

Session 24

A well deserved rest after a difficult night in the forest!

Kiva's first act in the morning is to go to the stream and wash off all the blood and dirt from the previous night. Afterwards, she collects the body of the Crinwin that was left on the trevois. She drags the Crinwin into the house, hauling it slowly up the stairs as her father is sitting in the main room with a mug of tea. Kiva nods nonchalantly at him saying "Hey Dad!". He just raises his mug to her, staring as she brings it up to her room. He takes a long, slow sip of his tea after she closes her door.

Soren awakens in his bed, sore all over from the fight. He shifts, looking to the side seeing Fio in a chair, she seems to be nodding off as well. He tries to get up quietly and prepare a hot brew of tea for the both of them. Her eyes flutter open just as he sets out the mugs, and she drags herself to the table and takes a sip. "Morning already, huh? Are you sure you should be up and moving?" Soren brushes off her concern, saying he didn't feel fall over when he tried to stand so hes probably okay, and he isn't planning on pushing himself at all today, just needs to talk to a couple of people. She nods, and after spending a quiet moment together she decides to go to her home to try to get a few hours of real sleep.

Rua wakes up in a strange bed, a little disoriented after the last night. He quickly looks around and sees Anghrad softly snoring in her chair. He panics briefly, thinking it can't be good for her old bones to sleep in a chair like that. He gets up and softly wakes her, and helps her move to the bed. After her breathing settles back into a sleepy rhythm he stretches his arms above his head, feeling inexplicably tougher than he did the previous day. He decides to sit in the chair that Anghrad recently vacated, contemplating the recent events he has been a part of.

Esme is usually awake in the morning so she is already up and about when she hears a stone knocking at the entrance of the Chronicle. She sorely shuffles over, seeing Ridney, one of the kids at Eadna's orphanage, is shuffling about anxiously. "What is it, child?" Esme asks softly. Ridney replies "Umm, Murdoch sent me, he says there is going to be a gathering or something, and wants you there...". Esme slowly kneels down, smiling at the child and says "Thank you so much for telling me. Here, this is for you." and with some slight of hand she makes a piece of candy appear out of her ear and hands it to the kid. Ridney immediately unwraps it and eats it, her expression one of bliss as it slowly dissolves in her mouth. Esme grabs her walking stic

Murdoch is on the bit of the stage that didn't collapse and waves his cane for silence. He updates the whole village of the events of the previous night, with one visitor being killed and one of our own being dragged off into the night. Thankfully we were able to get them back, but it is clear that the Crinwin are becoming a problem. "Becoming a problem?!" A visiting merchant yells "Someone is dead! Did you see her body? Ripped to shreds it was! Why should we stop here if its so dangerous? we would be better off going straight to Gordin's Delve." Esme replied, saying they

already have a plan to go to the forest and investigate the missing Forest Folk, as they used to hold the Crinwin at bay. Another merchant speaks up saying that this isn't the time for investigations, its the time for swords and walls! Rua feels a blaze of anger, lashing out verbally saying "yeah thats a great idea! and we could tax all the visiting merchants to pay for it!" There is some general laughter from the gathered people, but the merchants face falls into a glower as he crosses his arms and turns to Rua. "Mira was just killed and you jest about it?" Rua gets even more mad, pointing out that he was one of the people who went into the dark forest to rescue Bedwyr, what was he doing huh? Murdoch cuts off Rua before he can say too much more, saying they will talk about this later. Soren steps up and places his hand gently on Rua's shoulder and addresses the merchants. "Swords and walls are all well and good, but it doesn't stop people from straying into the woods. It has always been dangerous, and it is truly unfortunate what happened last night. However, we people of Stonetop have lived in the eaves of the Great Wood for generations, and we know that burning the powdered bark of the the hemlock tree will ward away the Crinwin. They should keep some on hand for when they travel near the woods. That should keep them safe for now, and they can rest assured Stonetop will be looking into the uptick in Crinwin activity, be it by finding the forest folk or some other measure that will push them back." There are still grumblings in the crowd, but at his mollifying words they are sounding much less angry and anxious.

After a few moments of chatter Murdoch calls for the visitors to move on as there is some village business to discuss. Esme announces that there will be a meal at the Public House, and this hast most of the visitors moving off towards the building. He goes on to say that they will be looking for volunteers to travel into the forest for the investigation. Esme says that she will be among them, Soren speaks up too but ruefully says that he will need a week or so before they can depart. Rua jumps in, saying he is ready to go right now, maybe this afternoon? Gwann calls out from the crowd saying he looks like shit, not really in condition to go on another expedition. Soren says that there is no way this expedition of going without him, so he will have to wait a few days at least. Rua nods and says okay..okay. He then says since they will be investigating the forest, they will need additional volunteers for a woodcutting trip to the foothills to gather wood for the winter. Rua also volunteers for this trip, asking when they will be going? Murdoch chuchles and says we will talk about that later.

Once the meeting is over, Soren finds Kiva and retrieves from her the crystal he borrowed from Orlando. He wraps it back up in some rags and scrap parchment after double-checking it is not damaged, and takes it to Orlando's house. Once there he hands it over, Orlando takes it out and inspects it thoroughly for damage. Once he is satisfied Orlando sets it carefully back into its home, before thanking Soren for bringing it back safe. Soren apologizes for it taking a week, but its been a crazy week with the festival preparations and everything, but if Orlando finds another cool rock he should tell Soren about it. Orlando lights up at this, immediately pulling out a stone he bought the previous night from one of the merchants. It has red bands throughout, which he explains is iron and spends the next 30 minutes or so gushing over his collection. Soren is 100% down for this, he is sore and tired and sitting there absorbing Orlando's stream of words takes little effort, and there is a simple pleasure in watching someone talk about their passion.

Rua seeks out Mira's father, the merchant. He finds him sitting on the low wall at the edge of the village with a despondent look on his face. Rua approaches him hesitantly, asking him about his daughter. He starts pulled together initially, but when Rua asks him if he has any stories of his

daughter he breaks down crying. One of his friends comes by and puts his arm around his shoulder comfortingly, waiting for his sobs to slow down. Once he is once again able to speak his voice is a low monotone, but as time goes on he gets more and more lively in his speech as he retells his favourite stories of Mira. At the end, he mentions he doesn't really know what he will do now. They were partners, missing her is missing half his business. After a little while he says he needs to go lie down, Rua is understanding and lets him be. Esme is sitting on a stump nearby witnessing this exchange, gives Rua a proud look when he is walking away. He goes over to her to say hi, and Esme offers to talk to Murdoch for him so he doesn't have to deal with it. Rua tells her its fine, he can deal with it. There is a little back and forth between them, but Rua assures her that he can handle it.

Kiva spends two days slowly dissecting the Crinwin Queen up in her room. It has remarkably flexible joints and soft, springy bones. They are capable of remarkable feats of squeezing through small spaces and darting about the treetops. Blunt weapons would not be ideal. Piercing weapons would be best, and she notices the area around the armpits and groin have a lot of blood vessels and would be especially vulnerable.

"Rua, its like there is just nothing between your brain and your mouth. You just think of something and it just comes right out without thinking about the consequences or how people are going to receive it." "You are not wrong", Rua replies, "but that guy was out of line. I had to say something." "That is kinda the point" Murdoch countered, "sometimes its okay for people to be a little out of line, and after a murder is one of those times. It can be good to let them express their frustrations, and deal with them directly at a later time." "Oh, like you are doing right now with me..." Rua points out. "Exactly." Murdoch says with satisfaction. "It is critical we do not get a reputation for being a village where people die. If the merchants stop coming to trade for our whiskey with metals and glass and other supplies we would be poor indeed." Rua nods his head in acknowledgement. While he is there, Rua also apologizes for making a scene at the winter solstice festival, accusing him of murdering his dad and all. Murdoch goes back to his point, after a death people can say things, and I know you didn't really mean it. Rua is kinda blown away, he was not expecting Murdoch to be so understanding. He thanks Murdoch for his advice, and asks if they will be going to the forest to look for the Forest Folk tomorrow? Murdoch replies saying that he is not going anywhere for a few days, Rua needs to go home and get some rest. That is an order! With that, Rua goes home and goes straight to bed.

Esme spends her time researching recent incidents with the Crinwin, trying to find a pattern in their movements or attacks. She leans on her network of contacts in the surrounding homesteads, and finds out it is somewhat regular that they steal livestock from the nearby farms, but no incidents in the last week. None of the farms out in the foothills report any issues since the bandits were dealt with, but any farm bordering on the Great Forest have had to take to sealing all their livestock inside during the night or they will be attacked. She also spreads the word that it was Stonetop who stopped the bandits, as a bit of counter-PR for whatever disgruntled merchants might say about Crinwin attacks at Stonetop.

Details for the expedition to the Great Forest, following Thisteldown's directions to the Forest Folk town:

8 days there-and-back at the best case.

Biggest risks are getting lost in the forest, or drawing the attention of Crinwin or other forest predators.

Revision #1

Created 31 December 2025 02:29:20 by Garettv2_Bigger_Bolder_Badder

Updated 31 December 2025 05:02:52 by Garettv2_Bigger_Bolder_Badder