Characters

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- Soren - The Fox
- Kiva - The Seeker
- Old Treasa - The Heavy
- Old Esme - The Judge
- Rua - The Would-Be Hero
- Stella Heliorsdottir - The Lightbearer
- NPCs

Soren - The Fox

Backstory

Soren was born to Alis and Gerlt in Stonetop and raised with the other children of the village. While there was no significant conflict between Soren and the other villagers, as he grew into a young adult he swiftly became disillusioned with the simple lifestyle of Stonetop. He wanted more out of life, and believed that he would only find fulfillment beyond its simple walls.

During one of Stout Jakka's visits to the village, Soren asked if he could travel along with him. While initially averse to the idea, Soren's silver tongue convinced Jakka and they left together, heading south to Marshedge. Alis and Gerlt did not approve of this and begged him to stay, but Soren was besotted with the idea of discovering the wider world and went anyways. Along the way they encountered some Hillfolk, and while Jakka was doing business with them Soren mingled among the folk. He grew enamoured with their way of life(and one of the young women there), seeming so free to roam the hills and forge their own paths. He decided to part ways with Jakka and stay with the hillfolk, however it was not long before their lifestyle grew repetitious and dull. Realizing this, he parted ways with the hillfolk and, using the knowledge he learned from them, wandered the Steplands for some time. He encountered other tribes, some he parted ways with amicably, some he had to sneak away and yet others chased him out at the tips of their spears.

Eventually he found himself in the vicinity of Gordin's Delve and and entered the town. Here he found even more restrictions, people were expected to do their work in the mines and not ask questions. Struggling with fitting in, he met Jakka again and from him learned his parents had died of a sudden sickness. Grieving, and sick of the confines of Gordin's Delve, Soren returned to Stonetop to pay his respects to his parents. They parted in anger, but he held no lasting resentment for them and mourned their passing.

When he returned he was met with general suspicion, it had been many years after all and he was remembered as a rowdy youth who left his parents heartbroken. Only Delyth, his father's sister, welcomed him with open arms. She spoke for him amongst the villagers and vouched for him. While he only meant to honour his parents and then move on again he realized that Stonetop was not the restrictive, boring village he had perceived. Seeing now with the eyes of a grown man, he realized that while it is small and unglamorous, each of the people were free to pursue their own desires and skills to the benefit of the village as a whole. When Delyth came to him, asking him to stay with her, he agreed and has lived with her in the outskirts of the village ever since.

Kiva - The Seeker

Old Treasa - The Heavy

Old Esme - The Judge

Rua - The Would-Be Hero

... You mean, the *actual* hero.

My tragic backstory

Let me tell you a story.

Deets

- Rua's mother left Stonetop for Gordin's Delve, where she fell in love.
  - One of the reasons why he didn't tell anyone about the copper seam in Stonetop is because living in the Delve gave him a bad impression of mining.
- When Rua was ten years old (six and a half years before the Winter Festival below), the family moved to Stonetop. They had an encounter with the Forest Folk along the way. By this point they were rare and believed to be gone. Rua's primary memory of the experience was a song he heard the Forest Folk sang.
- When Rua was twelve, his mother disappeared in the forest. All that was found was an engraved tinderbox, a prized treasure from her parents (long since dead).
- When Rua was fourteen, his father was on the way to meet Murdoch in town for unknown reasons. He died of a lightning strike, which should never happen in Stonetop -- it's protected by a stone that attracts lightning. Orphaned!
- Two years later, Rua accuses Murdoch of killing his father. Somehow. This doesn't really make much sense, and it makes him look like a fool.
  - This isn't right. You can't get hit by lightning in town -- that's what the stone of Stonetop does.

Appearance

OK OK OK OK.

In my head, Gordin's Delve is more of a racial mixing pot than Stonetop. I've always imagined Rua as visibly different than most of the old-blood Stonetoppers. His skin is a bit darker than the norm. He has dark brown to black hair, wavier than the norm, and he keeps it short but messy. At the present point in the story he's trying to grow a moustache and it looks terrible -- way too thin. He has an average height, but he's lean in a way that makes him look taller. He has visible muscles from being physically active and chronically underfed.

In ye olden days people didn't have many clothes, and that's Rua to a T. He's probably slightly better dressed now, thanks to Betta's influence.

... I didn't realize it 'til now, but my mental image of Rua is really similar to my previous character Muhammed Ibn Gaïd, minus the hats.

Notable scars

On his back is an ugly scar, going from the left of the small of his back up to his right shoulder blade. A souvenir from the bandit camp.

He took a nasty wound on his left thigh from Shag's sword below Gordin's Delve.

A hillfolk spellcaster sucked out his life force while Rua had her in a choke hold, leaving Lichtenberg scars on his upper arm.

He took a nasty stab from an insectoid in the broken tower that disabled his left arm for a day.

Betta's appearance

I don't have a better place to put this!

To the non-Rua observer, Betta is more pretty than gorgeous. She has bronze hair down past her shoulders, wavier than mine but less wavy than Dennis'. She gives off the vibe of being reserved and delicate, which might be why she's attracted to Rua.

I hope these two crazy kids make it!

Current state

- Rua just turned 18 in spring of the new year.
- Things with Betta are going shockingly well. Gwann isn't even as angry anymore, even.
  - They're officially banging. I sure hope they're using some sort of protection.
  - Midsummer's eve: Rua and Betta are engaged!
- He's been learning woodworking from Eliam. His specialty is making crates.
  - He wants to prove himself as responsible.
  - He repaired an old abandoned house for Kiva, with the assistance of Eliam, Steffen, and Stella's orphan helper squad.

Relatives

- **Mom** - When I was twelve, my mother went gathering in the woods and disappeared. All we found was her engraved tinderbox.
- **Dad** - When I was fourteen, my dad died. He was going to meet Murdoch somewhere (in the woods? in the town?) and was struck by lightning. I blamed Murdoch for his death. I'm pretty we retconned this, or maybe it is the retcon.
  - My father was struck by lightning mysteriously in town. He was on his way to meet Murdoch. The old man knows more than he's said!
- **Uncle Cillian** - In Gordin's Delve. Crippled in a mining accident years ago. No kids, but married to ...
- **Auntie Anya** - Blacksmith. Cillian's wife. We haven't developed her much yet.

Relationships

Stonetop

- **Betta** - She's just so amazing, y'know?
- **Gwann** - Betta's mom. After overhearing her complaining about the bandit newcomers and folk from Gordin's Delve, Rua's given up on her. There's no hostility, just weariness.
- **Angrad** - Betta's grandma. She's the closest person he has to a maternal figure. She had a fling with one of the Forest Folk ages ago.
- **Eliam** - Rua's carpentry master.
- **Steffen** - Rua and Steffen haven't really interacted that much, but Rua sees him and **Bedwyr** as his bros.
- **Bedwyr** - Don't forget, Rua saved Bedwyr from the crimwin. He feels guilty that Bedwyr lost his foot.
- **Murdoch** - Rua accused Murdoch of killing his father at the Winter Festival. He has since apologized.
- **George** - Elderly goat.

Gordin's Delve

- **Glenda** - Friend of his mother and former watchman. He remembers her as a friend of his mom who helped them out when he was a kid. She joined the bandits threatening Stonetop and was killed by Soren.

  https://wiki.garetthessels.ca/books/stonetop/page/session-15
- **Uncle Cillian and Auntie Anya** - His paternal uncle and his wife. Cillian is crippled and works as some sort of craftsman. Anya is a blacksmith. They had a touching reunion, and the last thing Rua did before fleeing Gordin's Delve with the party was unintentionally draw the attention of the bosses on 'em.

Other

- **Thistledown** - Rua owes him a favour. Or possibly Esme owes him a favour, and Rua's helping.Allegiances

Allegiances

Devotee of Aratis

We came up with this during character creation. How does this tie in with Rua? How does he express his appreciation for Aratis? What are the aspects of Aratis that attract him?

... This has 100% not been a thing. But it could be a thing. Maybe Rua should start playing it up somehow.

Character creation

Rua's questions

Whose heart do you hope to win?

Betta! She's an NPC from Stonetop. She's from a *respectable* family, and obviously too good for me ... but she's great. I want to get to know her better.

Who is counting on you?

Mad Gethin, and I don't know why.

Which one of you is my closest, truest friend?

Kiva is my bro!

Which one of you has promised to teach me?

Soren will teach me the ways of drinking, having fun, and being an adult. Esme could teach me how to work within systems.

Which one of you have I hurt, through what I have done or failed to do?

Old Esme. I don't know this, but she stood up for me after my dad died.

Others' questions

Soren: Which one of you joined my in my latest hijinx?

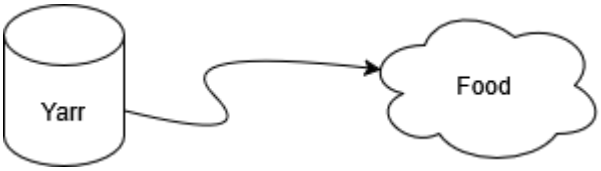
Rua. What were the details?

Kiva: Which one of you has been at my side the entire way?

Rua. Kiva's my bro!

Old Treasa: Which one of you once dragged me home, bleeding and unconscious?

Rua, incredibly.



Stella Heliorsdottir - The Lightbearer

NPCs

Villagers

Aerig: (m, child) A precocious four-year-old who’s imprinted on Stella like a duckling. Follows her around and asks a million questions.

Alis: (f, deceased) Alis liked weaving and singing. She and Gerlt succumbed to disease some years ago while Soren was away on his travels. Upon hearing the news of their passing from a roving trader, he returned to Stonetop to pay his respects and ultimately stayed with the village.

- Wife of Gerlt
- Mother of Soren
- Sister-in-Law of Delyth

Angrad: (f, elder) A clever but irritable old woman. She never got over her husband dying several years ago, and doesn't get along with her adult children.

- Mother of Gwann and Tomo
- Widow of Rusa (deceased)
- Grandmother of Betta and Fio

Arthur: (m, adult) Has a collection of books that rival's even Kiva's family. He gathered these books over his travels as a younger man, who knows what knowledge they hold?

Auvan: (m, mature) He used to travel, but came back and started running the public house after his joints started bothering him. Tells great stories of his adventures. Does most of the trading with outsiders.

- Adopted father of Nia
- Adopted grandfather of Aerig

Betta: (f, young) Lovely young woman. All the lads of the village compete for her attention. She’s sheltered and naïve, but seems to have inherited her father’s kind personality.

- Daughter of Daffa and Gwann
- Granddaughter of Angrad and Rusa
- Rua has a thing for her. Unrequited? Possible, but who knows.

Cayu: (m, child) Wickla's ten-year-old son. Slowly becoming accepted by the other children his age, but still isn’t quite fitting in.

- Son of Wickla

Honoured Cutha: (m, mature) Priest of Tor the Rain-Maker, the patron god of Stonetop. Highly respected by all of the townsfolk, and jealous of anything that smells of a threat to his authority or respect.

- Brother of Rusa (deceased)

Daffa: (m, adult) Gwann's hen-pecked husband. Good farmer, hard worker, can't do anything right as far as his wife is concerned. Everyone in town feels kind of sorry for him.

- Husband of Gwann
- Father of Betta

Dayed: (m, adult) Farmer, talented brewer, single father; his wife died of disease several years ago. He can't control his children and doesn't even know where to start.

- Father of Rhan and Shan

Delyth: (f, adult) Delyth has an affinity for animals and helps take care of the various livestock the village holds. She is short and stocky and is direct with her words and actions. She was good friends with Soren's parents, Alis and Gerlt, and acted as a surrogate aunt to him growing up. When Soren returned to Stonetop to pay his respects at his parent's grave, she welcomed him back with open arms and convinced him to stay with the village and has been a staunch supporter of him when other villagers call his loyalty into question or complain of his various antics.

- Surrogate Aunt of Soren

Honoured Dove: (f, adult) The priestess of Danu. She's the herbalist and healer of the village. No-nonsense and prickly, doesn't suffer fools gladly, but takes good care of people. She's also the one responsible for doling out food from the communal granary to people, so everyone tries to stay on her good side.

Granny Eadna: (f, elder) Eadna cares for the few orphans and those without a home. She feels it is her responsibility to care for them and give them at least a semblance of a normal upbringing. Stella, having grown up there, acts as an older sister to the other kids and helps Eadna care for them. She is generally respected and beloved by her community, and despite her advancing age she still exudes an aura of love and comfort.

- Foster parent of Stella and Aerig

Egwyn: (f, adult) Stoneworker and woodworker; the closest thing Stonetop has to an architect or engineer. She's completely untrained, but has a knack for elegant construction and simple mechanics. People consult her whenever they're repairing buildings or putting up new buildings. Her husband disappeared on a logging expedition two years ago; she's remarried to Offed.

- Wife of Offed

- Mother of Winfred

Eliam: (m, adult) Strongest man in town, gentle, quiet, whittles lovely sculptures. Enjoys woodworking and carpentry, but opposes felling trees in the Great Wood.

- Son of Helva and ???

Emmer: (m, adult) This logger and farmer is a real Gaston type: strong, arrogant, wants everyone to look up to him. He's agitating to start felling the trees of the Great Wood so that he doesn't have to schlep to the Foothills and back every year for timber.

- Grandson of Murdoch

Fio: (f, young) This young woman is proud of being the best hunter in the village. She’s very competitive, driven, and serious. Doesn’t get along with her parents.

- Daughter of Tomo and ???
- Granddaughter of Angrad and Rusa
- Soren is secretly desperate for her respect
- **Trait:** Lived among the Forest Folk(briefly)

Gerlt: (m, deceased) Gerlt was at home in the fields tending the crops. He liked drinking and carving wood. He and Alis succumbed to disease some years ago while Soren was away on his travels. Upon hearing the news of their passing from a roving trader, he returned to Stonetop to pay his respects and ultimately stayed with the village.

- Brother of Delyth
- Wife of Alis
- Father of Soren

Mad Gethin: (m, elder) An old man, former hunter, whose mind hasn't been quite right ever since he came back from a hunt a decade ago. He’s harmless and good-natured, so people help him out and put up with his spells of confusion and madness.

- No living relatives?
- He is counting on Rua to figure out SOMETHING. After the debacle when Rua accused Murdoch at the Winterlude?, Mad Gethin is hoping that Rua figures out some hidden secret in Stonetop that has been haunting him for ages.

Gwann: (f, adult) This arrogant, gossipy middle-aged woman is a spectacular weaver. She stirs up trouble and coddles her daughter too much.

- Daughter of Angrad
- Sister of Tomo
- Wife of Daffa
- Mother of Betta

Helva: (f, mature) The village blacksmith is a large woman of few words. She's shy, uncomfortable in groups of people, and will occasionally clobber people who get on her nerves when she's had a few too many.

- Mother of Eliam
- Mentor of Wickla

Judge Khadagan: (m, mature, deceased) Esme's predecessor and mentor as Judge. Saw an omen of death and felt the weight of doom on him four days before he died, settled his debts and said the important things, then continued living exactly as he did before until he tripped and broke his neck at the wizened age of his early seventies (he was never sure exactly how old). Not originally from Stonetop — came here following a vision from Aratis.

Murdoch: (m, elder) A bad-tempered old village elder, a skilled hunter in his younger days. Rua drunkenly accused him of complicity in his parents' death at the last Midwinter Festival, and he's been stewing about it ever since.

- Grandfather of Emmer

Nia: (f, adult) Adopted by Auvan after her parents died in a disease outbreak over a decade ago. She's been learning healing and herb lore from Dove.

- Adopted daughter of Auvan
- Wife of Waldo
- Mother of Aerig

Offed: (m, adult) A brawny, boisterous herder who brews small beer for the public house in his spare time. Best wrestler in the village. One of the few people in the village brave enough to help clean the cistern every several years.

- Husband of Egwyn
- Adopted father of Winfred

Olwinn Heliorsson: (m, elder, deceased) The former Lightbearer, who died a few years before Stella was born. His final act was contributing to the banishment of an awful monster–a singing horror borne from the depths of the great woods–that he, Treasa, and Esme had to defend Stonetop from.

Rhan and Shan: (f, m, children) A pair of thirteen-year-old terrors. Fraternal twins. Unofficial leaders of the pack of village children.

- Daughter and son, respectively, of Dayed

Rusa: (m, elder, deceased) Held the unofficial position of captain of Stonetop's militia for many years. He was well-respected and well-liked. The militia has become increasingly disorganized and sloppy since he passed away several years ago.

- Father of Weann and Tomo
- Husband of Angrad
- Grandfather of Betta and Fio

Tesmi: (f, mature) A busybody widow who never seems to stop talking. She’s a fantastic baker, and her honey rolls are highly prized by everyone in Stonetop. She’s taken a shine to Stella, and frequently bothers her for blessings and prayers about trivial things.

Terrwen: (m, mature) Farmer, militiaman. Did something terrible in the past and won't talk about it. Clearly tormented by it, lashes out sometimes. Stella wants to help him but isn't sure how.

Tomo: (m, adult) A middle-aged man who’s a bit too full of himself and loves to take charge. He drinks a bit too much, and knows that everyone thinks he can’t live up to his father's reputation.

- Son of Angrad and Rusa (deceased)
- Brother of Gwann
- Husband of ???
- Father of Fio

Waldo: (m, adult) The laziest man in town, and possibly the laziest man alive. Often volunteers for shifts in the watchtowers so he can get some sleep up there.

- Husband of Nia
- Father of Aerig

Wickla: (f, adult) She’s a refugee who moved here with her son from Gordin's Delve three years ago. The town decided to let her fix up an abandoned house and stay after she demonstrated her skill with tinsmithing and whitesmithing. There’s not much call for that, though, so she's now the apprentice to the town blacksmith.

- Mother of Cayu
- Apprentice of Helva

Winfred: (f, child) A quiet six-year-old child whose favourite thing to do is to follow people around and watch them at work. She hasn’t spoken much since the disappearance of her father two years ago, but Granny Eadna says not to worry, that she’ll start talking again when she’s good and ready.

- Daughter of Egwyn
- Adopted daughter of Offed

Elsewhere

Brennan: (m, mature) The leader of the Claws, the bandit group that eventually became the official police force of the town of Marshedge. Charismatic and calculating. Treasa spent some time running with his crew many years ago before she settled in Stonetop.

Dermud: (m, adult) A Marshedge resident who rode up to Stonetop for the Spring Festival. Kiva dragooned him into helping her with the puzzle box artifact.

Frixet Far-Traveller: (f, adult) A trader from Gordin's Delve who's been all over the region. She wanders about with no set route, occasionally showing up in Stonetop with strange goods and stranger stories.

Stout Jakka: (m, mature) A trader from Marshedge who plies the route between Marshedge and Gordin's Delve. Always welcome in Stonetop, as he generally treats people squarely and sometimes has odd curiosities. It's rumoured that he has friends among the Hillfolk.

Mythological Characters

Greenwood Jack: A trickster figure from old folktales. His origin varies, but he’s usually depicted as a Maker or a descendant of a Maker, larger than life both figuratively and literally. The stories about him are often about him tricking cruel and imperious Green Lords, usually with the aid of various fae allies, in order to help humans.

These stories are often used by elders to teach children how to interact with the fae in a respectful and… well, not safe, because nothing about the fae is ever safe, but minimally dangerous fashion.