

Sidebar

Not all weapons are created equal! Where Eryk carries a large hammer forged by Dwarven smiths, Allura carries a branch of the central tree from her city, and Omara carries a small parrying sword her father gifted her.

“Spit that out!” Shouts Allura as Eryk takes another bite.

The grizzled bandit smiles a crooked smile, each cracked canine lining his jaws gleaming disgustingly in the firelight. “Come now. Pork ain’t good enough for you?”

Vik’s stomach sinks. These sick people are eating... people! How many have died to fill their gullets?

“Eryk, that’s human meat!” Omara screeches, drawing her blade.

Eryk goes pale as he stops chewing. Half a mouthful falls onto the ground with a sickening plop. Eryk’s eyes dart around, his ruddy skin turning an odd green. He barely turns in time to avoid ruining the bandits’ clothes, all before spewing a stream of chunky vomit.

“Why in the forge’s fire would you eat that?!” Eryk booms, a mix of confusion and anger in his voice. He reaches for his hammer as the bandits stand at the ready.

“Not so fast now, you hear? Our rations are running low, so why don’t you spare some meat to convince us to let you go?” The bandit elder cackles roughly, while his two companions grip their weapons tighter. “Be a shame to hoard all that succulent flesh you all are carrying.”

Allura and Vik take a step back, scared more than anything. Eryk, with puke in his beard, grips his hammer with fervor. Omara Rotates her sword in her hand, looking for an opening. All those sparring lessons with her father are about to pay off.

One bandit lunges at Eryk, catching the dwarf in the thigh with his twisted dagger. In kind, Eryk Bellows a wounded cry, but steadies himself enough to bring his mighty weapon down hard on the bandit, crushing him underneath the blow.

The bandit elder slinks back into the shadows, with Omara giving chase. Beyond the firelight, the clash of steel on steel rings out from the darkness.

Allura’s eyes go wide as the other younger bandit lumbers toward her, his forked tongue lashing across his wizened lips. Allura offers prayer to the Tribunal as the bandit raises his hand axe to split her skull. The fire glows in the bandit’s hungry eyes, as he can almost taste the elf meat he is about to claim.

Vik closes his eyes, focusing on the Spark within himself. His fingers move of their own accord as a clap of thunder hits the bandit in the chest, knocking him back and causing him to fall. Whether a boon of fortune for Allura and Vik, or a bane of the bandit, the shove knocks the bandit into the cooking pit, catching him on fire as the roasting spit skewers his shoulder.

In a mad frenzy, Eryk smashes the burning bandit to a pulp, letting out a thunderous Dwarven roar.

The air falls silent once more as the skirmish comes to an end. Vik looks at his hands in fear and shock. The hands of a murderer, now latched to his wrists. Allura catches her breath, praying that the bandits might find just judgement for their sins. Eryk fumes, his war hammer dripping bandit blood. Omara is nowhere to be seen.

“That was...” Vik trails off with a waver in his voice.

“May the gods have mercy on their souls.” Allura stands, dusting herself off. “I thank you, Sir Vik. You may have very well saved me.”

“Y-yeah.” Vik falls silent, still staring at his hands. Then the silence hits him. “Where’s Omara?!”

Eryk drags his war hammer through the grass to clean it. “Oh, yeah. We had a fourth with us.”

“Omara!!” Vik yelps in fear. “OMARA!!!”

From the shadows comes a rustling, a grunting. Eryk readies his hammer once more, while Allura summons a mote of moonlight on the end of her staff.

Omara enters the light, her lip bloodied and her hand over her side. In a panting, breathless voice, she speaks. “G-got him.”

Vik rushes to Omara’s side, helping to support her as she walks. “What, um, what happened?”

Omara straightens, the dark spot in her tunic deepening. “Don’t look, Vikkie. It’s gonna be okay.”

“Here, let me.” Allura says in a soft voice, though a note of concern lays buried under the tone of a healer. Allura raises her hand toward Omara’s wound, whispering in Elvish. A soft glow of cool silver light emits from her palm, and the wound seals.

“Omara...” Vik says, holding back tears.

“We should make camp. Not here. Too many dead.” Omara remains stone-faced, even in the face of death.

And so, the group picks up their packs and continues on their journey northward, albeit at a slightly slower, shakier pace.



STONEHART

IRON SEA

THE RIFT

AGEA

DRIFT SEA

GREENWOOD

PANGEAN OCEAN

