


Investigation Notes

Location: *Further into the Kurai Forest*

Itinerary

- ❖ Try not to die.
- ❖ Help Mr. Davenport to the tribe as quickly and painlessly as possible.
- ❖ Stay focused, no side work. Continue keeping a detailed report as to any information we discover.
- ❖ Keep an eye on our team members for further offensive issues.
- ❖ Really, try not to die.

Notes

- ❖ The townsfolk seem very pleased with us over the return of the girl. Freshened our supplies before making our new plan.
- ❖ Someone found a map in the Kenku camp, it looks like a type of coded script. I'm handy with those... but there's nothing to compare these symbols to. **There is a Star, a Triangle, and a Square. Different phases of the moon.**
- ❖ **The Triangle.** We went to this place on the map with extreme caution. It appears to be a place along a worn path through the trees. Azandar and some of the others noticed lookout platforms in the trees, likely for ambushing whoever, or whatever, used that trail. No signs of life.
- ❖ **The Star.** Seems uneventful so far. We've walked for miles... It's exhausting...travelinnn.....
- ❖ Saw a strange creature with a elk's head and a man's body approach us before I passed out. It felt like I was being drugged by my own sleeping powders.
- ❖ We are now in a new camp. This one appears strange and primitive. The creature that led us here was apparently human, just in a frightful disguise. This village appears to be populated by these strange peoples.
 - *Did we finally make it to the tribe?? How did we get here? Did these strange men bring us after we fell asleep?*



Investigation Notes

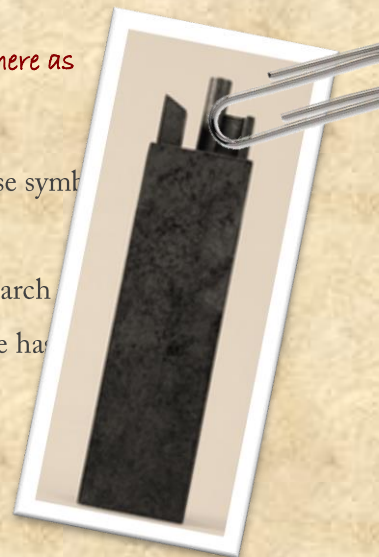
- ❖ We were taken to the chief leader named Hiwa-ki. He is very old, but seems nice enough. Mr. Davenport is extremely excited to be here. That must be a good sign that we made it.
 - They've invited us to stay and learn with them, under the condition we offer protection. Of course there is a catch, but what can we do? Mr. Luther will be happy.
- ❖ In the center of their village is an ancient coliseum of smooth stone. In the center is a strange and seemingly out-of-place totem of different material. Possibly the totem of Hateshigenai?
 - Must point it out to Mr. Davenport later today. I'll approach it later and make some sketches.
 - Noticed many of the men in the village spar down below, training ground perhaps?
- ❖ These people don't seem to use magic to a great degree. They have a good deal of reverence for it, but seem more interested with nature. Completely unlike the Kenku we fought.
- ❖ Apparently they are at odds with Kenku in the forest, which are attacking their other villages, keeping hostages, and forcing the soldiers out with their magic. This is what they want help with.
 - We have to fight more of those disgusting things?? I will see if I can stay with James here.
 - Sigh... I need to leave with the team. Such misfortune.
- ❖ In the afternoon I'll take a trip down to the totem. Armella and Hikaru wish to join me. Thank goodness she was with me, I still don't feel safe around him. But I may not get another chance to study it if I can't stay with Mr. Davenport.
 - BLOODY HELL.

Something came over me—it felt like what paralysis magic the Kenku used, but... different. More horrifying. I wasn't myself. I felt power, I felt, was it hate? Just the urge to do battle? I'm never like that. I... I started attacking Miss Mella, swinging at her wildly. I didn't feel in control, and none of my hits landed.

But I saw a look in her eyes, the same look that I felt I had. She swung her morning star at me, and almost smashed my head in. I think I remember Mr. Karu shouting at us... I heard gunshots. It felt like such a bad dream. I'm shocked no one was injured—or died—from that.

It felt like an eternity, but suddenly, we felt ourselves again. I scrambled away from there as quickly as I could. I dare not return to study it further.

- ❖ Happy to leave the village after yesterday. We set out to the first of the moon phase symbols on the map: the 3/4 phase moon.
- ❖ Rodrick thinks it is wise to be noisy, to draw attention to us so we don't have to search through the forest? Or he's being careless. I often opt for stealth, but then again he has secrets it seems. Perhaps he has a trick up his sleeve.



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I have to keep this separate from Mr. Luther. I can't bear to report these things.

What bloody horrors again. I thought things were looking up, but gracious Tarj almighty. I'm still shaking a few hours later as I write this, and I feel like I'll be catching my breath forever. This was beyond the worst things I've ever seen.

As much as I'm not a fan of the fellow, I still can't scrub my mind of seeing Rodrick being peppered with crossbow bolts. I heard the whistling, but it seemed to come from *everywhere*. When they struck him... He... Ugh, it makes me sick to think of, it was like watching a small child being struck.

Blessings to the glories that be that they didn't sail right through his poor body. Thinking back now, it's a miracle he survived. I suppose they held the blood in long enough for Thorin to assist him...

I still can't make sense of it. It feels like a nightmare. At the time, my mind just faded to silence. Everything felt in slow motion. Mr. Karu—was---was that really him? It feels horrid trying to write this down, it's like it makes it more real.

...He was trying to be so nice to me at the village, to make up for what happened aboard the ship. I let my guard down again, for Tarj sake!! I could just rip my hair out. Is this really who he is? *What he is?*

When he saw Rodrick go down... I just heard him *scream*. A scream like I've never heard before. It felt like it cut right through Terra. Not a second later, sparks—*lightning??*—flickered across the ground. I couldn't move.

I turned... I can't... I can't get that out of my head, either. It's almost...worse.

Mr. Karu, he looked for a moment, just a moment, like the scrawny, scared little kid he is, bent in horror, and anguish, and rage. It broke my heart. But he... he looked up. His eyes were glowing with a fierce light. His teeth suddenly stretched like razors from his mouth. His hair and fur stood like prickles all over him, and he contorted, grew, lightning spilling out of his skin. His scream turned into a roar. His face became a maw of vengeance, his body gigantic, like a great wolf out of a folktale. His tail... tails... wreathed in electricity like a storm.

As the Kenku came, leaping over the bushes and out of trees like roaches, the others fought. All I could do was hide...I tried to fight, I really did. But I was frozen. I couldn't land a shot. I was no help to anyone. Not like these monsters could stand long against... *That*.

All I could make out were the sounds of shotgun fire, cawing, cracking and flame, ripping and tearing and growling to shake the forest.

Finally it seemed to stop. I could hear a new voice... I chanced a look. That large orc... Ruck, was there now. He seemed bloodied but upright. I'm not sure what miracle Thorin was able to pull, it was unbelievable Rodrick—he--Ruck—was standing, trying to get Hikaru's attention to show him he was okay. He didn't look very good, though...

Investigation Notes

But... Hikaru was still gone. All I could see was that raging feral monster. No, he was in there. He was trapped. Everyone stood back. Was this a curse on him? *What kind of magic could do this to a person?*

I don't know how I did it. I don't know why I did it. I just... I had enough. I wanted this to stop. I'm not sure what came over me, but I went to him. I almost didn't mind being near Ruck, I didn't mind looking up into the eyes of... *it*. I could still see the pain deep in them, swallowed in the madness.

I told him to come back out, told Hikaru to come back to us. My fists were shaking so bad. I thought I'd collapse if I breathed. I wanted to throw up. He... he did though. The magic stopped. It shrank. It released him. He looked so *exhausted*, so small. Ruck went to him, even though he was still recovering. *They really are like a family, aren't they?*

I think Ms. Trident had more sense than me at the time. Perhaps it was all her years in the military... She could cut through the feelings. She didn't get weighed down with emotions. She demanded answers. Part of me wanted them, too. *I still do*. Too many questions... But... I just couldn't bear to discuss it then.

I saw her pointing her gun at them, like they were... *evil*. Heathens. How *dare* she? But, is... isn't that what I thought? What I *think*? I don't think I know anymore. I *knew her fear*. I knew she meant well, just like... like all of the paladins of the church, *right*? Who could look at *that* magic and say that was... is... *normal*? *Safe*? *Orderly*? It's just *chaos*.

I just felt sick with worry, that they'd have an abrupt ending to their reunion from hot metal and steam. *Ending their family*. I... Then I... heard her rack her shotgun... The smell of burning feathers and flesh and blood hung heavy in the air. I felt so sick, I had to stop her.

Mr. Zander stepped in as I did, too. I don't think I could ever thank him enough. Perhaps he understands them all, better than the rest of us. Both of them... He was in the military like Ms. Trident. Well... at least, for his country. He's... an outcast too, of sorts, isn't he?

I was glad I wasn't alone. *I'm glad no one's dead*. I'm glad there's no more Kenku here. I'm still so confused.

I feel like I must write all this, I need to, to make sense of it later. Although, I'm not sure I ever will.

