.

“ASAHI!”

Caught with the wind of relief and determination, Asahi kicked his legs and freed himself from the substance. Though pain lacerated his skin, he was able to at least walk.

“What... is going on?” He grumbled as he dragged himself across the moist grass.

Asahi tilted upward; his tongue was swiftly caught in throbbing fear. A dark silhouette crept above him, dangling its long dark arms.

He tried to sprint away, but his foot was caught in a twig. Asahi collapsed to the ground, and his head pivoted over to a white-haired girl covered in gaping cuts and large wounds gushing with white luminance.

“A...letha?!”

Tears flew over her eyes. She couldn't have looked more helpless and afraid. Aletha's voice numbed with shock.

“A...Asahi... b-behind... you....”

A corrosive pain struck both of them. They both collapsed to the ground; birds flew overhead.

Struggling to stay alive, Asahi tremblingly lifted his hand off from the ground and summoned a flickering white glow on his palm.

He prayed and hoped that he could unleash his magical attack, but as the four-legged, black, goopy creature lingered closer to him...

The luminance crunched into a pulp.

Asahi's voice trembled in shock.

"H...Huh?"

The creature threw its goopy arm through his chest and opened a massive wound, spewing white dust out his body.

(This can't be possible.)

Asahi came to a dreadful conclusion.

His godly powers that had assisted and shaped the very core of his life vanished quickly in a dwarfed dying light. The creature threw its arm through his chest and tore fragments of his skin, forcing an intrusive scream out of him.

Aletha's eyes shrunk with horror, and her face burned with uncontrollable rage and confusion.

"ASAHI!"

She lifted her hand and focused her energy on the creature. Aletha opened her eyes and saw her white magic thinning into oblivion. Panic fueled her.

"N-No... that can't be—

The creature smirked and lobbed Aletha's body through a tree. Struck into this predicament, Aletha and Asahi were forced to...

"SCREE!"

Asahi hurriedly forced his fist straight through the creature's head from nowhere. His dust and wounds gleamed under the morning sun.

Aletha rushed to the creature and threw her legs at the monster; pure anger and desperation trailed in her swift, pulsating movements.

"Ah!"

Her leg was caught from the second leg of the creature; a shrill voice of terror emerged.

"...w-what?!"

Hastily she was into the air and slammed into the ground, getting gnawed and torn by the monster. Asahi felt his heart-crushing into itself.

“Weak.”

That word streamed into both their minds. Aletha gritted her teeth, and despite being in pain, she wh!pped a b.ranch at the creature and screamed.

“STOP!”

IT never listened.

Aletha’s voice trembled, realizing how fragile she really was.

“H-How...?!”

The twig shattered into pieces; all the attack did was angered the beast even more.

(I’m... weak...)

Without their godly powers, Asahi and Aletha were nothing.

. . .

Heavy pressure forced both of them to the dirt.

The creature drooled and scr.aped its legs over its backs. That same word burst in them as they felt their life spill out.

“WEAK. WEAK. WEAK...”

Birds chirped, the winds whistled, and insects hummed.

Even in this circ.umstance, the world wasn’t focused on Asahi and Aletha, as if their lives were worthless.

Disbelief flew in both of them.

Was this what it came to?

To be defeated by a battle with the unknown, to awake to what COULD be their world, lose their powers that made them gods in the first place, torn and shredded by a monster...?!

Is this... truly, the end?

“UNLEASH PURNIMO ULTIMATUM!”

A voice emerged from the air, and the creature stopped and turned to the forest.

Suddenly, a massive lavender beam of light struck the monster straight in the face, launching and shriveling it into oblivion.

Asahi and Aletha were paralyzed in shock, unable to identify the mysterious person that unleashed that powerful beam.

In seconds, they saw the enemy that almost killed them effortlessly disintegrate from a beam of light.

“Brich, ESCORT the strangers to the hills, now!”

A man rushed to both of them and carried their dust-covered bodies on his back. The mysterious boy and the man ran through the forest toward an open grassland.

But as Asahi and Aletha’s vision slowly faded into darkness, the wounds and cuts on their bodies swiftly healed from a faint green luminance, and the mysterious two placed them soundly near a pond.

“Get the carriage. It should be a kilometer away....”

“On it, Sadiki!”

The silver-haired boy turned to Asahi and Aletha, rubbed their heads, and whispered to them with a calm voice and an uneasy smile.

“Y-You two... will be alright....”

\* \* \* \* \*

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eighteen...



Eighteen minutes. Just eighteen minutes after they had been summoned, Asahi and Aletha awakened underwater, encountered a creature ready to tear their limbs off, and discovered their powers had vanished.

They were even saved by two mysterious people, of which they never knew, yet... the peaceful aura of the place had returned.

All of that happened... in eighteen measly... minutes.

Could it be a bad omen or an awakening to the cold face of reality?

They couldn't understand; They had already awakened.

\* \* \* \* \*

The sun shone brightly above the landscape, a large fleet of bright swollen clouds drifted on the horizon and the skies, and the two awakened to peace.

The view looked like a vast, nearly treeless grassy plain; with rolling hills, large patches of beautiful flora, and clear lakes. A voice shouted to them.

“Hey!”

After catching their senses, Asahi and Aletha quickly lifted themselves up and turned their heads toward a boy.

“I apologize for that encounter. You're safe now.”

He had shining ashen hair, bright blue-lavender eyes, and fair skin. A large gray stripe stretched from the top of his face to his chin, wearing a dazzling shirt with a mixture of dark gray, purple, blue, and white scattered all over.

It seemed to Asahi that this was the boy responsible for releasing and saving the two. And so, in contradiction to this, he stepped forward and thanked.

“I show you my greatest gratitude.”

Unlike Asahi, Aletha was more impolite. She rubbed her head and shrieked as she heard the sound of bells echoing from a distance.

“Who are you?!”

The silver-haired boy bowed down to the wanderers and introduced himself.

“My name is Sadiki. I’m sincerely sorry for what you two had to experience. Usually, those monsters don’t lurk in the forest. They were so swift that you were already dragged into the forest in just five seconds. I’m glad I saved you two on time.”

Blue and white stockings stretched from his ankles to his thighs, and two fluffy cat ears poked out from the top of his head. His long gray tail wagged back and forth, staring at Asahi and Aletha’s attire. He continued while the distant sound gradually grew closer.

“Hmm, I don’t recognize the style of both of your attire.”

Asahi crossed his arms and scratched his head. As he was trying to answer, Aletha pointed out.

“Look, behind you.”

All three of them turned back and saw a carriage roll toward them. Aletha forgot that the log was still there and tried to grab it, but it was already too late.

(SCREE)

The structure of the horse-drawn carriage was a box shape, with diamond patterns painted on both the left and right sides and three clear windows on the front, back, and left sides. The horses that drew the carriage looked to have bright white fur and gorgeous lavender eyes.

Both animals projected a look of strength, power, and speed.

One could only assume what type of individual could be inside.

“I... forgot. about the log.” Aletha quivered.

Asahi raised a brow.

“What log—

Promptly, the carriage’s wheels skidded on the ground and approached an abrupt halt centimeters away from the log.

Sadiki signaled the carriage by waving his arms and seeing the horses stop.

“Hey, you two... follow me!”

The wanderers nodded.

“Okay...”

Afterward, Sadiki guided the wanderers to the carriage doors, Aletha still nervous on the log.

A click sounded behind the door; two doors slid open and parted away while a wooden staircase rolled toward the ground. The bright ceiling lights shimmered at the entrance, revealing a figure slowly walking down the stairs.

“I apologize for frightening both of you, but are you two responsible for that log at the center of the road? Do you know how dangerous that is?”

Aletha swallowed a gulp of guilt. Sadiki stepped in and tried to defend the siblings.

“Sir, I can explain—

But without hesitation, Aletha blurted out the truth.

“I... I sincerely apologize, sir. We just wanted to catch a carriage, that’s all.”

The man’s topaz eyes looked heavenward at Asahi and Aletha, quirking the corner of his mouth as he tried to calm himself down.

“Well, you didn’t have to do that! You could have just waved your hand into the air! I am willing to take strangers into Pladtioa City, As long as they are kind and respectful.”

Aletha sighed in relief while Sadiki and Asahi stood there quietly, not knowing what to do. The man chuckled and brushed away the intimidating atmosphere.

“Haha! I was just messing with ya!”

The man’s stubble gleaned from the sunlight and the dark fabric of his elegant suit with lightning symbols patched on his sleeves.

One of his sleeves rolled up, revealing a brown mark stretching from his arm to the bottom of his chin. His eyes were almost bird-like, with a sienna brown tinting.

“So... aren’t you gonna talk?”

His skin was pretty wrinkled and had a light brown tint, showing a sign of age plastering on his body. Despite that, the man acted energetic, bowing down and introducing himself to the wanderers.

“Well... if you two aren't gonna talk, I might as well introduce myself. The name's Brich! A pleasure to meet you two! Now if you want to come to the city, I suggest you enter my carriage quickly. This event, called the Royal Ceremony, is happening tonight, and I don't want to be stuck in traffic. So, if you want to come with me, you better hop on quickly!”

Without hesitation, Asahi and Aletha climbed up the wooden staircase and entered the carriage, brushing and keeping their concerned thoughts for later.

Sadiki rushed up the stairs and rolled it back up, whispering to Brich while the wanderers tried to occupy one of the five seats inside.

“Thanks for doing an act for them. I promise I will give you a reward.”

Brich sneered and snarled, slamming the two doors shut as Sadiki raced in and occupied the seat closest to the wall.

“You better.”

As Brich raced to the driver's seat and hollered at the horses, the carriage quickly caught pace and began its speedy travel across the road toward the distant city.

Despite being granted the privilege to ride a carriage from a stranger, Asahi still had suspicious thoughts lingering in his mind. He pondered while Aletha looked out the window, watching the blurry trees and distant hills pass.

(So much is happening. I'm losing my train of thought just from breathing. From what I have experienced so far, I feel unwelcomed here. As if this world doesn't want me and my sister to live. What happened here over these ten years we have abandoned this world? What truly happened... to our family?)

Out of all the countless thoughts bouncing inside Asahi's brain, one stood out and grappled onto his mind.

“What happened to our world?”