

# 《The Forest Spirit who sought the Gods》

## 56 Second visit to Ebb

Ebb's harbour on the horizon evoked mixed feelings for everyone in Oakbud's little group. They stood at the prow of the boat, watching as the silhouette of the city got progressively clearer. The lake pixie had -almost- not bothered them after she made sure Alice's past trauma was still well-remembered. Since the little spirit had gotten more proficient with magic since last time, he'd been able to save his companion from the water spirit faster by offering her some freshly made water crystals. Liezel's follower only got out of the cabin in the evening, still cursing lowly at the pixie who had made a point of staying on her windowsill the whole afternoon before leaving to torment other people on the lake.

Alice was happy to come back to civilization and eager to find the comfort of an inn. She had continued to train at night on the open deck when no one was up and intended to offer a more elaborate prayer to Liezel at a real shrine, hoping to get a third blessing and close a bit of the gap between herself and the other two. Perhaps she'd become able to condense her element too? Up until now each attempt had failed miserably, dispersing into fine dust despite her unwavering focus. The idea came to her without even thinking of its possible use or difficulty after seeing Thani do it with her blood, but she was ignorant of the advanced lessons Thani had gotten from the God of Nature himself... and was thus doomed to fail.

Oakbud was excited and could barely be held in place in Thani's arms. He was determined to meet Nature again, or at least Talia, to show off his progress and maybe get a bit of insight on what to pursue next. After all he didn't have any goal besides finding the other Gods, and the lack of a path to tread on the road to power stifled his growth. The God-Child and Ebb's Time followers were his best bet to learn something about that God's powers.

Thani on the other hand felt a bit apprehensive: her perspective on Kali's worship and the temple in Ebb where she knew people had been flipped over and trampled multiple times already, and she felt at a loss. Should she say something? Would they even listen before branding her a faith-renouncing heretic? And if they did, what guarantee did she have that they'd believe her even if she could bring proof? That slight bit of anxiety kept her from concentrating properly and was enough to make her unable to crystallize blood properly; it was, after all, much harder than the same procedure for pure elements. She had made a few when they were still on land and stored them for later; the thumb-sized crystals could be used for crafts like her dagger or emergency replenishment if she got injured. Perhaps she could use them instead of water crystals to power small contraptions like a miniature water mill or a fountain, but that would

make for a pretty disturbing sight and she soon gave up the idea.

Sighing, she gave up and got back to her makeshift sun-soaking spot on the deck to wait for their arrival.

Find authorized novels in Webnovel, faster updates, better experience, Please click [www.novelhall.com](http://www.novelhall.com) for visiting.

--

"Whoever said money doesn't bring happiness clearly hasn't slept on one of this inn's beds!" said Alice in between bites of food.

Compared to the dusty Coughing Pony Inn where Oakbud and Thani had stayed last time, they almost felt like spoiled children. The 'Ebb's Flow Inn' was a higher-end establishment, and its quality showed in both the amenities as well as the nightly price. The chairs had padding, there was enough light to see what you were eating, the bed was fluffy and bug-free, there was no smoke or alcohol smell lingering in the air, the staff was helpful and didn't try to scam you, proper locks on the doors, and decorations in the common room were both nice and intact. The three silvers a night (with complimentary meal!) were absolutely worth it for who had enough money and did wonders for everyone's mood after a night of sleep.

"I agree", answered a contented Thani. "Can you pass me that plate to your left? That pastry looks tasty."

"No way! That's mine. Order one for yourself if you want it so badly." She guarded the endangered plate with an arm, ready to slap away Thani's hands, or worse, a blood string made specially to steal food from her. She'd been had once already. "So, what's the plan now that we're back on land? To each their own for a bit like we discussed earlier, or is there anything specific we need to be together for?"

"Me wants to go to the temples! But me knows the way and can speak well now, so me can go alone with a golem." Oakbud was sitting on the table in-between the two squabbling women. "Me will stay here today, but Thani fairy and Alice can go do other things."

"Well," Thani answered, "I was thinking of going back to Auri at the Twin Hammers. The dagger he made is a real masterpiece and I wondered if he'd be able to help a bit with the new armour I got in Ocean's Guard. Should make for an interesting reunion, faster work, and maybe a discount since he knows a bit about my powers already." Thani took a sip of the tea she'd ordered for breakfast before continuing : "You might

want to come at the same time as me Alice, Auri is a true master smith and he'll be able to process the drake bones you have into a pair of daggers."

"Do you think he could engrave my bow too, or maybe even infuse it?" She had seen Thani's dagger before. The one who made it was no quack doctor, so having an opportunity to meet the man was great in her opinion. She already had plans for all her equipment but remembering her purse's content, she couldn't help but grimace. "He probably can, but I'm not confident in being able to pay for it..."

"Oh, you most definitely can't," Thani answered with a snigger. "Before we left last time he told me he usually asks for three gold just for the consultation fee. I got lucky because Oakbud worked his magic, is all. I can cover it this time though so don't worry. Speaking of which, I wonder if he managed to do anything with the crystal Buddy made for him."

"Can't complain if you're footing the bill or at least part of it. Let's go after I finish eating." Alice focused back on her breakfast, engulfing the rest of her honeyed gruel and pastry with record speed.

The city hadn't changed much since last time. The streets were still noisy and full of people, and it only got worse as they made their way from the commercial district towards the artisanal one. Gradually, the loud chatter of the markets and shouting merchants was overcome by banging, grinding, cutting and swearing. The distinct smells of metal, leather, wood and fire greeted Thani and Alice with open arms as they carried their gear. The twin handles of the giant hammers making the smithy's door were visible from afar, peeking over the rest of the buildings, taunting them as they struggled to make their way through the badly designed alleys.

They were welcomed by a very enthusiastic teen, probably a younger hire not yet ground down by the harsh job; his smile didn't even wane when Thani explicitly told him they weren't here to buy nor sell, but to meet the master smith with precious materials and gear instead. Unfortunately for them, Auri wasn't available so they would need to wait until his afternoon break at least. Disappointed, Alice made for turning back but was stopped by Thani.

"Wait. Auri is not the only competent smith here, and the others also know what kind of commissions he takes. Let's stay here and work with someone else on feasible designs so we don't lose time."

As impossible as it looked, the young man's smile widened even further and guided them to a free experienced worker in the shop before going back to the entrance. Finally, they could get some valid feedback on their ideas. Unless it was a relic made by a powerful God-Child or a God himself, equipment couldn't empower its wearer directly; still, that didn't mean nothing could be done to pieces of armour.

Alice's bow was planned to get a new stronger string to match her current prowess and an engraving that would let her empower her shots magically. She also wanted to be able to infuse some kind of stealth effect from her shadow magic or her blessing, but it was impossible. Each arrow would need to be engraved individually and the consumption to keep the effect active until the target was hit would be tremendous, so the idea was scrapped. She was still very satisfied with the designs of her future twin daggers though: those couldn't be infused with shadow magic due to the non-existence of crystals of that element, but they could still be engraved with runes and circuits for sturdiness and camouflage. Without surprise, her [break] blessing belonged to the 'non-engrivable' category due to its intrinsic effect: it would break the weapon itself if it were channelled through it.

Thani didn't need a new weapon, so she had followed Alice's discussions before; she got back in the heat of things when the topic switched to their armour however. Since Alice dual-wielded her weapons she didn't want nor needed something like a shield, and Thani could create one herself in times of need. When looking a bit closer, the smith pointed a major problem with the material they had used: the drake leather could be inlaid with a magic circuit that would help with fitting the gear and another for magical conductivity, but the scales on the outside were another story entirely.

Because scales moved naturally with the wearer's movement, it was completely impossible to create a circuit of engravings without it breaking instantly. Each scale would need to get its own individual engraving, and even the greediest of craftsmen would refuse such a daunting task. The same went for repairing it through magic infusion of powdered drake scales, the process would be lengthy and costly. On the plus side, drake scales were extremely sturdy on their own and few things could pierce them outright; the barely visible markings on Thani's set despite all her fighting were a good proof of that.

The discussions ended a bit after lunch (to which they had invited the blacksmith over), but Auri wasn't done with whatever he was doing. In the end, they had to wait until sundown, watching the rhythmical work and listening to the symphony of metal and fire playing in the smithy.

"Next one!" Slamming his door open, Auri was about to call a name on his list through sheer habit when he recognised Thani's. Looking through the working space, the surprised bronze mountain of a man instead walked behind her and put a hand on her shoulder. "I remember you. I hope you enjoyed your dagger till' now, because you really screwed me over last time."