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Chapter 42 Goodbye

While Ikenga fell asleep in his realm, an imperceptible sound, reminiscent of chains breaking, resonated throughout the entire world. Suddenly, a colossal, invisible, five-colored gate appeared, hovering outside the planet of Nana.

The gate burst open as if propelled by an unseen force. As the door swung wide, various five-colored elements flooded into the planet. Although these elements remained unseen by human and mortal eyes, any divine being would attest that the entire planet immediately transformed into a riot of five colors upon the gate's opening.

The gate remained open for a significant period, allowing the vast elemental wave to gradually subside. Once the final element had passed through, the gate closed and vanished into the void, as if it had never existed.

The effects of the immense elemental wave began to manifest as the planet slowly, almost imperceptibly, expanded. This transformation would continue until the planet had absorbed and digested the abundant elemental energy.

The night passed quickly for Ikem as he slept undisturbed. However, he woke up with a start, screaming for his father, as though he had just experienced a nightmare. Ikem scanned his surroundings, realizing his father was no longer there to answer or console him.

He rested his head back on Boros and curled into a fetal position, tears streaming down his face. The awareness that his father was truly gone weighed heavily on him. The crying continued until he eventually fell back asleep. Beside him, Tweet sighed at the child's misfortune but understood the need to let the boy grieve, as he would now be responsible for himself.

Aware that he could no longer sleep, Tweet transformed back into his normal form and took to the sky, intending to catch a meal for everyone once they woke up. Ikem slept soundly through the night without any further disturbances. Upon waking, he caught a whiff of barbecue roasting on the fire, a scent that stirred his senses.

His stomach emitted an audible rumble, underscoring his hunger after catching the scent of the roasting barbecue. Realizing that Boros was not around to provide a makeshift pillow, Ikem noticed his head had rested on a floating ball of water during his slumber, which he found rather comfortable.

As the water ball burst and dissipated, he shifted his gaze to one of the treants who had withdrawn their outstretched arm. Smiling, he joined them for the meal.

Sitting down and grabbing a piece of meat, he addressed the water treant, "Thanks for the new pillow; it was quite comfortable."

The treant replied, "It was a small gesture, young master, but I hope you expect less of this similar treatment from now on."

This response puzzled Ikem, and he couldn't fathom why the treant answered in that manner. Sensing his confusion, the other treant clarified, "There are no hostile intentions, young master. It was merely a word of advice. You will come to understand it in due time."

Still perplexed, Ikem nodded and returned to his meal. In silence, everyone finished their share of the prey, with the treants remaining silent and attentive companions.

After completing his meal, Ikem turned his attention to the book his father had given him. Upon opening the book to the map, he noted the considerable distance between his current location and his mother's place.

Closing the book, he looked at Tweet, who appeared unusually quiet. "What's the plan, Tweet?"

"There is no plan, Ikem. I won't be accompanying you on your journey" Tweet replied with a somber tone.

Ikem fell into silence after hearing Tweet's announcement, tears brimming in his eyes. "Everyone seems to be leaving one after the other," he mused. "I'm guessing you too, Boros, will also be departing."

For the first time since he had known Boros, he noticed her voice fluctuate. "Yes, boy," she replied, her voice filled with a hint of sadness. "I, too, will be taking my leave."

A heavy silence followed, but Boros interrupted it by sending a green scale floating over to Ikem. "Hold onto this during your journey," she instructed. "With it, I will always be able to find you, no matter where you are." Ikem accepted the scale with a surprised expression.

After handing over the scale, Boros swiftly took to the sky and vanished within seconds, leaving no room for goodbyes. Tweet, slightly irritated by her sudden departure, shook his head but was still grateful for her gesture. It also gave him an idea.

A feather detached from Tweet's head, gracefully floating over to Ikem as he continued to gaze absentmindedly at the place where Boros had been. He caught the feather and immediately stood up,

his anger apparent as he turned his attention to Tweet. "You're not planning to pull the same disappearing act, are you?"

Tweet, taken aback by the sudden outburst, shook his head while moving closer to Ikem. He then pulled him into a warm embrace with his large wings, all the while feeling Ikem's tears moistening his beautiful feathers.

"The feather can do the same thing as Boros, but with an additional function. It enables us to communicate. Right now, it's fully charged with air elemental energy, so we can talk anytime after your departure. However, remember that after each conversation, the feather will need time to recharge on its own, and it will take longer as I won't be there to recharge it. Hopefully, with this, I can still keep you company," Tweet explained as he released Ikem from the embrace.

Ikem watched in astonishment at the feather; he had no idea that Tweet possessed such abilities. But soon, a smile crept onto his face. Stepping back, he watched as Tweet gradually took to the sky, using a hand to shield his face from the wind turbulence generated during takeoff. When he lowered his hand, Tweet had disappeared from view.

A bittersweet smile played on Ikem's lips as he heard a voice carried by the wind that seemed to say, "Take good care of yourself. Do something your father will be proud of the next time you meet."

"I will, Tweet," Ikem responded with a smile, his heart warmed by the message.

As he contemplated how to keep the treasured items from his family members with him, the bloodroot that his father had given him responded to his thoughts. Thin threads of roots extended from the main body of the root, gently taking hold of the scale and feather, transforming them into a necklace that hung around Ikem's neck.

With this immediate problem resolved, Ikem turned his attention to the two Treants and asked, "So, are you guys ready?"

The two Treants exchanged glances and replied, "Yes."

"Then let's go," Ikem said as he walked into the forest, casting one last look at the place he had grown up. Observing his reluctance, the stone Treant knelt and placed its hands on the ground. A stone wall emerged from the earth, surrounding and encasing the house. Ikem, recognizing what the Treant was doing, channeled a wave of mana into the ground, connecting to the network of roots and supplying them with a significant amount of energy. Roots sprouted from the ground and intertwined with the stone wall, reinforcing the defense.

Taking inspiration from the stone Treant's actions, the water Treant approached and looked at it. It appeared that the two Treants had a means of communication, as the stone Treant placed its hand on the ground once more, causing the earth to sink in a circle around the house. Simultaneously, the water Treant extended its hand, and water elements gathered, ultimately creating a substantial wave of water within the sunken earth.

"Thanks a lot for this, guys," Ikem expressed his gratitude to the two treants for their efforts.

The Treants responded, "No need for thanks. This place means as much to us as it does to you. We have a feeling that something surprising will happen here."

With a final glance, Ikem fell silent and followed behind the Treants as they ventured into the forest, marking the beginning of his new journey.