

Chapter 3 - Captive

Note: I still didn't catch all of Travis' dialogue and convert it into past tense. Sorry for any inconsistencies :p

Travis

The team took a moment to examine their surroundings... All around them are the bodies of the men and revolting creatures that they just killed, and the unrelenting rain and thunder were the only sounds present. As the adrenaline wore off and their senses slowly returned, the oppressive stretch of decay once again hung heavily in the air.

David (Ilaus)

We've got a body that is currently tied up and gagged by the campfire. And when the mage fell out the tree, or before he fell out the tree, something smashed to the ground.

Sister Cavernsfall

... Something dropped and smashed...

David (Ilaus)

From the mage, yeah. That's what I just said. I'm gonna check that out first.

Peter (Soren)

I'll do a sweep for additional crunchy bear traps.

David (Ilaus)

Ooh yeah that's a good point yeah.

Eypór (Sindri)

Please do.

Travis

That will require a perception check.

Peter (Soren)

Sure thing. A seventeen.

Travis

Over the next few minutes Soren is able to locate two additional bear traps, which are pinned into the ground, that have not yet been triggered. In the opening moments of his search he silently puts a hand on Ilaus' shoulder, silently pointing out the trap he was about to trigger.

David (Ilaus)

Thank you.

Travis

laus approaches the corpse of the individual he believes to be a wizard. At the base of the tree he fell from, there is a shattered glass container which was perhaps once a vial. On the man's body, what's left of it, he notes blood crusted leather armor, a crossbow, a short sword, and little else of value.

David (laus)

Right. I'm going to investigate whatever that glass thing was.

Travis

laus pulled out his pinky, dabbed the mysterious liquid it once contained and took a quick taste, recognizing the flavor instantly.

David (laus)

Right. Potion of healing... I sold a few of these back at my shop. I wonder if its' one of mine.

Eypór (Sindri)

While he's doing that, I would like to talk about these brain monsters, these pustule monsters. I wonder if I have heard any stories about such monsters before...

Travis

That will require an intelligence check.

Eypór (Sindri)

Yes please. That's a natural 20...

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Any idea what these are?

Eypór (Sindri)

(Clears throat)... Long ago, when I was... traveling underground, I learned about creatures said to burrow into the minds of people, after draining them of their intelligence. They effectively created a zombie of a person, with the thing living inside controlling it. These things know everything that the person knew and replaces the person's brain. It knows your languages, your secrets, everything if it can devour your mind... That's what they're called, (In icelandic: Knowledge devourers)... *-Intellect* devourers. These things typically are only found in the underdark... There may be an entrance nearby.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I'm really glad that didn't get in my ear.

Eypór (Sindri)

Me too. There is no coming back from being possessed by these creatures. Your very personality is devoured when they take over.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

No, no I don't like that. At all.

Eypór (Sindri)

No, this may have been far more dangerous than I actually gave it credit for, these bandits, that is.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Oh damn... well....

Eypór (Sindri)

Are we assuming that these were bandits?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Well, we don't know what they were. I mean they're dead and gone now.

Eypór (Sindri)

Yeah.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Well, even before we got to them, what with them being eaten by, you say intellect devourers. Eurgh.

Eypór (Sindri)

Yes. intellect devourers.

David (Ilaus)

So...

Eypór (Sindri)

I've had a run in with these things back in the crag but never this many.

David (Ilaus)

So do you think the, whoever's currently bound and gagged over by the campfire there, has actually got one inside waiting or... not?

Eypór (Sindri)

I...

Peter (Soren)

Let's ask.

Eypór (Sindri)

Oh Pelor! Yes, we forgot about him! I'm assuming he is actually himself. Didn't the witch say he was scared?

Kessi (Flygia)

Yes. I assume it was him.

Eypór (Sindri)

Is it not right then to assume that this person is actually intellect free..

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

That would make him an idiot wouldn't it?

Eypór (Sindri)

Intellect devourer free!

David (laus)

Before we go untying him, let's be *assumption* free, alright?

Eypór (Sindri)

So we might actually have a person that knows something that's going on. Let's unbind him or at least take the...

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Whoa...whoa. Let's, let's not unbind him in case he's not ok.

Kessi (Flygia)

Yeah let's try to ungag him first and get that potato sack off his head.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

You've got this cousin. And I'm gonna give him a shove in the small of the back towards the bound person

Eypór (Sindri)

I would like to assume you move backwards instead of me moving forward from the shove.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Ah. I will, I'll accept that.

Eypór (Sindri)

Ok. Soren, you seem to be quite knowledgeable about these woods, can you please, can you please join me?

Peter (Soren)

Absolutely.

Eypór (Sindri)

Alright. When...

Kaitlin (Sister)

There's still something out there in the forest. I'll standing guard.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Some of these things also ran away too, so...

David (laus)

I'll check the bodies... to see if there is anything on the bodies. (to self) 6 corpses to pick through. Heh, that's quite a few, quite a few... Let's start with... you, big guy.

Eypór (Sindri)

I approach the hooded figure and rudely rip the hood off.

Travis

The burlap sack is pulled away to reveal a frowning human male, with scarred skin. He is very tan with heavy bags under his eyes, and short black hair and grey peppered hair, which is missing in patches. He glares at you with wide unfocused eyes. A bloodied piece of yellowing cloth is bound taught atop his stubble and cracked lips.

Eypór (Sindri)

I would like to like grab his face between the like the thumb and forefingers and I'm like kinda like pinching his face, moving him from side to side. And I'm gonna try to see if I see any like signs of an intellect devourer attack on this person.... Hm...His eyes are not very focused but he seems to show fear, maybe a bit of anger as well... Very much unlike the figures we just fought. Hmm... Okay, yeah... I push down the, the mouth gag he has.

Coal

[weakly] (cough cough cough cough). "Thank you. Gods bless you."

Eypór (Sindri)

You're welcome. I'm assuming you were captive.

Coal

"Yes."

Eypór (Sindri)

Hmm, how long have these things had you captive?

Coal

"Maybe a day, maybe two."

Eypór (Sindri)

That's good, that's good. Do you need water?

Coal

"Yes please! My throat is so dry."

Eypór (Sindri)

I... I go for my pouch and I feed him some water without unbinding his hands.

Coal

"(cough cough cough) Thank you stranger."

Travis

As Father Westpike gives the man water he notices a cracked set of reading glasses visible in the man's shirt pocket.

Eypór (Sindri)

Alright, I reach for them then I take the water away. Just. And inspect them in front of him.

Travis

The man flinches instinctively as father Westpike suddenly reaches forward, but does not produce any vocalization. The glasses appear to be ordinary and upon closer examination they seem to make everything through their lenses an unfocused blur.

Eypór (Sindri)

So, where are you from? How did these things catch you? If...

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

How come you're not one of them?

Coal

"I was travelling with my friends. We're trappers, from the east, here to collect furs before winter sets in. We were preparing a hunting site when these things attacked. I guess there weren't enough of the beasts to eat all of us, I still have my head. Did any of the others survive?"

Eypór (Sindri)

I am afraid not... These men, your captors, they were your friends before?

Coal

"Yes."

Eypór (Sindri)

Ah, I am truly sorry for your loss.

Coal

"Thank you."

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Could I check to see if he's lying about..

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

... about the whole thing

Travis

That will require an Insight check.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

A 20.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Hey cousin... Um... (in Dwarven) *"ah he's not on the level"*.

Travis

Rowena and Father Westpike begin to speak in dwarven.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

"ah he's not on the level". The bit about being kidnapped might be true, but everything else seems mighty sketchy.

Eypór (Sindri)

You know... I sort of trust him, maybe because of his condition... His missing teeth, and humans are just so darn hard to read...

David (Iaus)

Ooo... What have we here?

Travis

Iaus comes across a small silver broach in the shape of a hollowed acorn. He looks at it appraisingly.

David (Iaus)

(to self) I might have seen something like this before in my shop...17. Oh wow... I've only ever seen one of these before from a Darklands emissary. They're extremely rare: Night Ivy. The silver circle houses a small plant inside. There's a pin on the underside that you use to

literally pin it to your flesh, which feeds the plant. The plant, in turn creates armor over the host. It disintegrates immediately if touches sunlight but this is a great find. We could probably sell this for, you know... for well over a few hundred gold... There's also a shrieking rock, which, thanks to little grooves in it, makes a shrieking sound when you throw it. That's all it does really, nothing too special but worth a few silver maybe. And what about you, another mysterious vial? Which is peculiar. (dabbing a single drop onto his finger) A little taste and we'll find out what you do... (lick) Okay... Hm... That'll do it. It's a defoliating concoction. This stuff really messes up plants. I'll put you with the 40 gold I just found... Just one more corpse...

Travis

As laus leans over to flip the final body, a huge grin crosses the deceased man's face as his talon-like fingers suddenly plunge into laus' chest for 14 piercing damage, crippling him and dripping blood everywhere. [The Silent One shrieks]. The blood seems to transform the man's open face into three hollow sockets.

David (laus)

(terrified, a curse) Fucking-- (Impact from being stabbed, hard) Gah! Abyss Take you! "ihk-hiww zicy haff (ick hew zycky hoff)"-Hellish Rebuke!... (grunting sound x2 as he lifts and fires crossbow shot) (heavy breathing) 14 fire damage... (heavy breathing) I hope you hate fire, ya' bastard!...(heavy breathing)... Bollocks...

Travis

The team is able to see the creature flee into the woods gleefully as it pats out the fires from laus' hellish rebuke. laus' bolt catches the figure in the back, but it hardly seems noticeable as the creature's shape shifts in transformation. The growling wolf that is Flygia of Zarketh moves to follow the creature into the darkness.

Kaitlin (Sister)

No! By the gods, come back here Flygia! Don't split up the party!

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

(hollering from behind everyone) Remember, stay with your buddy.

David (laus)

(Mumbling to self) We only fought 6 humans... there were 7 corpses.

Kaitlin (Sister)

(panting, running over) Are you okay?

David (laus)

(angry) No.

Eypór (Sindri)

Don't worry, I'll take...

Kaitlin (Sister)

Alright.

Eypór (Sindri)

... care of this when we get together. Like when the thing is over.

Kaitlin (Sister)

Yeah I can heal you as well.

Eypór (Sindri)

Ok. I got prayer of healing I could do... Please come closer everyone.

David (laus)

You want to use your prayer-magic on me?

Eypór (Sindri)

I want to make the **best** use of my “prayer magic” friend. My leg is in grave need of healing, and if Sister Cavernsfall and I hold a small healing vigil there will be more than enough light and healing for all of us... Surely you can hardly continue to walking with such wounds?

David (laus)

(sigh) You too wolf-lady.

(sounds as they walk back to be closer together)

Kessi (Flygia)

If you’d prefer, my magic comes from the wilds instead of a bunch of creepy old man-gods... On a scale of 1 to 10 how hurt are you?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

On a scale to 10 how bad is your pain?

Eypór (Sindri)

No I...

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Well if we want to take a short rest we can, we can recuperate a little bit. I could also play some nice soothing music.

Kaitlin (Sister)

As long as it’s a short rest cause we still wanna chase after these kids...

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Yeah.

Kaitlin (Sister)

...as fast as possible.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

How about we cap it at an hour?

Eypór (Sindri)

Yes.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Rather than having you call on divine aid, from gods, the woods, or otherwise.

Eypór (Sindri) & Kaitlin (Sister)

Yeah.

Peter (Soren)

And we need to deal with our friend here too.

Eypór (Sindri)

Our prayer of healing would be a 10 minute thing so it's, we can use it when we're more rushed.

Kaitlin (Sister)

Alright. So, I, I do have to re... I have, my shoulder is finally starting to hurt.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I got hit too.

David (Ilaus)

I'm suddenly famished... I don't normally eat in front of others but I'll make an exception today (stuffs face).

Eypór (Sindri)

Oh yeah sorry, talking about trails of rations and such things. I have a basket of elderberries and cashews.

Kaitlin (Sister)

Great idea Ilaus. I have no reservations about eating in front of others and now that we've finally stopped hitting things I think part of why I'm so shaky is that I'm hungry.

Eypór (Sindri)

Trail rations... So I only have two remaining.

laus (David)

Someone was optimistic about this journey.

Kaitlin (Sister)

We have a ranger and a wolf. Assuming they hunt together with the buddy system we should be fine.

Kessi (Flygia)

And only if we do it within the next ten minutes because I, I think I only have a few more minutes left until I must return to my normal form.

Eypór (Sindri)

We should probably though, take care of this person.

[Sindri walks back to the prisoner]

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I'm gonna, I'm gonna be nearby. I don't wanna be close enough to have deal with it, but close enough to hear. I don't trust it.

Kaitlin (Sister)

I'll be the bad cop then. (walks to Coal) "If you do anything, -I see something squishy come out of your body, it's gonna get destroyed... Otherwise Blessing of Ilmater be with you, friend."

David (laus)

So, if we want to get information from this guy, I have a particular set of skills it getting people to talk... involving torture...

Kaitlin (Sister)

Alright, well get on in here.

Eypór (Sindri)

No!

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Whoa whoa whoa that might be a bit of a jump...

Travis

laus cracks his knuckles.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

... I mean we barely know.

Eypór (Sindri)

Ah the poor man can never play the piano again.

David (laus)

So. Do we want some answers or not?

Eypór (Sindri)

No. we are not, please calm down. This, this man is as much a victim of the circumstances as we are. Except for--

David (laus)

If he's a victim he doesn't need to lie to us.

Kaitlin (Sister)

I'm pretty sure he's lying though, yeah.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Don't get me wrong, he's a lying sack of... stuff, but.

Eypór (Sindri) (OR OTHER DWARVEN METAPHORE)

I don't know, I like the cast of his mould.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Ah, cousin you're always way too trusting. I mean...

Kaitlin (Sister)

Ilmater says that the suffering of the few...

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

...You trust me, that's a downfall right there.

Kaitlin (Sister)

Is ok as long as it's for the, forget of the suffering for the better. So we can torture one guy to save a bunch of kids.

David (laus)

Exactly.

Eypór (Sindri)

Calm down Groomsh. This is, this is we can talk this person down. Ok?

Kaitlin (Sister)

Who are you calling Grumish? First poking fun of my weight now--

Eypór (Sindri)

I, I, I look at, I look at the prisoner and like just give a little head nods toward my

teammates like. Ok apparently I am the calmest person here, so how about you stop apparently lying and start telling us the truth, or, I may not be able to hold my friends back anymore.

Coal

"I, I told you the truth. What more do you want?"

Eypór (Sindri)

I'm, I just...

Kessi (Flygia)

I growl at him.

Peter (Soren)

I found your camp earlier

David (laus)

As they say in the Darklands, a well-placed knife loosens a nice tongue.

Travis

laus may now roll an intimidation check.

Kaitlin (Sister)

Can I assist him?

David (laus)

18.

Kaitlin (Sister)

I think he's got it.

Coal

(Sounding more powerful, and almost sinister, no longer a victim) "(sigh) I didn't think I'd live see the day when so-called heroes would stoop so low... What do you want from me?"

David (laus)

Gents, what did you want to know?

Eypór (Sindri)

What were you actually doing in the woods? And I am not sure I can hold my friends back again.

Coal

(bitter) "Hunting."

Eypór (Sindri)

(sigh) I tried... He's lying through his rotten teeth. I bitch slap him as hard as I can.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I know how much that hurts.

Eypór (Sindri)

Those are friendly taps.

Coal

(being slapped in the face) Ugh! (with vigor and preacher-like passion) "We will awaken the nameless god from his slumber and be rewarded as he brings about a new era. **That** is what we are doing here!"

Eypór (Sindri)

Oh.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

My god, that was one slap. Whoah.

Eypór (Sindri)

I'm gonna grab his, his collar, and pull him closer. "The age, the god of slumber? Why, what are you doing here why are you doing this?"

Coal

"We seek the lost domain, a prison within a dream, which only allows passage if the proper offer is made... It involves blood."

Eypór (Sindri)

Hmmm.

Peter (Soren)

Who's blood?

Kaitlin (Sister)

Alright, we, we probably know whose blood. We just need to say 'where are the kids' and need to get going. 'Where, where are the kids?'

Travis

The man stares at Soren with a confused recognition.

Coal

(flustered) "You.. They're with **you**?"

Eypór (Sindri)

What does...

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Soren?

Eypór (Sindri)

Do you people know this man?

Peter (Soren)

Yes, we're together.

Kaitlin (Sister)

Is this like a racist 'all humans know each other' thing?

Coal

"I, I didn't know I... I thought these were interlopers, I apologize."

Eypór (Sindri)

What does he...

Peter (Soren)

Where are the rest of your friends? Tell us immediately. Where did you come from?

Coal

"Do you not remember me? I am one that escaped the camps not long ago, visited you in the place of dreams. We were on our way to his domain with the others. Did you..."

Peter (Soren)

Where is the camp?

Coal

"We came from a couple of different ones, my lord. I was, -I personally came from the "Ira Alma" the Gracious Bounty. I was with Sil'yal of Strathmann, rescued him, -rescued by him. And I, I joined the faithful... I've been working with you ever since. We've, we've come because we're finally ready to awaken Him. We spoke with you through dreams, beyond the great ocean, and traveled here, because we had found the entrance to the place where he slumbers. You found it. And as you instructed we have come with the children, my lord."

[Ear + ah All + muh] [Sill + Y'All of Strath (rhymes with 'bath') + min]

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I'm gonna to stand behind my cousin and draw my dagger.

Eypór (Sindri)

Don't be rash.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I'm not, that's why you're in front of me.

Kessi (Flygia)

I don't like this guy...

Eypór (Sindri)

I look at....

Kessi (Flygia)

... I growl at him

Eypór (Sindri)

... I look straight at Soren. My lord?...

Eypór (Sindri)

... Why does he keep calling you "My Lord?"

Peter (Soren)

I give everyone a look like I'm really not quite sure and turn back to the guy.

Eypór (Sindri)

Why do you...?

Peter (Soren)

Where are they taking them?

Coal

"To the place of archways, the town of the old gate. In the damned elven tongue, "Et-ya-ca-day-erae." [Eht + yah + cah + day +err + A]

Peter (Soren)

And this is where the nameless one will awaken?

Coal

"Yes. you, you were the one who told us this. Yes."

Eypór (Sindri)

Who is this man? I, I, I ask the prisoner pointing at Soren. Who is this man?

Coal

“He is Lord Soren Arkwright, the carver of dreams.” [Soar + inn Ark + Right]

Eypór (Sindri)

I...

Coal

(muted chuckle) “Your Lord too it seems.”

Eypór (Sindri)

I stare at Soren when he says the last name.

David (laus)

I’m interested by what he was scratching at on his back.

Travis

The man continues to nervously fidget, scratching at his back uncomfortably.

Peter (Soren)

Does he have anything else on him, if we search him?

Travis

Lacking pockets, the man does not have anything on his person, and it would appear that even his shoes have been taken prior to the team’s arrival.

Eypór (Sindri)

Is he in the same state of the people who, the creature, broke out of... no we’re not getting distracted with this. I push the man over so he’s now lying on his back with his hands tied behind his back. And I square myself against Soren, looking straight at him. “What is going on?”

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Do I...

Kaitlin (Sister)

I want, I want to look for any, like he found a doll earlier. At least he said he found a doll earlier.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Claimed.

Kaitlin (Sister)

So I’m gonna go and look for anything related to children.... On the ground I’m going to look for like hair ribbons or... Oh god I rolled a 2. Na, nah.

Travis

While searching through the immediate campsite, Sister Cavernsfall does not discover anything related to children in the area.

Peter (Soren)

Does anyone have any....

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Does, does the name Lord Soren Arkwright mean anything to me now I know his full name? Like...

Travis

That will require a Knowledge: History check.

Peter (Soren)

Also the place of arches? Does anyone have any elven history?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Yeah, I was kind about to ask that, straight after. Like one of doubles. Alright, I'll do, I'll do you first because eurgh, I don't know what you are. 18.

Travis

Rowena feels confident that the name Soren Arkwright is not mentioned in any historical or occult context that she'd ever seen.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Excellent. And...

Travis

However, she was previously unaware that the cult of the Nameless God was active.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Arches, common don't fuck me dice. Oh. Oh. 25.

Travis

el-or-kell-or-rae translates roughly from elven to 'the Old Gateway' and the other phrase

Si Kari Bolandri roughly translates to 'The Gate Village' or 'Place of Arches.' She cannot place the names to a specific location or legend but knows where she might locate such information in a book back at home. Rowena also recalls the camp the human mentioned as being from, The Gracius Bounty, or erah-alma, as being an old mithril mine, or quarry.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Well, I've at least heard the names but I don't, don't know where from. Like those names that just get stuck in your head.

Eypór (Sindri)

Hmm.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I've at least heard of them. I'm, I know a lot of obscure history, and that's not in it.

Eypór (Sindri)

Soren, this man seems to trust you. He seems to worship you. Ask him to guide us to the place of arches, the old archway.

Peter (Soren)

I'd be happy to.

Peter (Soren)

I will lean back to him and "what is your name?"

Coal

"I am Coal."

Peter (Soren)

Coal, and you say that I am your lord.

Coal

"One of-... yes".

Peter (Soren)

How many are there?

Coal

"I begin to question that now. Give me my glasses". He demands

Peter (Soren)

Why?

Coal

"I wish to see you."

Peter (Soren)

Why?

Coal

"I might be making a large mistake".

Eypór (Sindri)

I...

Peter (Soren)

Father, bitch slap him again.

Eypór (Sindri)

I hand... did you say slap him again? I, I, I, I reach out the glasses to you.

Kessi (Flygia)

Don't do it, no...

Peter (Soren)

I put the...

Eypór (Sindri)

No no, I'm giving Soren the glasses. 'Do your own dirty work, Lord.'

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I...

Peter (Soren)

I throw them into the woods, as far as I can.

Coal

"What have I done to deserve this?"

Travis

He sneers at you through yellowed cracked teeth.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

You're a lying sack of crap, to be honest. If you were straight with us from the start, might have trusted you, but kinda don't. Also you're, you're worshipping like some dark evil lord, umm, kinda puts you on the bad side of us.

Coal

"This world is full of pain and suffering, and it needs to be destroyed. Sin is all around us! You see it every day! You surely cannot deny this."

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

No, it's great.

Coal

"What beings could accept this as normal?"

Eypór (Sindri)

The sin comes from within friend.

Coal

“So we must be remade! As you’ve said, we all carry the burden of sin, we have all seen true evil within ourselves. We must quench the flames of sin and drown the world so that we all may be reborn anew, free of evil. Free of suffering.”

Peter (Soren)

I’m gonna grab him, and lift him off his feet. I’m going to keep holding him with one hand, and pull out the Dark Lantern with the other hand. I’m going ask him...

Peter (Soren)

(threatening) “Have you seen anything like this before? Do you know what this is?”

Coal

(spit) “I can't see much of anything, my Lord... (snide) If that is you.”

Peter (Soren)

But you can still feel right?

Coal

“Yes”.

Peter (Soren)

This, little, lantern of mine. It has a special ability. Now it doesn’t do much when you’re in this state. but my friends here would be more than happy to kill you and then, frankly, this becomes quite potent. I can bring you back for as long, and as often as I like, and it will be excruciating.

Travis

Soren may now roll an intimidation check.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Can I opt to be intimidated by this?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I’m just genuinely just gonna stand behind my cousin and just like to put my hand, like in his and like *This is a bit too far for me.*

Travis

Witnessing the darkness lurking just beneath Soren’s calm demeanor, Father Westpike, Lady Granitepike, Flygia the Witch, and Sister Cavernsfall, must now all roll sanity checks.

Eypór (Sindri)

Oh boy.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Oh boy.

Peter (Soren)

I got a 16 plus 2.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Phew. Natural 20

Travis

Rowena Granitepike maintains a safe distance while a cold chill goes down the spine of the other three companions. They gain 5 stress.

Coal

(scared) "I -I... What, what do you want to know? I, I'll tell you what I know, just... let me experience a natural death, and don't bring me back."

Peter (Soren)

"How's your sense of direction?... Do you need to see to be able to lead us to the place of arches?"

Coal

"Yes."

Eypór

Cough God fucking dammit.

Hem

Don't die!

Eypór (Sindri)

So you will lead us to the place of Arches?

Coal

"If you desire it. Yes."

Eypór (Sindri)

Did they...

David (Ilaus)

Yes we need it, come on.

Eypór (Sindri)

Did they take the children to this place, we never asked.

Coal

(smiling) "Of course."

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Can I insight that?

Eypór (Sindri)

And you're going to sacrifice the children to this nameless god?

Coal

(smiling) "Yes, but you're already too slow. Their blood will be at the final gate and their souls will be lost by now."

Eypór (Sindri)

Well that just means you're gonna have to march a lot faster than you set, than you were going to do before. and I start like mushing the crowd, the group. Oh god no, we need to rest. Argh!

Eypór (Sindri)

...A quick prayer of healing for some wound closure and then march on? Or...

David (laus)

Yeah.

Eypór (Sindri)

... do we take this mad man...

Kaitlin (Sister)

Do I get...

Eypór (Sindri)

... on his word and assume we are already too late?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Yeah can...

Kaitlin (Sister)

I'm never going to assume I am too late until I see the corpses of these children.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Can I...?

Peter (Soren)

And he will take us where we need to go.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Can I do an insight on that like "It's too late, how long we have left" thing? or is he just bullshitting us to...to be an asshole?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

15... Shit. He believes it, but I'm not sure that I fully believe him. I won't, however, mention that, I'll just keep that in the back of my mind. *I mean if you want to take a bit of a break that's entirely up to you guys but... the thing is...*

David (laus)

I wanna get going, that's my son there.

Kessi (Flygia)

Do all of your healing spells take time to work?

Eypór (Sindri)

The best most potent one I can have, I can use right now will take 10 minutes. 10 minutes of concentration.

Kessi (Flygia)

Ok, but most of us look pretty damaged. Especially laus. Could I--

Eypór (Sindri)

Again I prefer if we use the, the prayer of healing. Please, just 10 minutes.

Kaitlin (Sister)

Yeah. 10 minutes... can, can you do it while you walk? Can you concentrate and walk at the same time?

Eypór (Sindri)

No. it takes full concentration, I cannot take in my surroundings while I do it.

Kessi (Flygia)

I would turn into a horse but it feels like it'd be a waste.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Then, then we should probably wait cause if we go in there half cocked without... with all of us like bleeding all over the place. We're not going to do anyone any good.

Eypór (Sindri)

Please.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

We should take the 10 minutes.

Kaitlin (Sister)

10 minutes, 10 minutes is better than an hour of healing. So let's just do the 10 minutes and let's get going.

Eypór (Sindri)

I kneel down holding my hammer like, head down in front of me, and I start mumbling prayers.

Eypór (Sindri)

You guys have 10 minutes.

Eypór (Sindri)

(in prayer, mumbling in Icelandic) Lord of Light, Pelor, please lend us some of your strength to rescue these children. [make up a few lines of prayer for healing, mumbled. I'll fade it out.]

Kaitlin (Sister)

I am on guard because there is a scary 3, now 2 eyed thing in the forest.

Peter (Soren)

He did say he has to...

David (Ilaus)

I want to try look for the, that doll... -Soren has it, right... Hm... I'll look for things relating to the children around the campfire.

Travis

As Flygia turns her back on the team her white coat begins to shift as her body returns to tiefling form.

Peter (Soren)

And he did say he needs his glasses to lead us right? So should I find them in these 10 minutes?

Kessi (Flygia)

Didn't Sindri give them to you?

Peter (Soren)

Can I perceive where I threw them?... I supposed it'd be in poor taste to use the lantern near all these bodies... But (amused) -oh... there they are. Perfect. I have the glasses.

David (laus)

Right. Guys, I see some smaller footsteps over here. They're trailing off to the east a bit.

Eypór (Sindri)

Hmmm.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

A few notes on elves, by the way, the biggest faction of high elves is called the Tural empire. They're known to enslave so called 'lesser' races in the name of the greater good. They claim to do battle against great evils and will requisition, kidnap, steal, and massacre in the name of combatting those evils. They're pretty miffed about the whole Darklands incident, which took a portion of their empire and put it in the hands of the Drow & undead, and I feel like they prolly have a soft spot in their hateful little hearts for the Nameless God too. They've been rowing a lot of late with the human Jensla expanse, the um... a barbarian horde. (quietly) The more I think about it, I'm pretty sure that the Gracius Bounty was over-mined and abandoned at least 150 years ago. Yeah...

(Jensla = Jen + Slau (like 'slaughter'))

Eypór (Sindri) [in Icelandic, no longer mumbling]

Blessed father, the sun, (in English) please give us the strength to march on.

Travis

As the ritual concluded, a faint glow surrounded the group, mending torn flesh, reducing swollen bruises, and easing their pain.

Kaitlin (Sister)

That's exactly what I needed!

David (laus)

Me to!

Eypór (Sindri)

That's far from what I needed. So yeah...

Peter (Soren)

Thank you father.

Eypór (Sindri)

I..

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Think...

Eypór (Sindri)

Sorry, sorry.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

No, you go.

Eypór (Sindri)

Everybody, it can target up to 6 people, there's only 6. I count the people in the party.

David (laus)

There's 7 including Coal.

Eypór (Sindri)

I'm not healing Coal.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Fuck that guy.

Eypór (Sindri)

You seem fully healed laus. I was afraid you seemed to get hit pretty hard and same...
[with you Soren]

David (laus)

No I've had worse.

Eypór (Sindri)

And same with you Soren.

Peter (Soren)

Don't worry about me.

Eypór (Sindri)

What do you know of the name Sil'yal? Sil'yal of Strathmann.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Aye.

Coal

"Sil'yal rescued me from the Gracious Bounty, after I saved his life."

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Gracious Bounty, that's been abandoned for years. What were you doing there?

Coal

"I was working there, under the "generous" conditions of our elven captors. It was barbarous cruelty, even by their standards. Sil'Yal was an agent of the Silent Clan, captured during one of the elven slaving raids. He'd gotten too weak to work. I managed to cover for him a few times. He and his allies helped me escaped, and I've been faithful in kind ever since. I've always wondered what lies beyond death, and he had the answer. I respect that. There are so many questions that--"

Eypór (Sindri)

How long ago is, did you meet Sil'Yal?

Coal

"Maybe, 4 years? Much has happened since. It feels like a lifetime ago."

Eypór (Sindri)

No, Sil'yal is dead. He has to be dead.

Coal

"Impossible."

Eypór (Sindri)

No, you humans only last maybe 100 years under good conditions. He has to be dead.

Coal

(sneering) "Then it clearly hasn't been 100 years."

Travis

Coal sneers at Father Westpike.

Eypór (Sindri)

I spent 100 years in the crag, in the darkness, after I lost Sil'Yal. He can't be alive.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I, when I left Strathmann, he was missing. It wasn't that long ago cous. I know of him.

Eypór (Sindri)

What?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

You know that unpleasantness I had with, with Renaxe?

Eypór (Sindri)

Yes?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

It's his best friend. He went missing just before I left there.

Eypór (Sindri)

Sil'Yal?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Yeah.

Eypór (Sindri)

Human, dark hair, maybe about... and I tiptoe pushing my hand up... this high?

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

I'm going to put my hand above his because I'm slightly taller. Yeah, he was more like up here.

Eypór (Sindri)

It's...

Coal

"He lives, and very well I might add. I was with him until I, well, we, fell behind. We were looking for food, hunting, and we... well you saw what happened."

Eypór (Sindri)

This can't be. The... hu... I'm sorry

Coal

"You can see him when the world ends." He smiles. "It's not long off."

Eypór (Sindri)

I was not expecting to see him at my end, but I guess maybe a day sooner will not be worse. I've, I wish to see Sil'Yal again, but, you are speaking of a madman, not the man I knew. And, he can't have been in Strathmann's Hold. He, he died...

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

He was. No.

Coal

"None share his name, and he did not die. Let my freedom serve as proof! His sobriety of mind should also not be called to question! He is one of the most holy men I have met, as holy as any of flesh and blood can be. Do not besmirch his name by calling his sanity into question for he is wise, calm, and collected."

Eypór (Sindri)

Come from a man who speaks of cleansing the world through fire and destruction, I believe him to be as mad as you if you call him sane.

Coal

"I wish for a good world. A pure one, free of sin and death. I am a seeker of he who will bring this to pass! I am a servant of the Nameless god, and I shall not rest until the world is made proper."

David (laus)

And people say there's no problem with religion.

Eypór (Sindri)

(chuckle)

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

How does, how does your lord Soren Arkwright fit into this? And I'm gonna keep an eye on Soren as he answers.

Coal

"He is the one who is set our plans into motion. He is the one who discovered a path to the resting place of the nameless god."

David (laus)

How?

Coal

"Ask him. He rarely shared his secrets with us."

Eypór (Sindri)

Well he seems to know your personality.

David (laus)

"Well?" I ask Soren.

Peter (Soren)

I'm as confused as any of you.

David (laus)

Do you know anything about slumbering gods or villages with gates?

Hem (Rowena)

I'm going to be watching him intently.

Peter (Soren)

Truly I don't. But I think it would be wise before we move on that you keep a very close eye on me, because my brain, well, it might not be functioning quite correctly. But truly, I don't have any knowledge of who this man is or why he seems to know me.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

He's telling the truth, at least he thinks he is.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

You said you want someone to keep an eye on ya, do you not trust yourself?

Peter (Soren)

No, I haven't for many years now.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

How come?

Eypór (Sindri)

I think this is a conversation we can have on the road.

Peter (Soren)

Indeed.

Eypór (Sindri)

Let us tie the mad man up in a way that he can still guide us.

David (Iaus)

Which one of us is going to hold the end of his rope? I'm retying this so he can walk...

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

No way! Too much responsibility, not me.

David (Iaus)

I'm gonna suggest that it's someone that's... got some anchorage behind them.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Are you looking at one of us dwarves?

David (Iaus)

Maybe.

Eypór (Sindri)

Sister Cavernsfall? I hand the uh, the rope to Sister Cavernsfall.

Kaitlin (Sister)

Alright. I am a 4ft little dwarf but yeah I'll hold it.

Kessi (Flygia)

A fine task for a sturdy dwarf!

Eypór (Sindri)

You have the power of a god behind you, do not underestimate yourself.

Kaitlin (Sister)

I am also wearing very heavy clothing, chainmail, and a shield.

Hem (*Speaking as Rowena*)

Yup. And you're a kick ass woman, so, you know, you've got this.

Kaitlin (Sister)

Alright let's go, let's go get some kids.