

shapes came out of the dark to visit

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shapes came out of the dark to visit

by [Empress_Snake](#)

Summary

One, two, three.

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It seemed like three seconds passed when he slept. Though the rush of 500 years of memories made that statement false. His other half was busy during those years - making a powerbase for them.

Then he woke up alone, on a beach far away from his sister. At least their minds are still connected?

Notes

My discord for stories is <https://discord.gg/JfdcWXdJMZ>

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

waiting to be seen and felt and heard

“For longer than we can remember, we have traveled throughout the stars. We’ve seen sights and saw those sights become lost. Everything that could be experienced was experienced. Our traveling brought us many horrors with an equal amount of joy.

Yet...We have grown tired. All we have known is traveling from universe to universe. We wish to rest peacefully.

Eons passed and we have never found a world to stay in for the rest of our immortal lives. Either the beings be claimed us as evil, or they worship us as gods. We have no need for either - our only wish is for peace.

Soon, we scouted a new world through our eyes. Exploring this unknown land, we eventually landed on a nation called Khaenri’ah. We made friends. This was the world that we would stop on.

That is until an unknown god came upon our sight. A female - at least that was what they looked like.

“Outlanders, your journey ends here!” The god said with a monotone voice. Our dark form glared at the being with our light form growling.

“Why are you here? Who are you?” I asked. My eyes stayed on the god, looking for weaknesses.

“The sustainer of heavenly principles. The arrogation of mankind ends now.”

I pull my power from the cosmos, only to be blocked. The god came prepared. We grabbed our swords. Red blocks of {ERROR: UNKNOWN} appeared. They tried to grab onto us both, but we avoided them all.

“Agh!” We both grunted, glaring at the unknown being. The blocks have finally grabbed ahold of us. It consumed us, blocking more of our powers. In the darkness, we slept for years. With most of our power gone, we couldn’t leave. Though halfway through our sleep, our other half woke up. She kept me updated on the world, explaining sights and what she is doing.

Finally, I woke up from our deep slumber - only...I was alone. My stomach growled, hunger all-consuming. Never have I been hungry, for my primordial life had no need for such.”

He woke up on a beach shielded by cliffs. He smiled in his mind and knew what to do. Their act was far from finished.

The lighter half - his twin pondered about the past while he fished. It took some time to learn how too, but he eventually got it. Something tugged on the string and he reeled in the fish. As the fish - wait...that isn't a fish. A small human came up, holding on to the hook. Both of the halves focused on him. He backed up, startled from the sudden appearance of the strange human.

"Thank you!" The being said with a huge grin.

"Who are you?" He asked, narrowing his eyes in suspicion.

"I'm Paimon! I would have surely drowned if you didn't fish me up from the ocean!"

"And why were you in the ocean when you could clearly fly?" With his eyes narrowed, Paimon squirmed.

"There was a tasty fish...I wanted to catch it...My wings got wet and I couldn't fly," Paimon pouted. "Why are you all the way out here anyway?"

"Ah well," He told the story that we made up.

"So...what you're trying to say is that you fell here...from another world?" Paimon said. "But when you wanted to leave and go on to the new world, your path was blocked by some unknown god?"

He nodded.

"Some kind of seal was cast upon me, and I lost most of my power and my sibling. Luckily my power is slowly growing the longer I stay here," He said, fluttering his wings, "So while we used to travel from world to world, I am now trapped here. How many years ago was it? I don't know...But I intend to find out," His eldritch voice leaked in. A thought crossed both of the twins' minds quickly before shaking it back to the depths of their subconscious.

"What is your name?" The small being asked, realizing she didn't know his name. The twins thought back to each other, trying to find names for themselves. They traveled for so long that they didn't know their actual names anymore.

"I shall be named Aether," He said.

"As you are new, Paimon will do her best to be a great guide!"

Aether followed the strange Paimon to a small cliff. It was double his size.

"Well, the path ends here, so we'll have to climb. Well, you'll have to, Paimon can just float." Aether looked at Paimon deadpanned and flew up. "Oh, yeah..."

Aether chuckled slightly, rolling his eyes.

"Yes, yes, can we get a move on?" Aether said.

“Okay! Let's take the route we planned!” Paimon floated to their destination. A statue waited for them showing a winged human holding a ball. “This is a Statue of the Seven! There are a few of these statues scattered across the land to show The Seven's protection over the world. Among the seven gods, this god controls the wind. Paimon's not sure whether the god you're looking for is the Anemo God, but...Paimon'll take you to the Anemo God's place first, and there's a reason why~” The fae smiled mysteriously. He tilted his head in confusion. “As we all know, poetry and language flow like the wind...There'll definitely be someone there who knows about the unknown god. At least, that's what Paimon thinks! Whether the gods actually answer you is a different story. You never know unless you try. So, let's hop to it!”

Aether hummed as he flew over to the statue. Touching it, an almost ethereal feeling graced him.

“What a strange human...” The wind whispered to us, *“to fly with the wind.”*

“Ooh! Did you just feel the elements of the world? Seems all you had to do was just touch the statue and you got the power of Anemo! As much as they may want it, people in this world can never get a hold of powers as easily as you,” Paimon sighed.

“This cannot be good,” Aether said. The twins' thoughts conflicted with each other. Though they can communicate with each other, it's hard to differentiate the two different processes.

“That's not a good thing to say to the god who gave you the power of the wind. Even if you came from another world...Anyway, if we keep heading west from here, we'll eventually reach Mondstadt, the City of Freedom. Mondstadt is the city of wind because they worship the God of Anemo. So perhaps, because you got power from the God of Anemo, you can find some clues there. There are also lots of bards there, so perhaps one of them has heard the news of your god.”

“Paimon, what are the powers of this world?” Aether asked curiously.

“Well, there is Anemo, the power you just got. Then there is Geo, Electro, Cyro, Dendro, Pyro, and Hydro! Each has a corresponding element. I don't have my own and Paimon is jealous that you just had to touch the statue to get yours,” Paimon pouted. A large shadow passed them, wind following its path. They looked up and saw an enormous dragon. “Woah! It's headed towards the heart of the forest. We must proceed with caution.”

Aether slowly walked towards the forest, watching their surroundings carefully. As they enter, they see a boy talking to a dragon, seemingly trying to calm it down.

“...Don't be afraid...It's alright now, I'm back.” The boy said, petting the top of the dragon's head.

“Is he talking... to a dragon?” Paimon rhetorically asked. The sound of her voice startled the two beings.

“Who's there!?” The boy asked, looking around. The dragon flew away in a big blow of wind. Aether hid in the tree as the boy left.

“That was close! Paimon almost got blown away! Luckily Paimon managed to grab hold of your hair! Thanks.”

“Good thing you didn't pull our hair out,” Aether said. Both of the twins winced at the ‘our’. Someone is eventually going to get suspicious.

“Just what was that? Paimon thought we were gonna get eaten,” She said nervously.

“I can't believe dragons exist in this world...” Aether said, trying to show worry.

“Yeah, Paimon gets why you're worried.”

“Is talking to dragons normal?” They asked.

“Of course not! That boy was weird,” Paimon pouted before something caught her eye. “Oh? What's that? There's some kind of shiny red thingy on the big rock over there...Let's go take a closer look. Be careful! Paimon doesn't have a good feeling about this...”

Aether went to the red gem, his eyes entranced by the look. He touched it.

“Paimon's never seen a stone like this before, so Paimon can't tell what it is. All Paimon knows is that it's dangerous. Best we put it away for now. Okay, we've got it! Now let's get out of here.”

The gem disappeared, but he could still feel it on the edge of his mind. It felt like it was in his mind instead of in the physical world. Weird.

“Our next stop is Monstadt!” Paimon led us through the treacherous woods. They fought against monsters that were in their way. As Aether grew closer, he hid their wings in fear of what the people might think of them.

“Hey, you! Stop right there!” A woman wearing lots of red stopped them. “May the Anemo God protect you, stranger! I am Amber, Outrider for the Knights of Favonius. You don't look like citizens of Mondstadt. Explain yourselves!”

“We're not looking for trouble,” Paimon said, trying to calm the woman down.

“That's what all the troublemakers say,” Amber said.

“I'm Aether,” Aether said.

“That doesn't sound like a local name to me. And this... mascot, what's the deal with it?” Amber nodded to Paimon.

“Emergency food,” Aether said, smirking.

“Hey! That's even worse than being a mascot!” Paimon stomped her foot in the air.

“So to sum it up, you're traveling partners, right? Well look, there's been a large dragon sighted around Mondstadt recently. Best you get inside the city as soon as possible. It's not

far from here, I'll escort you there.”

“Oh? Aren't you out here for some other reason?” Paimon asked.

“I am. But not to worry, I can keep you both safe while doing that too. Besides... I'm still not sure if I can trust you two just yet!” Amber admitted.

“Why so suspicious?” Aether asked, locking eyes on the red woman.

“Oh, ahh... I'm sorry. Probably not something I should say as a knight. I give you my apologies, uh... strange yet... respectable travelers.”

“That sounded so fake!” Paimon shouted.

“ Do you have something against the type of language usage prescribed by the Knights of Favonius Handbook!?” Amber angrily shouted back.

learning to dance in the rain

“The dark and the light, they exist side by side. Sometimes overlapping, one explaining the other. The darkened path is as illuminated as the lightened...” – Raven Davies

The worlds they visited explained that their bodies seemed to revolve around each other. That they could see each other's thoughts. They didn't know how close they were to the truth. Their beings are so intertwined, it's hard to see who's thoughts begin and when it ends.

Two stars rotate around each other so close that no one can tell the difference. They are a binary star. Never have they known life without each other. This is their life, and they shall know nothing else. Even separated as they are, their minds are still linked. Clearly, the unknown god underestimates them.

He smiles secretly as he follows the woman - Amber - to Mondstadt. His light half laughed suddenly in a meeting with the abyss.

On the way there, they talked.

“So, suspicious travelers, what are you doing in Mondstadt?” Amber asked them.

“Aether got separated from his sister during a really, really long journey,” Paimon said.

“Paimon is his travel buddy, helping him to find his sister.”

Aether nodded, telling Amber that his travel buddy was telling the truth.

“Oh, looking for your family... Huh. Ah...” She seemed speechless for a moment before gathering her wits. “Okay! Let me finish my other stuff first, and then I can help you put up posters around the city...”

“What exactly is it you need to finish doing first?” Paimon asked, tilting her head.

“It's simple. You'll understand in a bit.”

“Mage, bring the commanding Lector - who I think goes by the name Enjou? Anyway, go get him,” Lumine said, smirking. Watching Aether trick them was entertaining.

“Yes, your highness,” The hydro abyss mage bowed their head. A minute passed before a more human-like monster appeared.

“You called, your highness?” Enjou bowed with a book in hand.

“Start the plan, he's woken up,” Lumine said. The Lector let out a soft cackle before bowing out. Oh yes, so entertaining. “Your move, Aether.”

Aether snorted, before covering his mouth in surprise. Luckily no one heard him as they spotted a hilichurl in the hills. They had a mask, looking somewhat like a shaman mask from one of the worlds they visited.

“Ah! A hilichurl!” Paimon screeched, hiding behind Aether. The sound made the hilichurl notice them. Using the newly granted power of anemo, he fought off them.

“These monsters have been getting too close to the city recently. My task this time is to clear out their camp,” Amber said, pointing towards a camp ten meters away.

He smiled, his bloodlust hidden under it. Quickly, he fought the hilichurls to the death. It was disappointingly easy. Aether hoped it would've been harder.

“Heh, nothing to it. Though I've gotta say, you surprised me a little with your moves there...” Amber bounced, excitedly pointing out how he did then sweatdropped. “Thanks for the backup. How'd it feel?”

“Barely broke a sweat,” Aether said cockily.

“Now that you mention it, how did the hilichurls end up here?” Paimon asked, flying closer to Amber. “These creatures don't seem like the type to set up camp so close to cities like this.”

“Exactly. It's more normal for them to be much further out in the wilderness. But because the dragon — Stormterror — has been around a lot more recently, our orchards have been destroyed and the local market has been affected as well,” Amber shivered at the memory of the storm that the dragon caused. “When the storms hit, we usually end up with at least a few injuries, so the Knights of Favonius have been tied up doing the best they can to defend the area.”

“So these annoying creatures have been getting closer and closer to the city?” Paimon worriedly asked.

“Exactly. That said, clearing this camp helped make the area a little bit safer,” Amber said before looking at the sky, “Come with me! A responsible knight must make sure to see you to the city safely before it gets dark.”

—

“Somethings wrong...” A voice said, “Something is very wrong.”

“Perhaps it's the dragon?”

“No...it feels different. I don't know how else to explain it.”

Gens una sumus...the motto for the game being played between two one beings.

—

The bridge to the capital of Mondstadt was fairly simplistic in design. Although, it has great meaning. A bridge to freedom, many say about it. To the residents, it's just a simple bridge that a boy resides feeding pigeons day to day.

“Hey! Why'd you scare the pigeons away?!” A boy yelled to the group.

“They will come back, Timmy,” Amber said, waving the boy away, “Go check on your mom for me please?”

“Fine...” Timmy grumbled.

“Who was that?” Paimon asked.

“That was Timmy, the resident pigeon feeder,” Amber smiled as they entered. The guards saluted her before letting them pass. “Let me officially introduce the city of wind, dandelions, and freedom — Travelers under the protection of the Knights of Favonius — Welcome to Mondstadt!”

“Finally, no more having to camp outdoors!” Paimon stopped and tilted her head. She observed the city. “But... the city folk don't look too cheery.”

“Everyone's been put out of place by Stormterror recently. But everything will turn out fine as long as Jean's with us!” Amber said, placing a hand on her hip while raising her other hand up. Realizing what she did, she awkwardly laughed before placing her hands down.

“Jean?” Paimon asked.

“Acting Grand Master of the Knights of Favonius — Jean, Defender of Mondstadt. With Jean on our side, surely even the vicious Stormterror will be no match for us!” Amber said, almost going to her previous pose before stopping herself.

‘Sounds like someone who will be useful,’ Aether thought. Lumine nodded mentally back.

“Before I take you guys to the Knights of Favonius Headquarters, I have a present for you, Aether. It's a reward for helping me clear out that hilichurl camp.”

“He-Hey! Why doesn't Paimon get a reward?”

“Ahh... Because this reward is useless to you, Paimon. But I'll treat you to a traditional Mondstadt delicacy — Sticky Honey Roast,” Amber said.

“Sticky Honey Roast!” Paimon said, flying excitedly around.

“Come with me, we'll head to the city's ahh... high ground,” She pointed towards the statue that was looking down at the people.

They walk down the roads. People seem to recognize Amber, waving and saying their hello's. Everyone seemed happy to see her. Though, Aether expected there to be a lot more people.

“This used to be a bustling street... But with so many Stormterror attacks recently, the usual crowds are nowhere to be seen,” Amber explained. “Except for the local tavern near the city wall over there. They haven't been affected. If anything, their business is better than ever.”

As they came to their destination, Amber stopped by the edge of the plaza.

“So, the present I want to give you is...” She paused for dramatic effect, “A Wind Glider! Outriders use them to ride the wind, and the people of Mondstadt love using them too. I brought you here to give it to you so you can experience it right away!”

“Oh, you're really excited about these wind gliders, huh!” Paimon said. The wind glider did seem beautiful, with blue highlighting the edges of the black wings.

“Well that's because the wind is the heart and soul of Mondstadt!” Amber then shook her head, “Alrighty then, enough talk! Let's give it a whirl! It's easy to use, but you still need to pay attention to my instructions.”

Aether nodded, putting the wings on. It felt weird to have them - especially as he has his own wings. Though, a part of him was glad to have it as it gave him an excuse on how he flies.

“First, use the pulley to spread the wings out and then use your arms to move around. It seems pretty simple, but the wind is unpredictable. Expect the unexpected as the saying goes! Now, give it a try.”

Aether let the wings out before jumping. It felt - freeing and adrenaline-inducing. Like his own wings, but different as he couldn't get higher and faster. That is until he went through a wind tunnel in the air and went faster, the wind pushing him. He landed with Amber next to him. A huge smile was on his face.

“Freeing ri—” Amber stopped, “The sky...” He looked up and saw it growing dark. Fast winds came through, tornadoes coming down from the sky. Then the same dragon he saw in the forest came and roared. A tornado lifted him up, making him panic and almost letting his wings out in the sight of the citizens. Instead, he pulled the pulley and glided to the top of the tornado.

Although something was making him stay afloat instead of going down.

“Huh? How are you staying afloat like this with just a Wind Glider?” Paimon asked with a silent question.

“I'm preventing your fall with the power of a thousand winds. I have a feeling you wouldn't let out your pretty wings even if you fell,” A mysterious voice said, it seemed vaguely familiar. “Now, concentrate. See yourself grasping the wind. Harness its energy.”

“Who... who said that!?” Paimon said. Aether gasped as the same power when he touched the statue engulfed him. A picture floated in his mind of him shooting arrows out of his hand. He

did just that, damaging the dragon until it fled.

The wind slowed down and he drifted down.

“A—Are you hurt?” Amber asked, looking over Aether.

“You've actually got the power to go up against the dragon...” A man came up, eyeing him suspiciously. Aether suspects he’s going to be a problem going forward. “Are you a new ally... or a new storm?”

“Stormterror... is attacking Mondstadt itself!” Amber said, summarizing the situation.

“Kaeya, Aether, you've come at the right time. We must—”

“Hold on, Amber. Are you perhaps forgetting to introduce us?” The man said. Aether suspected his name was Kaeya.

“Oh... right. This is Kaeya, our Cavalry Captain. These two are travelers from afar, Aether and Paimon.” Aether could practically hear Kaeya’s thoughts, the suspicious look all he needed. “Long story short...” Amber explained the situation as she knows it.

“I see. Welcome to Mondstadt — though you haven't arrived at the best of times, I'm afraid. I understand the anguish of being separated from family,” Kaeya frowned before going back to smiling. “I'm not really sure why you're looking for the Anemo God...But everyone has their secrets, right? Haha, relax! I won't press you for more. First and foremost, on behalf of the Knights of Favonius, I would like to extend our thanks to you for your help just now.”

“Well, we couldn't just leave the situation to fester,” Aether smiled, trying to make Kaeya trust him.

“Ahh... How about a traditional Mondstadt delicacy, Sticky Honey Roast?” Kaeya asked.

“I just heard about that one!” Aether said.

“Your fight to defend the city against the dragon just now was witnessed by no small number of citizens. The Acting Grand Master of the Knights of Favonius is also very interested in meeting you and formally invites you both to our headquarters,” Kaeya said, showing them a map and pointing towards a building.

“Okay,” Aether smirked.

—

“This seems like an entertaining movie,” Lumine said, eating popcorn.

“My highness, what’s a movie?” An abyss mage hesitantly asked.

“Nothing to be worried about.”

a living fire to lighten the darkness

Chapter Summary

I do not own Genshin, though I copy sentences from the game :D

“Older men declare war. But it is youth that must fight and die.”

— Herbert Hoover

For those who wander, what do you think of the stars? Are they guides or liars? For those that stay, what do you think of the forests? Are they menacing or somewhere to escape to? As Aether glances around, he thinks of these questions he asked people in another world. He was curious about how people thought and how they reacted to things. He prodded and annoyed to make someone tick.

Aether thinks he got pretty good at it. He knows all the tricks in the book, so he shouldn't be this annoyed at this *infuriating man*! The knowing look Aether received when he tried to hide his annoyance was so...agh. He can't even describe his hatred. When they entered the Knights of Favonius headquarters, he couldn't help but let out a sigh of relief.

“Jean, I've brought them,” The *molestus*- Kaeya, his name is Kaeya, said. He casually waved his hand to them. He began explaining what happened. “...And once it was over I brought them straight here.”

“Mondstadt welcomes you, windborne travelers. I am Jean, Acting Grand Master of the Knights of Favonius. This is Lisa, our resident Librarian,” Lisa came out of the corner.

“Oh! Are you sweeties here to help us out?” Lisa said, her hands itching closer, wanting to squish his cheeks. “You're both so adorable! Sadly, the timing is regrettable... Stormterror has caused quite a ruckus in the region since its recent resurgence. Simply put, Mondstadt's elemental sphere and ley lines are now akin to a yarn ball in the paws of a kitten.” She conjured an electric ball of yarn and small kitten paws.

“Ah, that sounds bad,” Paimon said, looking entranced at the yarn.

“For a mage, it couldn't get much worse. My skin is one elemental particle away from a full-blown breakout,” Lisa pouted.

“If it weren't for this interference, the Knights of Favonius would have better ways to help you than just putting up missing person posters,” Jean scratched the side of her head. “We simply ask that you repose in Mondstadt while we help you seek out your sister.”

“Guess we leave it up to you then. Where's the inn?” Aether smirked, trying to get a rise out of his little friend.

“Hey! Don't be such a slug! We should be a part of this too!” Paimon stomped in the air.

“Good. In that case, we need a plan,” Kaeya said, ignoring Aether's comment.

“With Stormterror now directly attacking Mondstadt, we may have an opportunity to cut this problem off at the source. Lisa has revealed the sources of Stormterror's power with her detection magic,” Jean said, looking towards Lisa.

“Is that so?” Kaeya said while turning towards the librarian.

“They're located in the abandoned Four Winds' Temples,” Lisa pointed out where the temples are on the map that was set out. “Stormterror's ability to whip up these kinds of storms can be attributed to its drawing power from the temples.”

“Our objective is to deal with three of the four temples. I trust everyone understands why we are only dealing with three?” Jean looked towards Aether and Paimon.

“Paimon doesn't...” Paimon said quietly.

“We'll ask later...” Aether said.

“Knights of Favonius, time is against us. The storm is rampant. There is no point in maintaining a defensive position,” Everyone nodded. “Alright. We need to take initiative and act before the situation escalates.”

“Your gliding style seems familiar somehow...” Kaeya admitted when Aether came closer. He glared at the man, turning away from him. “Rude.”

“I'm Lisa, the librarian. Do you need anything, cutie?” Lisa asked once Aether said hello to her.

“I'd like to know more about monsters,” Aether said, curious about the world.

“The monsters out in the wild? We've got many resources here in the library. Making good use of elemental advantages is the key to winning any battle. By the way, would you be interested in having a part-time job here? We need people to... need people for doing... We just need more people,” Lisa admitted.

“How do we fight Stormterror?”

“A way to fight against Stormterror...” Lisa hummed. “I'm sorry, but there's no way to do it alone. Judging by the level of its Anemo power, it's definitely not an ordinary creature. I could teach you some elemental basics, so you'll have an idea of what I'm talking about.”

“Thank you for the information, goodbye,” Aether waved before going towards Jean.

“Goodbye!” Lisa said.

“Thank you for accepting our invitation, traveler. Even if reluctantly...” Jean said.

“How do we fight Stormterror?” Aether asked Jean. Different opinions are always good to have when going to a battle.

“Its change in size and power really is suspicious. But for the Knights of Favonius, our priority is to deal with the aftermath of this attack. The Grand Master entrusted the Knights of Favonius to me. I cannot let him or the people of Mondstadt down. I must get to the bottom of this...” Jean said.

“I’m sorry, but aren’t you Grand Master?” Aether asked.

“Ah no, I’m the Acting Grand Master. I stepped into place while the Grand Master was off on an expedition. He took a lot of the knights so we have a lot to do with a limited number of people,” Jean said.

“Are all the knights as... 'strict' as Amber?”

“I heard you and Outrider Amber had a misunderstanding. Please forgive her. She was just doing her job. Talk to Amber sometimes. I'm sure you'll like how energetic she always is.”

“That’s all, goodbye.”

“Thanks again for your help, Aether!”

He went towards Amber, a smile on his face.

“Do you want to team up with me?” Aether asked.

“Wanna team up with me? Huh, I should warn you though, I don't slow down for anyone, greenhorn or otherwise,” Amber said in a matter of fact tone

“That’s fair enough,” He nodded. “Jean seems to be pretty reliable.”

“ With Jean by our side, nothing can stand in our way! ...At least, that's what I wanna say...” Amber sighed, “But I can't keep spouting that same old line. She always dashes headlong into the heat of the battle, and we want her to take better care of herself. I really hope that one day I can look Jean in the eye and tell her she doesn't need to worry anymore because we have her back...”

“I hope you do too. Anyway, you seem pretty good with a wind glider. When can I get that good?” Aether asked.

“As a novice within the Knights of Favonius, your understanding of the wind is absolutely crucial. Leave the advanced wind glider training to me!” She smiled.

“That’s all, goodbye!” Aether waved.

“Let's all do our best to defeat Stormterror!”

Aether looked at the scene in front of him with a critical eye. The temple was...inadequate. To put it nicely. Maybe because it was run down or maybe because he's seen better.

"This is it. One of the deserted temples of The Four Winds. These temples have been left to waste for years now. The people of Mondstadt almost never come here. There's a chance there's a monster nest or a hilichurl camp inside. Even Stormterror has given up on its own temple," Amber said.

"Stormterror?" Aether asked, startled by the last sentence.

"...Yes. I also find it hard to accept, but... Stormterror was once one of The Four Winds," Amber sighed.

"Ehhhh!?" Paimon screeched. Amber put her hand up to listen to her.

"Wait... Did you just feel that? The wind here... Something's off...Let's go in and take a look, Aether. Be careful, the dragon's power is disturbing this area."

A powerful wind pushed them closer to the temple. Almost tripping, he looked back at Amber for directions. He knew little about this world, so even if it was frustrating, he had to ask others for help.

"Everyone in Mondstadt is still getting blown about by the storm...Every second we waste is a mark against the name of Favonius. Let's get in that temple, stat!"

They went into the temple, stepping quietly to avoid getting attention from the monsters in the area. It seemed bigger...and stranger than what it looked like outside.

"Yo! Yo! Undu du yo!" A hilichurl shouted, noticing them. A fight began and ended quickly. A horn came from the corner. Amber quickly turned to see where the noise was coming from.

"Oh no! A horn! The fighting must have got them riled up. Well, good thing I've prepared my secret weapon: Explosive Puppet 'Baron Bunny'!" Amber quickly brings out a miniature puppet version of herself. She threw it and started shooting while the baron bunny distracted the hilichurls. It soon exploded; killing all the hilichurls around it. They soon enter the next room. It had vines growing at the exit, making it almost impossible to go on.

"Are those explosive barrels over there? Well... One-shot should be able to blow them up!" Amber pulled her bow and shot, making a big explosion, destroying the vines easily.

The next room had a chasm.

"It's so high... Seems like there's something up there," Amber looked down before looking up and seeing a ledge.

"How do we get up there?" Aether asked.

“Isn't this... a Pyro Monument?” Paimon floated over a monument with the pyro symbol on it. “If we hit it with a powerful Pyro attack, we might trigger it!”

Amber pulled her bow back long enough for her vision to trigger pyro on the end of it. Shooting the monument, a gust of wind floated them up.

They went on the ledge and quickly fought the monsters up there. It took a while, but soon they approached a room with a strange object in the middle.

“Dragon's breath! Is that where the power is coming from?” Amber asked herself. Before nodding after examining the object. “Great, let's smash it!”

With both of them attacking the dragon's breath, it was easily destroyed.

“Phew, I'm tired. But, at least this way we've helped Jean out. In the past, we were at least able to defend the city and keep it safe. This, of course, is mostly thanks to Jean. But now with Stormterror directly attacking the city itself...” Amber took a deep breath, “The winds change, so too should our tactics.”

“Sounds deep,” Aether noted.

“It's what Lisa likes to say. Speaking of which, The Four Winds we were discussing earlier...If you want to learn more about our history, you can ask Lisa...I'm not saying I don't know our history! It's just...I mean...A librarian is supposed to be more knowledgeable than an Outrider, right?” Amber laughed with self-deprecation.

Aether tried to think of a way to comfort her before deciding to go for a hug. She cried, then got up and left the temple.

“You should go see Kaeya next. Though be warned, he's tricky and can be manipulative,” Amber warned.

an artist on ice

Chapter Summary

A shorter chapter here!

“Thin ice isn’t a problem for the sea; it’s a problem for the blind idiot who steps out on it. The fool who breaks it gets sucked under; the ice, it mends.”

— Jennifer Giesbrecht, *The Monster of Elendhaven*

Kaeya couldn’t read Aether - his face showed he told no lies, but he could tell that was not true. It frustrated him which he dealt with by frustrating the source. It seemed to work, but he couldn’t tell.

Then, at the meeting, he looked closer at the boy. He seemed almost familiar, like a picture from his homeland. The sounds of steps knocked him out of his thoughts. He looked at the blonde hair that was coming closer.

“You’ve arrived,” Kaeya said. He stopped and sniffed the air, “Come closer. Can you smell that?”

“It’s the smell of burnt Pyro slime,” Aether said.

“Something must have happened in the temple. imagine there will be slimes, hilichurls, and... whatever is giving Stormterror extra power,” Kaeya smiled. “Oh yes, it is going to be lively there indeed!”

“Will it be dangerous?” Aether narrowed his eyes, trying to gauge his response.

“As bustling as it may be — no, I can’t imagine it will be dangerous at all,” A little sarcasm slipped from his voice. “It’s a pity that the Temple of the Wolf has been disturbed by such an atrocity. Let’s head in, Aether.”

A wind passed through and Kaeya softly smiled.

“No one makes offerings to The Four Winds anymore, yet the old winds never vanish...” Kaeya sighed. “We need to clear out the temples, for The Four Winds.”

“Yeah, for The Four Winds,” Aether said, narrowing his eyes at him.

“My first chance to fight beside you. Think we’ll make a good team?” Kaeya asked.

“If you weren’t so annoying, maybe,” Aether retorted. They entered the temple, its lackluster entrance betraying the beauty of the inside.

“Let me show you how the Knights of Favonius conquer our adversaries!” Kaeya said, excited for the battle ahead.

“Sure,” Aether rolled his eyes before entering the first room. Kaeya observed it, before looking up.

“Hmm. If I’m not mistaken, the end of the temple should be up there,” Kaeya pointed up.

“Wait...How do you know?” Paimon asked. She picked up on Aether’s suspicion and was watching Kaeya carefully.

“Heh, experience,” Kaeya scornfully said, “ ...The kind of experience you get after years of dealing with things like this for others.”

A hilichurl screeched, pointing at them. All of the hilichurls rushed towards them. They were quickly defeated, their random attacks being the most dangerous thing about them.

“Traveler... Unless I’m mistaken, you don’t seem to have a Vision. So how exactly is it that you’re able to channel elemental energy?” Kaeya asked.

“It was a very strange occurrence,” Paimon said, not elaborating. An awkward silence fell over them as they took the long walk to the end of the path. “Ugh, finally... we’re here,” Paimon groaned.

“Seems the path ends here. Let’s use the wind currents to fly up,” Kaeya jumped off and pulled on his wind glider. The wind current pushed him up and he flew towards the platform high up.

Fire made the path unpassable. Conveniently, there was a water barrel right beside it.

“Water! We can use this to put out the fire!” Paimon flew over the water barrel excitedly.

“Good idea. That’s some keen observation,” Kaeya smirked. “We should get Jean to give you a title and make you a knight.”

They continued on, crossing underwater spikes and other dangerous obstacles. Another one of those ‘dragon breaths’ came into view. Aether assumes correctly they have to destroy it.

“Bravo! What a performance!” Kaeya clapped. “You are, to my surprise, a well-trained knight. The battles you just fought were sights to behold.”

“Quit with the sarcasm,” Aether scoffed.

“Quite rewarding, was it not?” Kaeya said.

“We’ve seized another temple from Stormterror’s grasp!” Paimon fluttered her wings.

“I can take care of the rest here. You go take care of other things while I'm at it,” Kaeya dismissed them.

“See you later then, bye-bye~” Paimon waved before both of them left. He narrowed his eyes at Aether.

“There's no way hilichurls organized an ambush like this themselves — not with their limited mental capacity...” Kaeya said, glancing around the room. A hydro abyss mage appeared, laughing. “Thus you were behind this.”

“Gohus, Chiso Vonph,” The abyss mage said with a smirk on its inhuman face. That smirk changed into shock when a red-haired male came from nowhere, killing it.

“Knights of Favonius... Always so inefficient,” The man scoffed.

“Agree to disagree. But, your involvement in this just made things a whole lot more interesting.”

—

“Your highness, your brother is doing well,” An abyss herald said on its knees.

“As expected, tricking mortals has always been easy,” Lumine stood up and looked down on her brother. He looked up and waved, smirking quickly before looking back to his pixie.

Ah, the game was getting interesting...

End Notes

My discord for stories is <https://discord.gg/JfdcWXdJMZ>

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