

## **From Mendera Temple**

### **Chapter 11 – Tonokae**

**~ Tomma-Goran – A God returns to his city ~**

**About 1,140 Words**

Tomma-Goran waded the river alone, like most of the deities he preferred his own company. Even in the golden years of his city, he had merely created it and moved on. He'd perpetuated the myth that he'd return to Mariba and a second golden age would follow. Now no one knew the destroyed city by its real name, he hadn't heard a mortal tongue use the name in.... even he couldn't easily grasp the length of time. Now everyone simply called Mariba the City of the Lost God. He wasn't lost of course, he'd just left the various humans, demons and hybrids who'd used the city to go about their business.

"I'm pleased you came." He said.

When their reality had been destroyed the Genova had become pathetic creatures, drifting in and out of other realities, like dreams given momentary substance. Sikush had some affection for the creatures, he even found them useful. But Tomma found their ability to go anywhere annoying; they always seemed to be buzzing around him, often like an insect swarm. Juliette was different though, somewhere she'd gained immortality of a sort and she'd become a warrior.

"You asked and I am pleased to offer my service." Said Juliette.

He walked over the rubble where the slums had been and Juliette followed him, drifting in and out of several realities as she went. To most Juliette appeared to move erratically, vanishing from one point and reappearing a few feet to the right or left. To Tomma though her movements were a graceful glide through reality and time, almost like a ballerina moving to the rhythm of the multiverse. Juliette was wise; perhaps the wisest essence in the multiverse and Tomma greatly valued her advice.

"I want to rebuild the city, but here doesn't feel right. Too many bad souls have dwelt here, too many dark events have occurred." He said.

He looked up to the mountain and a few walls of the dome still survived and here and there was a recognisable piece of stone, but Kittara had destroyed his city, completed the work of billions of years of wear and tear. The catacombs were still there, at least in part, but they were now empty, just the darkness remained. Pity really, it was a great place for a city. The river was wide and had once provided clean drinking water, there was decent farmland to the north, but he needed a new site for the new city.

"If you want to stay near the rift gate, the other side of the river is ideal. There are clean streams off the mountains and nothing of the dark has ever been built there."

He followed Juliette over the river and onto the narrow plain between it and the mountains. There wasn't a huge amount of space, but there was room for a city, his city. Tomma remembered there had been a temple built to honour him in a nearby valley, perhaps he'd have it rebuilt.

“So they’re coming here,” asked Juliette, “the inhabitants of the doomed planet Sikush seems so fond of?”

He looked at the fertile lands stretching out to the edge of the rift, tens of thousands of miles away and decided that not only would it be nice to have humans on the rift again, but also it was a definite improvement over their current sulphur smelling over crowded slums.

“Yes Juliette, the majority of the population of Ixir will be coming to the 1st rift.”

Juliette seemed less than enthusiastic and kicked over a pile of loose rocks.

“It’s barren Tomma and the light is appalling, their crops may like the high ultra violet, but their eyes won’t.”

It was all minor adjustments to Tomma, the light would be right for their eyes by the time they arrived and the river water cleaned up a bit. He was going to leave the Nesh bugs and the other biters and stingers, no new home should ever make a people soft. Juliette vanished from the rifts, but he saw her moved through several realities, before appearing again nearer to him.

“The demons will hate them and so will others. They will have to survive a constant state of war.”

“You should see their current world Juliette. I think they’ll thrive here and they number into the billions. Many will die but most will live. As to the demons, there is room enough for all here; they will have to learn to live beyond the mountains.”

Juliette picked up a handful of soil and rubbed it between her fingers.

“They may like it here, if their own world is as bad as you say. Will they be given a choice?”

“No, their own world will soon be destroyed. But Sikush views their move here as a gift to them, something they should appreciate.”

“Why?”

Tomma looked at Juliette and wondered why she refused to admit she understood the value of being on the 1st rift. Her own race was happy enough to cling to its edges when the multiverse had one of its periodic purges.

“You know full well,” he said, “the switch never takes the 1st rift, or at least hasn’t for almost an eternity. The people of Ixir will evolve and the creatures they become by the next switch may not look anything like they do now, but they will survive.”

Juliette was smiling at him.

“So you’re going to give them a great city?”

“Well it is almost a tradition. I will summon the delvers, the diggers, the hewers of rock and stone. Time to summon the dredgers and remind them how they came by that name. The 1st rift will be transformed and a new great city built upon it.”

“Will you give them domes, towers and minarets this time?”

Tomma-Goran began to summon the creatures of the rifts and the ground around him started to almost bubble as the soil rose and moved. He raised his arms and began a long melodic chant and other beings were brought into existence. Huge powerful creatures, with strong backs and muscular arms.

“Yes Juliette, I think I will. I rather like towers and minarets.”

Tomma started walking towards the foot of the mountains, the place he intended to build his new city. As he walked tens of thousands of creatures the colour of mud rose from the ground to follow him. Others appeared out of the air around him and yet others broke through from other realities. They were all there to build the new city, but this time there would be no talk of a lost god. Juliette followed behind, eager to see how the city would turn out.

~ ~

© Ed Cowling ~ November 2024