Session 12

Bandits! There are likely some scouts on a bluff up ahead, what is going to happen? Down a player again today but that is how big groups are I guess.

Having agreed that taking down the scouts is the plan, they discuss how to approach without them immediately sounding the alarm. Esme wants to send some people around the other side and have her walk along the trail to act as bait, then ambush them as they come down to investigate. Treasa wants to sneak up and catch them by surprise, take them out before they can raise any alarms. Soren supports this, and adds that both ideas are good, they should send a few around the back to catch any that try to run when they ambush. There is a bit of debate about the best course of action and Treasa just starts moving into the trees towards the back of the bluff. Rua and Soren go after her, Soren saying "well action is better than inaction" as he goes. Willem and the hunters go as well, leaving Stella and Esme on the trail. Esme asks Stella for her cloak, and upon receiving it turns it inside out to hide the decorative weave and starts shuffling slowly along the trail, acting as a frail old woman. Stella is left alone and confused, has a long moment of indecision before hurriedly following Treasa and the others with the intent of alerting them to Esme acting as bait.

Treasa doesn't just rush headlong into the bushes but scans the landscape to find the path with the best cover. She sees a tangle of branches and bushes at the crown of the bluff that doesn't look natural, like a small hunters blind. She angles her approach to keep as many trees as possible between her and the blind with the others following. As they move slowly and carefully Rua steps on an unsteady boulder causing it to shift and begin to slide down the slope. Treasa throws her body onto the stone with an oomph as her breath is forced out by the impact but is able to steady the stone, stopping it from rolling away and causing a ruckus. Rua looks back, sees how a little dirt and small stones had shifted and realization dawns on his face as he turns to Treasa and gives her a thumbs up! Treasa slowly raises her hand and gives him a thumbs up back with a incredulous look on her face. At this point Stella gets within a stones throw of the others and throws a stone, it landing in some leaves behind the others causing Soren to turn. He sees her and raises his hands in a "what the hell?" kind of gesture. Stella is visibly distressed so Soren quietly goes down to her within loud whispering distance and says "what the hell, are you trying to get us caught?". She responds telling him that Esme is acting as bait and apologizes for not stopping her. Soren replies saying that nobody can stop Esme really, and grabs her and goes back to the others and lets them know as well. Knowing that things are gonna happen soon they start moving the rest of the way to the top with as much speed as possible.

As they crest the rise they see a small clearing behind the blind with a one bandit sitting on a log and the other stringing his bow. The one with the bow rouses the other and points over the bluff, they go back and he nocks an arrow, preparing to shoot down on Esme! Treasa sees this and breaks into a full charge, running headlong at the bandits. Soren, Willem and Rua are all a step

behind, joining her charge. The bandits turn hearing the noise, the one without the bow has just enough time to pull out a bronze-tipped mace before meeting Treasa's charge. They clash, he dodges her blow and strikes back with the mace, hitting the fingers of her hand on the axe. As this happens the bandit yells "The log! Go for the log!". Soren is keeping an eye out for traps, knowing that means something, but can't discern what it is. With no time to think he just charges the bandit with the bow, aiming his spear at his chest. As he rushes he steps on a loose stone, turning his ankle and flailing his arms to regain his balance. Unbeknownst to him, Rua was also rushing the bandit and Soren flailing his spear wacks Rua with the haft. The two of them get a bit tangled up, allowing the bandit to slip past them and run towards one of the logs. Treasa yells for the hunters to shoot him, they let fly but two of the arrows fly over his head and one only grazes his arm. Willem takes a swing with his heavy club but he dodges that too! Treasa pulls back from her initial clash against the bandit with the mace and prepares a strong overhand blow, disregarding defense. As her axe starts to fall the bandit swings his mace and impacts her hip, however the axe was already on its course, crunching down into the bandits chest and dropping him to the ground. Just as the last bandit is approaching the logs Rua comes out with a flying tackle, taking him to the ground. The bandit struggles and clubs Rua in the head with his bow but is unable to get away. Soren, seeing the tangle of limbs on the ground, drops his spear and jumps in, pinning the bandits legs to the ground. Willem comes up as well, helping hold him down and clamping a hand over his mouth.

With the three of them restraining the last standing bandit the fight is over. Once he stops struggling Rua pulls out some rope and they tie his arms around his back and start interrogating him. They ask his name, it is Grumman. They also find out that Bogden took the horses and two others to go to Hansen's Hill, leaving 9 others in the camp. They will be sending one person to relieve the scouts at sundown, Horsh will be coming. Fuda is the other bandit they killed, he and Shering came down from Barrier Pass. It seemed to Grumman that Bogden had a backer, someone funding his venture. Grumman was hired from Gordin's Delve to join his crew, he and a couple others are just regular people trying to get away from the oppressive environment of Gordin's Delve but the rest of the bandits seem to know each other and know the banditry business well. He also says that if anything were to happen they were to bang on a hollow log, it makes quite a racket and that will signal the camp.

While they press him for information, Stella is standing in shock looking at the corpse of Fuda, with his chest split open and his blood soaking the ground. Esme had made the trek up the hill, arriving after the fight ended and saw her standing there. Esme took the cloak off her shoulders and placed it back on Stella's shoulders and turned her away from the body and led her down the hill a little ways, talking to her in a soft voice and helping Stella through a bought of nausea. Esme gets her to focus on her light and breath, getting her to focus on what she feels she should do next and not get stuck in her mind. After taking a moment they go back to the top of the bluff.

Treasa calls Esme over to Grumman and fills her in on the information they gathered. Esme turns to Grumman and says that he looks like a steady young man, and starts to convince/ask him to join the village, they have already taken in other bandits and there is always rooms for more hands to do the work. Soren objects to this, he was just trying to kill us! He doesn't think Grumman can be trusted and can't believe that Esme is just asking him to join them out of the blue. This doesn't dissuade her and she stares deeply into his eyes as she asks if he could turn his back on banditry

and join them. He honestly answers yes, his last 10 years have been nothing but struggle, he is willing to do some honest work. At this point the adrenaline is wearing off and he sits there in a bit of a daze. Esme undoes the rope tying his arms and leads him to sit on one of the logs, asking him if he would like something to eat. He acknowledges and she starts to build a fire to make a meal. Soren looks at Grumman with a deep and untrusting stare, always taking care to stand between him and Stella is hovering around the edge of the clearing, trying not to look at the corpse while looking at Treasa's wounded hip. Esme calls out to Treasa, saying she should tend to her injuries, and Stella offers to heal her. Treasa is hesitant, she is used to taking her lumps and walking them off and she also doesn't fully believe in Helior's stuff. However, she does trust Stella and allows her to approach with her glowing white consecrated flame. Stella invokes Helior's healing light and holds the flame to Treasa's wound and a tingling heat spreads along the injury and soothes the pain away. Grumman is taken aback by this, and constantly shoots glances at Stella for the next while like he expects her to toss magic around at a whim. After healing Treasa, Stella goes to a sunny spot on the edge of the bluff and spends some time soaking in the sun and contemplating the events of the day.

End of Session!

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