

• *Drakland*

• *Waque*

• *Kai Darl*

• *Fogvalor*

• *Coat*

The Forgotten World





High Wilds

Slay Waterways

Tuskbane

Silane

Lastre

CENTRAL OCEAN

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CÓLION

by Kathryn Popp

‘**M**ove it, Cólion! We’ve got an entire day of rounds to do!’

Cólion glanced up at Alred and snapped his small book closed, shoving it in his oversized boots.

‘Sorry about that, sir,’ he said quickly. ‘I was wondering what the best weapon for today would be.’

Alred harrumphed and left Cólion, muttering about ‘new generations.’ Alred was kind but he had a habit of making his temper as short as himself.

At age seventy-three he had been injured during the start of The Great War, earning an early retirement after the bones in his left leg had been shattered. After that, Alred had built a weaponry for the elves of Waque.

One day, Cólion would make history; he would stop the drac’s and maikong’s. He would make them pay for fighting with the elves. Queen Canadiel’s army would

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need every weapon that Cólion could make.

The dark elves; the drac's. The drac's were clever and fought dirty; winning every fight with the elves, they never went into battle without an unfair advantage.

The maikong's, on the other hand, no one knew much about. What they did know was that they were foxes with humanoid features; arms, legs, some even had fingers and toes. The maikong's always attacked in groups of four, yet they didn't use weapons.

But what made them so deadly, was the amount of casualties after an ambush.

'Cólion, we've got three steel swords and a shield, so start moving!'

Cólion jumped up and ran to a large silver anvil. Picking up his hammer in one hand and an iron rod in the other, he ran around his post looking for coal. Finally, he stopped and dragged some out from under a shelf. He would have to tell Alred that they would need more.

A few minutes later, Cólion was working fast, having already done two swords. Cólion hummed as he hit the hammer against the sword, keeping the rythm in touch with the hammer. After a few more hits, he was able to admire the sword. The blade was light and had a needle-thin point.

'Raid!' Alred shouted from outside. 'Cólion! Get out

now!

Cólion dropped the sword and sprinted to the door before he froze and raced up the wooden steps. He dove to the side of his bed and yanked out a black satchel before heading for the stairs.

BOOM!

Cólion heard the loud explosion before he tripped over the steps.

The last thing he saw before he blacked out was the wooden floor rushing up at him.

Cólion squinted and slowly opened his eyes, a jarring movement causing him to wake up. Through his bleary eyes he made out bars. Metal bars.

Cólion's eyes widened in shock and he attempted to move away, only to find his hands bound tightly behind his back.

Cólion thrashed around in his small prison, trying and failing, to slip out of his bindings.

After a few minutes, he gave up.

Instead, he rolled onto his side and stood up, trying to get his bearings. Only to have his head thump on some sort of metal roof.

Cólion cursed and crouched on his knees, finally noticing that he wasn't just in a cell but a moving metal

cell. He could hear the whip crack and strike horses, the laughter of the drac's and the wagon wheels turning over the gravel.

Cólion slumped over on his side. He wouldn't get out, that much was certain. He would be beaten and held unless the war stopped. But it wouldn't help the drac's or the maikong's.

No, Queen Canadiel wouldn't give in that easily. It would only enrage her.

Cólion smiled to himself, imagining elves marching in and ending the War themselves.

The sudden snap of a whip catching on his cheek made Cólion jerk back with a yelp before he heard the drac's cackle in delight.

'Hope you're cozy there, little elf!' One of them taunted before lashing at the cage again, the whip striking Cólion's arm and drawing blood. Another hit catching him on his leg, the gash was deep and flared with hot pain.

Cólion cried out as the drac's continued to laugh, whipping him every couple of minutes as the cage rolled on. Soon, the cage slowed and grew dark until Cólion couldn't see anything. For a few moments Cólion only saw darkness, then it suddenly got lighter. But it was still dim and hot.

Soon, Cólion's forehead was dripping with sweat from the uncomfortable heat.

Cólion realised he was in the heart of the drac's home.

He glanced around at the makeshift homes that the drac's had built. The wooden homes looked old, the wood seemed almost bloated because of the intense heat. The stone ground was crumbled and full of rubble where the drac's had often travelled. Beyond the houses, Cólion could see a sickly green fog that seemed to hover over the filthy water.

Cólion felt a clawed hand reach through the bars and grab his brown hair, brutally slamming him into the iron bars. He gasped, tasting coppery blood in his mouth as the drac leaned in close. Cólion opened his eyes, staring in fear at the drac's twisted features.

His face looked like wrinkled bark and his teeth ranged from yellow to black. His ears were shredded and he stank of alcohol. His skin was burnt and crusty from the intense heat, a nasty yellowed brown that made Cólion flinch.

The drac grinned. His features crinkling even more as he gave Cólion a sickening smile.

'This will be your new home, you pathetic welp.' His smile disappeared. He used his other hand and pulled out a curved dagger, pointing the tip at Cólion's cheek.

'First things first.' He sneered.

Cólion's breath hitched and he closed his eyes as the blade neared his face. He heard a gasp, then a snarl and

the drac released him. Cólion scrambled backwards and looked through the bars.

A man with dark ginger hair was facing the drac, crouching in a defensive position. The drac's knife in hand, he waited for the drac to strike.

'It's my prisoner, mutt!' The drac hissed.

'Prisoner or not, that elf is already beaten and a captive.' He replied calmly. 'There is no need to make it worse.'

The drac roared in fury, charging the man head on, pulling another pair of knives from his belt. The man waited until the drac was inches away before he swept the drac's legs out from under him. The drac landed heavily on his stomach before the man pinned him down.

'Enough. Do I need to embarrass you further?' The man said. 'There is no point in hurting a defenseless enemy.'

The drac grunted and the man let him up, handing the blade back. The man walked over to Cólion's cage, his wild hair sticking out from every angle. His deep tan skin looked almost orange in the sickly light.

Cólion pressed himself as far back as he could as the stranger got closer.

Cólion looked at the man for the first time. A pair of green-hazel eyes stared back. A knot of dread forming in his stomach.

This man was clearly a maikong.

The maikong stopped in front of the cage and bent over to undo the lock before reaching in and firmly pulling Cólion out by the arm. He held Cólion for a second before turning him over. Cólion felt the bonds on his ankles snap.

The maikong gently set Cólion on his feet before he smiled broadly. His wide smile reaching the corners of his twinkling eyes.

‘Sorry about all this,’ the maikong said sadly. ‘The drac’s take prisoners and it’s our job to take care of them until something changes. My name is Cedar.’

Cólion glared up at him. He couldn’t be serious.

‘I’m Cólion,’ he grumbled.

Cedar cocked his head. ‘Does that mean something in your language?’

‘It means gold.’ Cólion huffed.

‘Ah. I see,’ Cedar said as he ruffled Cólion’s hair. ‘Your name means gold because of your hair!’