

Run in

By Digital Doom

The heat was overpowering. The pressure from the humidity and heat pressing down on every fabric of his soul. Sweat pouring out of every pore. He smacked a mosquito off of his face, while slashing through the underbrush of this hot jungle.

“Slapshot, how are we coming? Are we getting close to the safehouse yet?” Blade asked.

“We are close to the compound. Should be about a click.” Slapshot replied.

He groaned, this was going to be a long day. “Let’s have a break. I need some food.”

The group quit moving and came together in a small clearing. The team and a few support people that they hired for this movement, all circled around a small pile of gear. Everyone pulled out some water and some UCAS MRE’s. Blade looks around, Scarlet, Fang, and Slapshot were all sitting in a circle talking about the run that they had done. One of the locals gave some water to the engineer that the team extracted.

“We have a click left to get to the safehouse. I am figuring it will take over an hour because of having to cut a path to the main route to the compound.” Scarlet said.

“What are the Venezuelians going to say about us cutting their jungle?” asked Blade.

Scarlet replied, “I doubt very much, I made sure they were well compensated for looking the other way.”

“How are your spells holding up Scarlet?” Blade asked.

“They are fine. I am tired, but holding. Noone should be following us. If they do, the spirits will warn us.”

“Hey Fang, have you noticed anything?” Blade asked.

Fang looked up from his bagged meal, “Nada boss. I haven’t smelled anything.” his canine teeth poking through his lips. His doglike eyes glowing with pride.

“Something doesn’t feel right. I don’t have any idea what it could be, but something is wrong. When we get going again, keep a good watch.” Blade warned.

Everyone nodded and finished eating. They packed up their gear and started moving toward the safehouse location.

Fang took the lead again, changing into a large wolf as he pounded into the jungle.

Within minutes the group was covered in sweat, drenching through their clothing and making everything wet and miserable. The heat was radiating off of the fawna, and the humidity was rapidly climbing. It seemed like it was going to rain again.

As they were cutting through some brush, there is a short bark and a thump then whimper. Blade stops the group and starts talking over their comms. "Fang, what's going on?"

Silence met him on the comm. A static and crackle that should not be happening was in his ears. Then there is a gurgling sound, then nothing. Blade starts yelling frantically, "Fang! Fang! Where are you? What is going on? Fang!"

Still silence. Dreck, what the frag was going on?

"Scarlet, can you find anything out?"

Her elvish body went limp as she laid down and went into astral space. The first thing she noticed is all the life in the area, it is almost overpowering. A slight feeling of unease crept through her as she started floating toward Fang's last known location. She would know that wolf anywhere, so she was looking for him anywhere. Two of her spirits following her closely.

She first notices traces of Fang across the ground. Then she saw a blurry, dark mass that was so much like Fang. She was thinking he was dead. Scarlet flew back to her body only to realize there is something wrapping around her legs as everyone else is looking out for threats. As it tightens around her legs, she jumps back into her body and instantly feels pain. She screams.

Hearing the scream, Blade and Slapshot both pull their pistols and look at Scarlet. She is being drug away by a vine. She is casting fireballs at the vines over and over as it is dragging her away from the group.

Blade grabs his machete and runs at the vines, swinging down from overhead toward the vines. His blade connects with the vines, a spurt of red flies through the air as his arm pulls away. There is a screaming sound coming from the treeline.

Scarlet throws another fireball and then passes out, her body jerking and twitching from the magic flowing through her body. Both of her spirits materialize on and start attacking the vines. More vines wrap around the spirits and start dragging them in the same direction of Scarlet was being dragged away.

Blade readies his machete again and Snapshot starts shooting the vines. A moment later there is a light green mist that covers the area, making the air look foggy. Blade and Snapshot both started seeing colors pulling off of everything in sight. Then the colors started swirling around and round, like a colorful tornado, blinding them from everything they could see normally. After a little while later, the colors settled down and everything went black for these two.

Blade stood up and shook his head, getting the cotton out. Feeling like he was hungover, he squints his eyes and looks around. Both he and Slapshot were there, along with about a third of the help. The package was still there as well. Only the magically active, his friends included were missing.

Blade and Slapshot both recovered and used stim patches. Then they loaded up their weapons and started to follow the drag marks. It looked as if Scarlet was drug quickly after they passed out.

They followed the marks without a word, and found nothing but some blood. No clothes, no body, nothing. The plants in this area looked a little funny, large bulbous flowers on the verge of opening, and vines coming off of them. Out of curiosity, Blade took out his knife and walked over to one of the plants. He cut the vine, it spewed red blood, the plant screamed and jumped up. The flower opened and came down on his head, ripping it off.

Slapshot saw this and backed off. There was no helping Blade after that. He had to get the package to the Johnson so the team's death wouldn't be in vein.

He regrouped with the package and the help and made it to the safehouse, where he handed off the package, and sent a report of the plants to the shadow boards to warn other runners of the danger.