Going Underground

We are likely to away for several days so Elder Saelin suggests we see Brannick the Quartermaster and Garran the Blacksmith to see if they have supplies that can help us.

We decide to head out in the early morning light. As we see the woods in the distance, Bran is at the gates recording who is outside of the settlement. Folk have been told to stay nearby. Bran adds our names to list of those who have ventured outside.

We head north to the trees following a now familiar path. We recognise the stones and the shallow valleys, but roots now break through where there used to be only snow. Some have split the ground and run for a while, other appear above ground and vanish again quickly.

Aethlwynn studies the new roots and determines this is new growth is likely a maximum of seven days old. The roots don't seem to have one source so she thinks that whatever links them must lie well beneath the surface. This time the roots leave us alone. We can hear birds and animals but not as many as normal.

As we enter the woods the wind drops and our footsteps seem loud even though the canopy is not silent . Further into the trees something small moves through the undergrowth, and birds sing quietly. Aethswold finds the route to the collapse in the ground after a little disagreement with Sebastien. When we reach the hole in the ground we find the opening is now much larger and that the hillside has been pulled apart by huge roots. Several have grown large enough to split revealing fibres within. The roots growth has revealed stonework, cut and placed not natural rock and a passage into the hillside. Aethlwynn examines the roots and confirms they have opened the earth and exploited cracks to reveal the passage. She quietly confesses to Aethswold that she's scared. He comforts his sister saying that he will look after her and that they've been through worse.

Salus casts Light and can see that the passage is mostly clear. It's dusty and stone fragment cover the floor. We can't see any movement inside. Sebastien and Guru check the archway leading into the passage looking for inscriptions. They see that ihas been made from worked stone, but can't see much else.

As we head into the passage way a root shifts causing a thin stream of dust and rock falls injuring Guru. The collapse hasn't sealed the door way, but we need to be careful. While Salus tends to the wounded Aethlwynn checks to see if there items that can prop up the doorway and finds a number of rocks and branches. Our stronger comrades spend some time to brace the entrance way and we head into the tunnel. The passage opens into a bare chamber with no writing or decoration. Nothing to suggests a tomb, but it is silent. Although we can see roots at the entrance we can see none ahead. We see no hazards in the chamber so Sebastien checks the door to the south and finds it's not locked or trapped. Guru opens the door and sees a long stone passage leading to a T-junction. Sebastien sees the stone work continues. Aethlwynn notices that most of the passage was

excavated through the bed rock and then faced in places with stone additions. We notice that the stone work is similar to the collapsed tunnel on the eastern coast and that the the construction is very old and built to last.

Sebastien checks and opens the door to the east finding an unremarkable long shallow chamber with recesses in the walls. Faint black marks show where lamps once burned. Aethlwynn thinks people spent a lot of time in here and it may have been guard room, but she can't really tell. We can't see any roots here and continue to explore. Sebastien checks and opens sever doors until we find another chamber. Inside we find a metal tool which has collapsed against the wall. We can see other items here that were once usable, but all are now ruined. Guru gets the feeling that the tunnel system is older than Moonrest itself. On the western wall we notice a fitted stone inspection panel. Guru tries to remove it but can't, but Sebastien removes the panel to reveal a narrow service passage. It runs for about 10 feet before a roof collapse has sealed it off.

The corridor to the right was been broken into by the roots. Several of the roots are cracked and dry but some are still fresh. We can tell that they haven't grown along the corridor, they've broken through the walls. Guru moves up and casts Ignition at one of the roots. Several shudder of them shudder and retreat. Aethlwynn looks at the dead roots but cant see anything about the tunnel that could have killed them. Guru examines the roots and confirms the roots are newer than the masonry having broken through from the outside. He sees that the damage is newer than the original stonework. Sebastien sees that one thinner root is making small movements whenever someone steps heavily nearby. We kill off the root after a short combat, then we see that the south bound passage way is blocked with rubble, however the north bound passage looks clear. Sebastien finds another door leading into a broad chamber which looks to have been used extensively. The chamber contains a large cylinder in the center with several smaller cylinders around the outside of the chamber. There are are three channels running to the central cylinder, all contain dried residue. Roots have broken into the chamber, but don't seem threatening. Aethlwynn tries to work out what the residue is but can't. Sebastien notices that the mineral staining is different between the three channels and definitely all carried water at some point. Guru examines the central cylinder and thinks its a distributor and that water would flow in through one channel and out through another. He thinks it still workable but a lever is missing and the mechanism seems seized with mineral deposit. We did find a corroded bronze lever head in a previous room so Sebastien hands it to Guru who tries to make the ancient collar move. Nothing happens.

To be continued.....

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