Sidebar

Water sources like this spring are common all over the world of Pangea. Sometimes a foreign body contaminates a source, causing the local populace to get ill. This is an extreme case of that.

"Um, Omara?" Vik asks with a hesitant tone. Eyeing the spring, his mind wanders to all the possible problems. "How exactly are we supposed to fix this? Who knows what might be wrong."

"And that's exactly why we have to try!" Omara strikes a heroic pose. "Whatever is poisoning the spring has to be close by. Otherwise, it would be tainting more than just this spring, yeah? So, we start close."

Eryk, lumbering dwarf he is, makes his way to the spring. He kneels down and scoops up some of the water, much to the frostmoths' dismay. Eryk brings his hand to his face, sniffing the brackish water.

"Bleck! This smells like rust! I bet something metallic is in there." Eryk wipes off his hand before returning to the group. "It smells awful. Like old iron and… something acrid."

Vik sighs, knowing what needs to be done. "If we rest, I can gain the knowledge of a spell that will let us breathe underwater. Unfortunately, that won't stop us from getting sick from whatever is in it."

"Well, with that ring Lady Skinforger sold me, I can bolster our defenses if I heal us, and I have some long-lasting healing magic I can spend on this." Allura twirls the ring on her finger, a lovely moonstone band. "That should help keep us safe, at least to an extent."

"Sounds like a plan to me!" Omara whistles for Rakesh. "We have a plan, so tell the bugfolk that they should have clean water soon."

Rakesh nods, returning to the four clans to inform them of the plan.

"Alright, Vik will let us breathe the water, while Allura keeps us happy and healthy and safe and stuff. Eryk, you've spent the most time underground, so we'll follow your lead. Allura, if you can give us some light while down there, that'd be super helpful. Everyone ready?" Omara's eye glimmer with the lure of adventure.

Vik chuckles, more nervous than amused. "I still have to trade out a spell. Forgive me, but I wasn't prepared to breathe underwater while we were traversing the desert."

“Well, get on it! We’ve got a whole lot of bugs counting on us!” Omara paces as Vik sits and pulls out his spellbook.

Allura begins casting a spell to defend the health of her allies, bolstered by the rune Eldie granted her. Eryk sits down, impatiently waiting for action, as always. Omara paces, then sits, then lies down while kicking her feet, then paces some more.

“Alright, I am ready,” Vik says after a few minutes. “Let’s do this.”

With a gurgling hum and bubbling whisper, Vik casts his spell. The Appenendats’ lungs become heavy as the organ prepares to process something more substantial than air. As his spell takes effect, Allura completes her own. A soft moonglow envelopes the party as their bodies adjust to a cleansing, regenerative aura.

“Eryk, lead on, big guy,” Omara says with a chirp, all too eager to be active again.

Eryk nods, taking the lead. With Eryk as the spearhead, the Appenendats quickly climb into the cold underground spring. As they swim deeper, jet blackness consumes them. Allura, with lungs already aching for air despite the water serving its purpose, summons a globe of light to float between her and her friends.

The group swims against the spring’s flow, heading deeper underground and toward the source of the corruption. The closer they get, the more their lungs burn from the poison infesting the waters.

The water stings their eyes and burns their skin, with countless flakes of something flowing past the group. Eryk’s eyes scan the slowly shrinking tunnel beneath the water’s surface. Whatever has poisoned the spring must be close.

There, at the edge of Eryk’s sight. Something neither stone nor undergrowth catches his eye. Eryk stops, motioning to the others. Allura guides her light closer to the source.

Deep underground, wedged in a crack in the stone, lies a crumpled figure with a vaguely humanoid shape. Its arms are twisted unnaturally, with its legs up over its head. And the most disturbing part is the fact it is entirely made of metal. Long since rusted through in places, but there is no denying what this is.

Vik gasps, causing him to sputter as thick oil coats his lungs, spewing from the ruined metal corpse. In all his years, he had only seen one of these, in an equal state of disarray. And that had been during one of his and Omara’s many ventures into the Cur ruins near Reaper’s Rest.

This is… a Cur droid!