

Of the Sky, Of the Sea, and of the Stones
Chapter 3 - Of the Sea
Part 14 - Fight and Flight

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As the Homarim closed in on us from both sides, my three companions and I put our backs together to face our threats with as few vulnerabilities as possible, despite the disadvantageous circumstances. The four of us were standing in a large hole within the decrepit yet huge metal gate leading out of Old Pleon's north side. On the outside, forcing us in was a line of red Homarim males, while those pressing us from within the ruins were a mix of red and blue crustaceans.

Eocar barked an order which quickly caused them and Carpi to take opposite sides of our small square formation: the tall leader facing the line of outer red Homarim and Carpi confronting the mixed line of lobster-like fiends. Eocar drew their greataxe from their back, which was essentially a sizable iron cleaver with the handle of a polearm. "Back, fiends! Let us pass, we 'ave no business wit' your kind!" Eocar shouted, hoping that the Homarim would either understand or be intimidated.

Two of the largest red Homarim at the center of the exterior red line exchanged glances and a few chittering growls before they turned back to us, "No... Bu...si...ness... You... Food... For... Brachyura!" the left of the two big ones screeched at us brokenly.

There was no time to be amazed that these inhuman creatures could understand and speak in a human tongue, as they set upon us from both sides at once, causing Eocar and Carpi to fight valiantly while Pyloc and I simply tried to stay out of the way, which involved us ducking frequently to dodge snaring pincers.

Just within the gate, Carpi was fending off a line of red and blue Homarim with he dual mallets which looked like the kind used for slamming huge nails into certain parts of ships. However, the young lady in red shell-plate armour made great use of them in this frigid urban battlefield. Instead of trying to fell any foes, Carpi was sticking close to the gate to both better defend me and Pyloc, who were unarmed, and so that she did not get surrounded and overwhelmed. I saw the soundness in this tactic, though it was not one that would allow us to hold out very long; there were simply too many foes and more were approaching from within the ruins, roused by the commotion.

Back and forth, left to right and back again, Carpi lunged while striking in frenzied movements. She twirled and twisted like a hammer-wielding hurricane, slamming the aggressive lobster-people in their pincers and torsos with her thick wooden mallets. The Homarim were continuously pushing toward us, though were still shielding their vulnerable heads due to Carpi's high-intensity attacks. Soon, however, the lass' energy began to wane and her destructive pace slowed.

On the other side, Eocar was utilizing the opposite strategy: as the red Homarim attacked, Eocar would wait until the very last second to side-step a blow before returning one of their own with devastating results. Every time the line of enemies attacked, Eocar backstepped and struck back with their hefty greataxe, using the length of the armament to reach and cleave into the susceptible heads of the foes. Even when one of the red Homarim blocked with their claws, the power of Eocar's vertical slashes were enough to break through the guard and land severe strikes.



The battle continued in this fashion of a few tense minutes that felt more like hours until I mentioned Carpi's slowing pace to Eocar. The tall warrior in dark brown and black shell-plate scowled in frustration, "Damn lobsters! Carpi, let's force our way out of t'ese ruins! To me!" And with that, the two hunter-warriors charged the weakened line of red Homarim just outside the metal gate.

There were only three male Homarim pinning us in from that way, which the duo of warriors made short work of in mere seconds. Carpi jumped into the air and brought down both of her mallets in an aerial assault that caught a stunned Homarim before they could block, which resulted in the lass smashing the fiend's face to oblivion.

In a lunge that ended with a vicious horizontal slash, Eocar swung their greataxe with as much force as they could muster while letting out a savage roar. The gigantic cleaver sliced through the raised claws and head of one Homarim before swiftly destroying the chest of the lobster-beast beside it in a decimating diagonal attack.

Without missing a beat, the two hunters turned to me and Pyloc, ushering us to follow them as they sprinted north and away from Old Pleon. The four of us fled, running along the coast on our left, the western shore of Kioshell Island, however, the other Homarim were hot on our tails, screeching and chittering in rage over their fallen brethren.

As we ran, the Homarim began some sort of synchronized screeching, which, after a few moments, began to sound like a chant or a call, which unnerved me greatly despite my extremely adrenaline-filled and winded state. Soon, it became apparent that exiting Old Pleon was not the end of our worries, as to our left, from the pale gray water of the western shore, rose a colossal pincer.