

THE CLIFFS - EARLY MORNING - 9th CENTURY DENMARK.

RIM and WORLD are pattering around on the cliff's edge while BEED flips through a stack of pages, muttering and pacing around the tall stack of firewood placed in the middle of the cliff landing.

A cold breeze runs through the two goblins. RIM, fidgeting with a pocket knife attached to his tunic's left side, stares out into the sea. The waves are choppy, foam leaks out onto the beach and slowly retreats. A lone seagull croaks in the distance.

BEED approaches the funeral pyre and tucks the manuscript stack on her side. She frowns.

BEED

I think it needs to be bigger.

WORLD turns to look at BEED. Her hat covers most of her face and dampens the effect of the early morning's strong winds picking up at this time of year on her long, messy dark hair. Strands like oil slick tendrils stick to her neck.

WORLD

I don't know how much bigger it can get, BEED. We built it according to the last version of the schematic you gave us.

BEED

(interrupting)

And I think you've scattered the treasure a little too carelessly on the left side.

WORLD sighs and walks up to BEED, standing between her and the pyre.

WORLD

Okay. Well. They are not supposed to be there in the first place, though, remember?

BEED gives WORLD an unimpressed glare.

WORLD

Didn't most of the accounts say that those present at the funeral buried the treasure deep in the earth?

BEED

(mockingly)

Okay! Didn't we also agree that because you and RIM failed to find said buried treasure that those accounts might be wrong?

WORLD sighs and rubs his forehead. He looks back up at BEED.

WORLD

What is this really about, BEED? Because this, in your own words, was supposed to be about "accurately getting a sense of Beowulf's final moments."

WORLD mimics the quotes with two furry clawed paws and then points to the research notes BEED brought with her, tucked tightly to her side. The schematic of the pyre, placed dutifully first in the stack, is creasing at the edges where BEED's arm fidgets nervously.

BEED is about to reply when a single rain drop lands on WORLD's cheek. Her eyeline follows it and her eyes widen.

BEED

(sternly)

We have to hurry. Get the rope. Here.

BEED hands WORLD the research notes and lifts her black robes, walking towards the hastily constructed wooden platform. Raising one of her legs up and grasping at a longer post for leverage, she looks back at WORLD.

BEED

Tell RIM that it is time.

WORLD, limply holding BEED's meticulously detailed drawing of Beowulf's funeral, whistles at RIM's direction.

RIM anxiously pockets his knife and grabs a pile of thick coiled rope from the ground. The rain continues in earnest and coats the dry cliffside landing, darkening RIM's path back to the pyre.

BEED climbs into the small bed-like structure and takes one last look at WORLD and RIM. One of her hands clutches her leather-worn wizard's hat.

BEED

Remember, you need to write down

everything I say from the moment you finish tying me down. Don't miss a single word!

WORLD
(nodding)
We're on it.

RIM
No worries, boss!

A light flashes along the horizon and the crackle of thunder follows it unceremoniously. The rainfall gets harsher and the wind starts shifting the thin tree line of the forest exit behind the rocky landing.

RIM quickly climbs the pyre and gets to work on covering BEED with the rope. Skittering around on four paws, RIM wraps thick braids around splintering wood chunks of various sizes. One of his claws gets caught in the frayed edge of the last little bit of rope. RIM curses and uses his pocket knife to cut himself out.

Before RIM can climb out of the pyre, BEED tuts at him and gestures at her hat with her chin pointed up.

Moving slowly at her side, RIM removes the hat from her and brushes a few dust motes off of it. BEED nods approvingly before looking up at the sky. Rain drops accumulate on her face and she blinks a few times in frustration.

RIM sits, crouched next to her, for a few more moments watching her blink. He moves the hat to his side and gently extends a paw to wipe the rain out of her eyes and cheeks.

BEED bristles at the contact. RIM immediately picks up her hat and scurries out of her sight back to WORLD's side.

WORLD
Is the rope tight enough? How does it feel?

BEED
(yelling, muffled)
It's good!

WORLD
(rifling through the research notes)
Alright, well, ready when you are!

The thunder roils through the sky again and a proper storm pushes through the scene. In the silence, the forest rustles. The waves, now emboldened, hit the side of the cliff with a

strong resounding crash. The pyre wood takes on a strange metallic sheen under the early morning gray sky.

For a long while, BEED says nothing. RIM begins pacing nervously five minutes into her silence. WORLD, as if expecting her to pipe up at any moment, keeps a keen eye on the research notes protected from the rain, tucked into his cloak sleeves.

BEED stares at the sky. The clouds hang above her, mottles of grey and black, creating familiar shapes. She thinks she sees a sword, a long spindly arm with sinews hanging from the top muscles. Lightning strikes, she blinks by instinct or out of fear, she doesn't quite know yet. The storm feels deafening inside the pyre.

WORLD

(yelling)

BEED, are you okay? What's happening over there?

BEED feels her sweaty palms catch on some of the wood under her. Her scalp itches.

BEED

(yelling)

Light it!

WORLD

What?!

BEED

(louder)

LIGHT IT!

WORLD

(yelling)

BEED, WE ARE NOT LIGHTING IT! FORGET IT!

RIM

BOSS, JUST COME OUT! I'LL CUT YOU OUT!

BEED

WORLD, TRUST ME! JUST LIGHT IT! THE STORM WILL STOP THE FIRE BEFORE IT GETS DANGEROUS!

WORLD looks at RIM. He finds a look of utter fear. An uncertainty washes over both of them. With a sigh, WORLD reaches into his cloak pocket and pulls out a small piece of

flintstone. He nods at RIM, who takes out his steel pocket knife. Approaching the pyre, WORLD tries to speak some sense into BEED for a final time.

WORLD

BEED, this is taking it too far. It is not worth this. Do not do this!

BEED smiles to herself. She flexes her hands and cracks a few of the joints.

BEED

I'm doing it. I'm doing it. Don't worry. It will be fine.

RIM takes the flintstone from WORLD's paws as WORLD imploringly looks up at BEED's laying form. With a short click, the pyre is lit.

The two goblins return to their place a few feet away. WORLD deliberately turns away from the pyre. He draws his cloak into himself. RIM nervously gnaws at the corners of BEED's hat.

The fire grows throughout the structure and fast. Despite the wind, the rainfall, the thundering cliffside waves, BEED's pyre begins to glow.

BEED smells the burning wood and smiles broadly. She coughs and squirms as the fumes penetrate from the outside and into the center of the structure.

She watches as the frayed end of the rope, coiled dexterously by RIM so that it wraps around one of her boots, begins to catch on fire.

Turning her eyes back to the sky, BEED watches as sparks join the dark clouds above. The rain has soaked her hair through. She wrinkles her nose and laughs. She smells awful.

BEED

(whispering)

I'm doing it.

Feeling the warmth crawling up her legs and nipping at the worn material of her robes, BEED concentrates on her breathing.

She hears nothing. For a long while.

A beat.

And BEED hears a dog barking in the distance.

BEED

Do you hear that dog?

Miserable and wet-furred, WORLD and RIM stare in their respective directions. NORTH and SOUTH, the illumination of the pyre colors their horizons red. They do not react to BEED's question.

As the roar of the fire reaches the center of the pyre, a crackling sound echoes into the distance.

WORLD's back fur bristles. He closes his eyes.

T H E

E N D.