

Some time had passed since Helci's first expedition into the forest. That was something she considered a big failure. She couldn't kill a single goblin and had to be rescued by some kid and she even got berated for it. She did manage to level up once, the goblin that she injured had chased after her and was finished off by the human mage that rescued her. She gained part of the shared experience after the kill and managed to level up.

This incident made her rethink her approach. She wasn't strong enough to wander alone into the forests. She also figured out that the white goblins that were in this forest were stronger than the regular green ones.

She was a scout, this was a combat class while also a utility class, so she needed to increase her combat and detection skills. She didn't receive any free weapon proficiencies as they needed to be trained by herself. She needed to increase her basic dagger proficiencies and maybe the short sword ones. She was a class relying on agility and wouldn't be good with heavier weapons.

With their good eyesight, a scout made a good archer but they mostly needed to use short bows or crossbows due to their lack of strength. Contrary to popular belief, archers relied more on strength than dexterity as they needed enough power to draw their large longbows. The dexterity and good vision then added to their aiming proficiencies.

After the first level, she had received a basic trapfinding skill. Before that she only had a passive that allowed her to see better and spot hidden enemies. It only worked on them if they weren't hiding or their skill in stealth was really low.

The half-goblin girl had decided to first train a bit, increasing her passive weapon proficiencies along with doing basic strength training. While at it she also made sure to visit the adventurer guild hoping that she could get a job there. To her dismay, not many people wanted to take in a bronze class scout into their midst that was only on their first class.

The other adventurers didn't want to put their faith in an inexperienced tracker. Someone that could detect the enemies before they ambushed you was a cornerstone of every party. They were sometimes even considered more valuable than mages or priests.

Time continued to pass, in the day she worked at the inn while in the evening she did her training. She was quite diligent and even managed to level up thanks to increasing some of the basic combat skills. She had never trained before and had gone through her first class change. People who didn't train the basic skills beforehand would find them leveling up faster after attaining a class.

After a few months of hard work, she had her break. She managed to land a spot in a party. She agreed on lower wages and was more or less a tag-along extra. Her first job was to protect a caravan that would take her on a two-week trip back and forth. The pay wasn't great but she still took it.

This forced her to quit her job at the inn. The innkeeper wasn't happy about an abrupt leaving of his worker but he could do nothing but shrug. The first quest unfolded with some strains, their party was attacked by some wolf looking monsters. They managed to clear them out with only a couple of people injured. Soon she started leveling up and her adventurer life had

finally begun. She found the encounter very exciting and was hoping for more but to her dismay, it wasn't always so action-packed.

Her party spent two weeks walking in front of a cart and sometimes riding it. The monster attacks were rare and she felt bored. The sleeping conditions were even worse than at the inn as they either slept outside or in one of the carriages. She even had to deal with the male members snoring all night long.

She also didn't like the looks that some of the adventurers were giving her. Luckily she wasn't the only female in the group and they never went too far. Her new party consisted of her as a scout, two warriors, a girl that was an archer, and another scout that was already in his second-tier 1 class that was a tracker. This was a popular class to take along with a scout as it also had monster detection qualities along with basic pathfinding skills.

Everyone besides her was a steel rank so she was the newbie of the group. She had to do things like cooking or washing their dirty clothes. She knew that they didn't consider her a real party member just yet but she had to catch up to everyone. Their ages were all comparable to her as she had a late start.

The days continued to pass and she never returned to the inn. Her levels were slowly rising but without any dungeon nearby her progress was meager. Her party didn't want to move to another city as they were okay with easy transport work. She on the other hand wanted more, she wanted to get stronger and earn some respect.

One day Helci brought news of the expedition to Manstos Grotto and how it was mostly about exterminating a monster infestation. To her surprise, the party refused this request telling her that it was sounded sketchy. There wasn't enough info about the monsters and the inside of the caves might not be correctly mapped out. They were the types that liked to play it safe so they refused the request.

She went away fuming, she didn't want to do the protection missions anymore. They had spent the past four months doing those and she was still only a level 10. She wanted to progress faster but was afraid to head out on her own. Luckily this expedition was accepting almost everyone even bronze adventurers could join.

To the protests of her party, she decided to go there as a solo act. They didn't want to budge even after she asked them again and again. This wasn't considered a betrayal of trust or anything, it wasn't rare for adventurers to change parties and to join larger expeditions like this on their own. They wished her good luck and to come back in one piece.

She arrived early in the morning almost before anyone had gathered. She took her time to examine her dagger and short bow that she was now using. She was wearing light armor and the same leather vest was still on her as she didn't have enough coin to make a drastic change to her gear. She also looked at her status screen while wondering how she compared to others at her level.

Name :	Helci Scout L10
HP	240/240

MP	176/ 176
SP	335/335
Strength	15
Agility	30
Dexterity	25
Vitality	18
Endurance	20
Intelligence	12
Willpower	14
Charisma	15
Luck	9

Scout Class	Increases stamina regeneration by 20%, Improves vision by 25%
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When she asked the person that had the same class as her about his stats he just laughed. He explained to her that she shouldn't ask or reveal her status screen to anyone. It was actually considered rude to do this unless you had some kind of strong bond with the person you were asking.

The people that were going to go on this expedition started gathering together. There were a variety of classes here but most of them looked to be warriors with some archers and scouts sprinkled in. There were two people sticking out like a sore thumb.

One was a youth with golden hair. He was wearing a long white robe and had a large symbol of a sun embroidered on his back. He was holding a large book in his right hand and was praying while looking in the direction of the rising sun. He was obviously either an acolyte or a priest.

The second person was also wearing a robe, it was only pitch black. He had a heavy rapier strapped to his side and was above 160 cm in height. She recognized that gloomy robe and the lanky youth that was standing there, it was the same brat that had saved her from the mountain goblins that one day.

Their eyes met and the two started looking at each other. Roland was surprised to see the waitress from the inn even more than she was surprised to see him here. She was still the only person that he knew around here, so he just nodded with his head as a sort of greeting.

Helci was slightly taken aback after Roland had nodded at her. She wasn't as annoyed with him anymore and she felt a bit back about how she acted after he had saved her. Still, she just nodded back at him and then turned around as she didn't really have anything to talk about with him.

There were exactly twenty adventurers here plus the person in command. This person raised his hand and gave a shout to make himself noticeable. He looked to be a man of about 180 cm in height. He had a robust stature and was of the human race. His hair was brown and he had a short beard.

The thing that made him stand out was that he was wearing blue brigandine armor. It was made from either heavy cloth or leather and lined with small oblong steel plates riveted to the fabric. The rivets were sticking out as little round metal circles outside this heavy cloth.

The advantage of this armor was that it wasn't a single piece of metal and allowed better movement. Roland had done some research as he was soon to reach the blacksmith class and knew that this type of armor was also easier to manufacture or repair than plate mail. He was also wearing some heavy cloth under it which was probably was the ever-popular gambeson.

The man looked to be in his later twenties or in his early thirties which prompted Roland to believe that he was at least a tier 2 class. Besides the armor, he also had a longsword strapped to his side that was probably enchanted.

“You can call me Wells, I'll be taking the lead in this expedition.”

“We have twenty members, from which fifteen already have their own parties, the rest will form the fourth.”

The man started listing down some basic info. He didn't add much, the exact kind of insectoid monster was unknown and the mine had been barricaded from the outside so that the monsters wouldn't wander out. Now they were waiting for the adventurers to move inside and clear them out. They would be the first organized party to go in.

Roland was more interested in the party he was getting. He was going solo so he would be joining the fourth party that was forced together. Wells was the one that brought them together and he started calling the solo adventurers out while also listing their main classes.

“Dalrak, Dwarf Shield Warrior, Steel rank.”

Roland saw a robust-looking dwarf move out from the crowd and move towards where the leader was. His beard wasn't all that long and he looked young. He was also wearing heavier plate armor with a chain shirt underneath.

“Selanar, Sun Elf - Tracker and Archer, Steel rank.”

This time it was a tall lanky elf. He was wearing light green leather armor and carrying around a longbow over his shoulder. He had all the usual fine elven features that all sun elves had, long golden hair, and a pretty face.

“Orson, Human - Two-handed Sword Warrior, Steel rank.”

All of his party members were of the steel rank apparently, this one was also a youth that didn't look older than eighteen. He was above 180 cm in height and was wearing a metal curriass over his chest. His arm and leg protection was lighter, probably due to him having a large sword to swing around. He looked like your usual damage dealer by game standards.

“Roland, Human - Mage, Steel rank.”

He was finally called to action so he walked over towards his new group. The others gave him some looks that soon subsided.

“The last is Helci, Half-Gnome - Scout,...Bronze rank...”

The leader narrowed his eyes while reading the last member's name. She was the lowest-ranked party member and caused everyone to look. The girl noticed the scornful looks but she was already used to them, she knew that she was still green. Still, it was quite annoying to be looked down upon by people that were of similar age as her.

While Rolands and Helci's group gathered up the leader continued talking. The priest looking person that was seen by Helci was brought to the forefront.

“This is Priest Elric, he will be joining our expedition and as a special guest he won't be joining any of the parties.”

The leader explained that the priest was getting a special status in the group. It was their responsibility to protect him from harm as he was able to heal the people from the expedition. Roland thought that mages were seen as assets but maybe being a healer was even more important.

“Praise the Sun, my children, let the Sun Goddess watch over you and warm your souls with her eternal sunshine.”

The moment he got to the forefront he started preaching. The adventurers looked at each other while trying not to show their disdain. It was understandable that the priest classes were important assets and they needed to be protected. This didn't change the fact that most of them were considered to be religious zealots. If you asked them about Solaria they could talk you to sleep while conversing about her greatness from dusk till dawn.

From what Roland could tell the expedition consisted mostly of Steel grade adventurers. There were a few tier 2 classes on board, one was the expedition leader and the other was the priest. He also believed that the party the leader was in was probably mostly composed of tier 2s as well.

Roland had a suspicion that besides that main group of adventurers all of the rest were considered expendable meat shields. His group would be getting one carriage to travel in so they would have enough time to strategize and get to know each other. Though there was a problem already, mainly one of the members wasn't happy that they had a bronze adventurer with them.

“What is this? I didn't sign up to babysit shitty little bronze brats.”

“Who are you calling a brat? You're not even much older than me!”

The ones fighting were Orson and Helci, the half-gnome. Apparently the man didn't like that they had a bronze rank with them. The small girl was staring daggers at him and stomping her foot on the ground.

“Hah? what? You want to go, shrimp?”

The man grinned while looking down at the small girl and started egging her on. Roland saw this and knew that in a party it would be better if the team worked with each other. He

decided to move closer in the hopes of defusing the situation even though he didn't like talking to people all that much.

“I don't think we should be fighting before we even arrive at the Grotto, save it for the monsters.”

The elf and dwarf didn't seem to care that much as they moved toward the carriage that they were going to use.

“Another shrimp appeared? We having a bargain sale or something?”

“The only shrimp I see is between your ears.”

Roland replied hastily, his emotions getting to him. Before he could backtrack on his insult he heard the dwarf bursting out in laughter.

“He git ye thare gud, laddie.”

Orson's face turned a bit red, and the half gnome girl also got out a chuckle from Roland's remark. Selanar the sun elf remained quiet while just sighing, he was one of the more silent types.

“Stoap yer nonsense.”

The dwarf could see that this human here was on the angrier side. He had enough sense as the main tank to not let things escalate. Luckily Orson was more bark than bite and they all managed to get inside the carriage without a fight breaking out. He did curse up a storm before getting into it.

It was quite the quiet trip, the most talkative one was Dalrak that kept complaining about the bumpy road and how much his posterior hurt. Roland had worked in a more tight-knit group of adventurers and knew that good cooperation was key. He decided to at least try to talk with them to figure out what he was working with.

“Dalrak was it? How good are you with that shield and is that a polearm?”

“Aye, this 'ere? Did ye think a'd be usin` an ax or somethin?”

The dwarf asked while chuckling. Dwarves were considered strong for their height but they lacked reach. This is why most of them favored weapons that had long reach like spears and polearms. They also used longswords or even bastard swords. The one Dalrak was using was a slightly shorter halberd, fit for his height.

You would very rarely see a dwarf using an ax. This mostly happened when they were wearing full plate armor and were sure that they could just charge into their enemy without worry.

“Aye, lea th' frontline tae me, nottin is aff tae git by me.”

Roland couldn't understand the heavy accent too well but he figured the dwarf was just reassuring him about his defensive capabilities.

“And Mr. Selanar...”

“Nothing will escape my elven eyes, leave the tracking to me.”

Before he could even ask the elf answered, he probably realized what Roland's intention was and just answered so that he wouldn't have to beat around the bush.

“I'm also good at scouting and trap finding...”

Helci chimed in while everyone was talking, the group started to slowly converse with each other during the carriage ride even Orson finally gave in and listed his two-handed sword abilities. Roland also informed them about the array of spells that he was able to cast.

He had made a lot of regular mana bolt and mana arrow spell scrolls that fit on smaller paper. He could use them to level up and only dip into the better ones if they run into trouble. If they asked he could just say that he knew a high-level runesmith that liked scribing. The close to two-day ride continued, soon Roland would get another taste of adventuring after having had taken a long break.