Session 22

OK, got access to the wiki back but needed to make a new account. Let's do this

The rescue team starts to gather at the bottom of the cliff, nearby the scene of the Crinwin attack. Soren is going around organizing the group, making sure there are plenty of torches as the light is failing quick. Esme is also handing out whistles to everyone to sound on in case of trouble. Once the bustle dies down and the group is ready the final headcount is Soren, Kiva, Rua, Esme, Treasa, Willem and Fio. Soren looks to Fio, indicating they are ready and she starts to inspect the visible tracks. After a moment circling around she steps into the forest, leaning close to the ground and holding an oil lamp close to the tracks. The moment they enter the forest the last light of dusk is blotted out, and the many and varied noises of the forest start to close around them.

Fio leads the group east into the forest. She explains that the only reason tracking will work is because they are dragging a body with them, typically they travel through the canopy. Soren is paying close attention, not only to her tracking method but to the trees above and to the side as well, making sure nothing gets the drop on them. Soon the trail starts to go down in elevation and the ground starts to get soggy. Fio raises an arm and halts the group, explaining that they are entering a bog. "I know this swamp, its only a half-mile wide. We could circle around and pick up the trail on the other side, or just push on through." Soren knows that they only get one shot, if they circle around and can't find the trail again Bedwyr is as good as dead. Kiva agrees, its best to follow the trail we know than risk losing it. Fio nods and says "Well I hope you don't like your boots. Its gonna get soggy from here..." and she starts heading into the swamp. Soren looks down at his feet, sighs heavily, then picks his head up and trudges forward.

They keep going through the bog, their feet sinking several inches into the mire with each step and making a sucking sound as they walk. Soon enough the ground starts sloping up again and the soil firms underneath their feet. A little farther along Fio stops again, saying she can smell blood much stronger ahead. They take a moment to deliberate, and decide to move forward inspecting the surroundings closely. They come upon a small area of the forest that has been trampled heavily. Esme spots a Crinwin body off to the side, its limbs mauled and leaking sticky black blood. Kiva also spots what might be a racoon's body, but its hard to tell given how deformed the corpse is. It almost looks like its bones spontaneously exploded out of its body. Kiva recognizes that no natural effect would have done this, something twisted this animal and either enraged or provoked it to attack the group of Crinwin, killing one and, based on the blood splatters, wounding more of them. While spooky, none of this changes what they are here to do, and that is rescue their neighbour. They press on, the trail even easier to follow with the black Crinwin blood dripping next to the red human blood.

Soon the undergrowth starts to thin and Fio is able to pick up the pace, almost breaking into a jog. It is hard to tell how long exactly they have been tracking the Crinwin, the torches have guttered out but they still have enough light with the lamps others have carried. Fio comes to a stop, announcing they have arrived. Ahead is a small clearing with a giant tree in the center. The trunk of the tree is naked, its branches high up in the canopy competing for light. There is a white, papery substance substance the trunk, reminiscent of a wasps nest. It is several meters high, fairly skinny but a person could go in, or be dragged inside. Looking at the rough size, a dozen or so Crinwin could be hiding inside, but its a couple storeys up from the forest floor. Soren is on high alerts, scanning for threats while Kiva and Esme inspect their surroundings looking for some advantage. Soren mentions fire would be great, if they didn't have Bedwyr to worry about. Kiva also sees some trees at the side of the clearing, possibly they could be bent over by Treasa and Willem to get to the Crinwin nest. She spares a glance to the canopy and sees an extra thick branch. She tilts her head as two points of light shine out from a protrusion on the branch. It is quickly made clear this is a Crinwin when it opens its mouth, full of jagged, pointy teeth, and slurs out "whats going on here?" in what is clearly an imitation of Bedwyr. This shocks the group, but they are aware now of the watcher and are not caught by surprise when more of them jump out of the canopy!

Rua is somehow overlooked by the ambushers and he uses his opportunity to light a fresh torch and head to the base of the big tree with the nest. He calls out "Bedwyr! Can you hear me?!" He hears a faint groan from above and immediately resolves to rescue him. Emse's first response is to step bewteen Kiva and the closest Crinwin, raising her shield in defense. Kiva starts swinging her staff around her, ready to counter any moves the Crinwin make. Soren responds quickly, seeing one of the monsters jumping at him he sets his sword against his hip to catch it. It works, the Crinwin impaled on the length of his blade by its momentum but not before it gets its claws in his arms, scoring some long scratches. Across the way two others have leapt at Kiva from opposite directions. Esme catches one of them one her shield, ramming it into a nearby tree and crushing it completely. Kiva slashes her spear at the other, tearing a large gash across its chest but not felling it. It bats at her in reply, hurting her in the process before slinking back. Outside the main circle of light they can hear Willem cursing and fighting, but he has no light of his own.

Rua has started climbing the tree towards the nest. As he gets in he wriggles inside. It is suprisingly damp, the papery walls looping into cramped chambers connected by vertical shafts. It is a tight fit, but he can wiggle himself through. As he heads inside it is a disgusting display. Little hexagonal cells containing oozing flesh and plant matter, but also trinkets and baubles clearly stolen from Stonetop. The deeper he goes, the dryer the walls become. The walls and floor are tough enough to support his weight, but there is some give so Rua thinks he could put his fist through the wall if he really tried. He looks around, inspecting his surroundings to get an idea of where Bedwyn could be. Unfortunately the nest is an alien environment, bearing no resemblance to anything Rua had ever seen before. He is disoriented and can't see any tracks or trails to lead him along. He calls out in frustration "Bedwyr! Where are you?"

Outside the battle rages on, four of the beasts advance towards Soren and Fio in a rough semi-circle. Soren glances backward, seeing Fio getting ready with her bow he decides to give no ground. Wanting to keep attention away from her so she can shoot freely he angles his sword to catch the light from the lantern she set down and shine it towards the approaching foes. This

works almost too well, with all four of them hissing at the light and quickly moving to attack him. He swings his sword wildly to drive them back, but each time he pushes one back another comes in from the side and claws at him. Before Treasa is able to step in and behead one of the Crinwin with a swift stroke of her axe Soren takes multiple hits, his arms and back scored with claw marks and blood running down his body. Kiva sees this and hurls her spear towards another of them, impaling the creature through it's chest and taking it down instantly while Esme moves to cover Soren with her Makerglass Shield as he stumbles back.

Inside the Crinwin hive Rua is getting desperate. He starts running around the circumference of the trunk and looking around as quickly as he can. Finding nothing on the first level he hauls himself up one of the vertical shafts. In one of the chambers he comes to up there he narrowly avoids a wriggly white grub that launched itself at him from the wall. He is grossed out for a moment but looking around he sees Bedwyr laying on the papery floor, with some misshapen lumps on his neck and arm. Looking closer with his torch he sees the lumps are more of the wriggly grubs latched onto him. Rua thinks quickly, pulling out his pocket knife and using it to stab and peel the parasites from his body while Bedwyr moans weakly, blood loss and shock having rendered him entirely immobile. As Rua picks him up, intending to carry/drag him out he hears hissing from above. Above him in a darkened corner of the chamber unfurls a bizarre looking Crinwin, larger than the others with long spindly arms and fingers and its hissing maw full of sharp teeth. It crawls down the wall towards them with murder in its eyes.

Down below Kiva moves towards Soren and the others to reclaim her spear, but after just one step another Crinwin drops from above, landing on her shoulders and yanking the hood of her cloak down and over her head while it lashes into her with its grimy claws. Those wicked points find their target, piercing her abdomen. The shock and pain jolts Kiva into motion as she reaches up and grabs at the clinging beast, finding its neck beneath her finders and squeezing with all her fear, anxiety, and rage to crush its throat in revenge. The two remaining Crinwin by Soren move back in to strike again, but Esme steps in front and takes the hit from one while bashing the other with her shield, crunching it's face but not taking it down. Soren gathers himself for a moment before reaching for a spare torch and lighting it off the lantern to shed more light on the battle. Hearing Willem swearing from outside the circle of light he takes a risky move and flings the torch towards the sound. In the dancing orange light, Willem's silhouette is writhing with the shape of 3 Crinwin who are trying to overwhelm him. Three others lay broken on the ground around him, the great iron club he bears stained black with their ichor. Fio takes aim, timing his body swinging back and forth trying to shake them off and letting fly her arrow just as he is bent over. It knocks into one of them, sending it tumbling to the trampled loam below.

In the Crinwin Hive Rua's fear and disgust ignite, turning into righteous anger at this twisted creature. He shoves his torch right into it's' face as it approches, blistering its face and causing it's hissing to pitch up into a tea kettle whistle. It staggers back then opens it's mouth wide and a wet sticky tounge lashes out towards Rua, wrapping around his neck and starting to squeeze. He scrabbles for a moment before remembering his knife, grabbing that and slicing across the muscle strangling his throat and pulling it away from his neck. His struggling causes him to slip on the uneven floor, crashing down onto the papery material and right through it, sending him and Bedwyr tumbling down to the chamber below and wrenching him free from the grasp of the Crinwin Queen's sticky tongue. He gasps as he gets up off the floor and tastes smoke in the air. Rua looks

around the dim room, looking for something, anything to use against the Crinwin that is sure to be coming to finish the job.

CLIFFHANGER ENDING!!

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