

# 《The Forest Spirit who sought the Gods》

## 29 Waves 3

"Me can cast water magic! Boat will not sink!" Oakbud was marvelling at his own prowess, too happy to realise the situation he put Alice in.

"So big! So much magic! Can you move it? Can you? Put it back? In the lake?" The water fairy was flying around him like an overly wound up spring. Pulled out of his reverie by the rapid-fire torrent of questions, Oakbud lost his focus, and the spell terminated before he could try to layer more magic around it to change the water ball.

"NOOOO~~~~" Alice's despairing voice could only spread across the surface of the lake before a few cubic metres of water fell upon the boat, golem... and her. Thani had quick enough reflexes to start moving as soon as the water ball was lifted, knowing Oakbud more and able to predict what tragedy would probably unfold. Jumping to the side of the boat, she'd made herself a pair of blood wings and spent some more magic to use her tattoos as skipping stones over the water in between flaps. They were now a meter and a half long each and more defined, finally able to support her weight for short flights, but staying in place like this for an unknown amount of time required the extra step. She was holding her bag in one hand, and her shirt in the other, barely holding her laughter.

The golem instantly began its descent towards the lake's bottom, leaving small earth clumps behind it, while the boat sank more slowly due to its shape. A furious Alice resurfaced a few seconds later, a bit groggy from the hit, and with her black hair glued over her eyes by water.

"Fuuaaaaaah! What in Liezel's name was that! You... wannabe murderer! And you, damn pixie! You're an incarnation of water, the lake itself through magic! Couldn't you do anything to help there?". Her violet eyes were locked on the second-hand culprit (she taught Oakbud the spell, after all), and the mean glare prompted the water spirit to calm down a bit.

"Eh? Me? The other boats usually give me a few magic crystals so I don't bother them and don't let them sink, you know? Also, it's fuuuuun! It's always the same on the lake otherwise!"

"Bahahaha! I suddenly like that fairy a lot!" Thani couldn't repress herself anymore, and her clear bell-like laughter brought life to the lake again. "So, what now, little

Buddy? You don't plan on leaving Alice here, do you?"

"Me can't bring back the boat and make boat again at the same time... Fairy help?" The little spirit had grabbed Thani's backpack to keep afloat, and was feeling guilty for his mistake.

"Alright, but then I want water magic crystals! You have so much magic, you can make some, right? Right?" Even before she got her answer, the pixie waved her arms upwards, and with a cute "Hya!", the sinking boat stopped deteriorating and began floating back to the surface. Luckily it hadn't turned over and was just pushed down, so Alice's bag was still on it (only soaked through). Oakbud started using earth-elemental reinforcement magic on it after it was drained, and even found it interesting to make a tiny golem core for it.

"Crystals ♪! Crystals ♪! Crystals ♪!" During the whole process, the water fairy was still flying around Oakbud, harping him to get her due even a second earlier. As sensible as he was, Oakbud was able to ignore her to focus on his repairs before getting to condensing water crystals. Once again compressing magic and integrating his new knowledge, he made a first crystal as big as himself, which the fairy immediately tried to grab. However, its size rendered her unable to plunder the gem, and the density of magic inside instantly made her drunk on the power when she began draining it.

"Who- Whoa... This is some goood blue crystal! Soo niiiiice... You know what, I'll even take you to the Island if you make me another one like that... Water take me to the Island on the lake, for my words are not fake!"

The moment she finished speaking, magic resounded under the water surface, and a wave tilted the boat forward gently, carrying it forward towards their goal. As the wily pixie started her end of the bargain even before they agreed to it, Oakbud could only start making another crystal. The golem core in the boat helped it maintain equilibrium on the wave, and the trip finally went back on tracks with the addition of a new passenger.

Under the morning sun, a pixie was drunkenly lying on two water crystals at the front of the boat, with a still drying up Alice and sunbathing Thani behind her, and Oakbud practising water magic with maximum restraint at the rear.

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When Harp came back to Nidhögran, he wasn't alone. Three people from Karj's family, including their brewmaster, were helping him carry two barrels of home-made alcohol each.

"Hm? What's all this? How about our matter here?" The dragon had reverted to his normal form, but kept at a reasonable twice as large as a horse size. Feeling his discontentment, the wolfman immediately came forward to appease the beast with ingratiating words. The other carriers preferred to stay further back, intimidated by the dragon's appearance.

"Master Nidhögran, we would be poor hosts if we didn't extend every courtesy to you while you stay. Also, it is night, definitely not the best of travel conditions. Why not spend the night away drinking and sleeping comfortably? The road can always await the rays of the sun."

With a twinkle in his eyes, the beast couldn't hide his interest at the flowery words. Food and sleep? Those were both included in his favourite activities! His grabbing of the closest barrel with a quick cast of wind magic was a tacit agreement to the proposal, and Nidhögran lost no time piercing the barrel with a claw before pouring the sweet alcohol in his waiting maw.

"Oho? \*Glug\* The taste isn't bad, but it could be stronger! Hmmm, I don't remember you mortals making such a good beverage before." Two other barrels were drunk in quick succession, while the brewmaster of the house was lamenting the loss of his best creations. Harp couldn't help but wonder at the beast in front of him. Couldn't remember alcohol? Was it just that forgetful, or that old?

"Hpmph! Too bad I can't carry much of that, I'll need to get down from my mountain more often it seems!" Even with such great alcohol in hand, he somehow managed to work himself up, pushing a thick cloud of embers and ash through his nose.

"Not to worry, great Dragon, if you told us where you reside we could surely bring some to you..." The brewmaster was the one coming up to flatter the beast this time. As scared as he was, this was a great opportunity to get some fame out of his work!

"Bah! You'd bring me barrels of that all the way to the top of the Third's highest mountain? Less ass-kissing, human. I may be lazy and arrogant, but don't you dare thinking I'm dumb. Hmmm, many of you have quite a similar aura, who are you worshipping here?" The poor craftsman took a few steps back quickly, pale faced and afraid that the reach of these sharp-looking claws was enough to tear him to shreds right now. Harp, who had a bit more time to learn some of Nidhögran's antics, came to the rescue.

"Please don't be angry, as we couldn't know your mighty residence would be so far..."

This here is the Blood family's residence, whe-"

"Blood you say? I knew that aura was familiar! Hahaha! That little girl Kali is here?" The dragon was surprised, and got up to look around. "WHERE ARE YOU LITTLE DROPLET, COME BRUSH MY SCALES LIKE YOU DID ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, I HAVE MISSED YOUR SWEET CARE!"

The content of his shout was as incredible as its volume, sending everyone rolling away, and even crashing some trees behind him. After a few seconds without any reaction, Nidhögran scrunched his menacing brows over his squinted fiery eyes.

"Hm? Wait, she's not here! And here I got happy for nothing! Come on, show me! You must at least have a statue here, right?" His mood, that was just uplifted, was deflated back almost instantly. "Might as well give you something, for bringing those good memories back and your 'alcohol!'"

Karj met Harp and the dragon at the temple's entrance, and quickly opened the doors to let the monster in. There was not much light during the night to see, so the dragon conjured a swarm of fireflies to light up the interior of the building. The basin with the chained statue at its center was revealed in all its splendor under the warm orange magical light. Under the swaying light and shadows, the sculpture looked almost alive.

"She's just like before... Nyx would be jealous of this artwork without a doubt..." From the side, Karj and the wolfman could see the fondness in Nidhögran's eyes. He began speaking in a low and shaky tone, lost in his memories of the Goddess.

"When I was on a rampage once, she dared to face me and offered herself to be a sacrifice and bear my fury in exchange for the end of the carnage. There was something in her at the time, in her aura and her look, that soothed even me. I took her back, and she spent quite a few years at my side serving me. She was such a sweet little human before she ascended, I even ended up teaching her a bit of magic. How and why she left I can't remember, but still sadness lingers in me... RISE!"

With his last word, Nidhögran mobilised his magical reserves and cast an unknown grand spell on the statue. Every carved pillar in the room was trembling, and the chains rattled eerily under the pressure of the discharge. Still emotional, the dragon threw the two humans outside and slammed the doors shut. His voice carried through the door.

"Now leave me with little Droplet. We'll talk more tomorrow, humans."