



CHARACTER STORY: HUNTER

The world plunged into darkness. Beasts and monsters swarming just beyond the tenuous light of our settlements. What a time to be alive.

Most choose to recoil from the dark, huddling to the warmth of their fires and the illusion of protection the crumbling walls provide. Others struggle against the darkness – pushing it back, forming a barrier to stop it from encroaching further. Me? I embrace it. Darkness brings monsters and killing monsters is what I am known for.

It started innocently enough when I was a simple hunter in my village in the south. A particularly bulky boar here, a scar from taking down a bear there – you stay alive long enough with these stories and people start to recognize you. Then a winged deformity started frequenting the village snagging children – putting a spear through that brought me real fame. I liked it.

Tasting the glory and profit that came from feats such as that I knew I would not stop. Following the Calamity there was no shortage of twisted beasts prowling the wilderness and I pledged to put them down. Long weeks were spent knee-deep in stinking mud, cutting myself on bladegrass in search of filthy monsters dwelling in the marshes. Stalking the treacherous mountain slopes to seek out and take down a griffin. I have done these things and have the trophies to prove it, yet I found the appreciation of such kills never went as far as I'd like. Nothing like that time I killed a monster that was threatening a village. I was good at this but being good wasn't enough. I wanted people to know it, to value it, to be awed by my prowess.

So, I decided to make things a little more interesting. Luring a couple of harpies out of their cliff nests to the vicinity of a trading post was not particularly hard. Soon, caravans started to suffer from the attacks as people plunged to their deaths, captivated by the bewitching songs. I remember the despair that hung around the trading post when I arrived – their livelihood was at stake. People grabbed my sleeves, begging to make it go away. A tip of the hat from me – that's what I'm here for. Some poisoned bolts, some wax for the ears – not a difficult job. Back to the post with some feather trophies to the grateful crowd. Let the gossip and whispers of my deeds spread, the slayer of monsters is there to save those in need.

Who's to judge if sometimes the need is a little contrived? Morsels of food here, shiny trinkets there – each beast is drawn to their own prize. And with them they bring devastation and death. Good thing someone is there to put a stop to such horrors.

And now this mining hamlet. Seems desperate enough as it is, but the legend must grow. I hear a cavern complex nearby is home to terrible beast of all manner. I'll be the judge of that. Perhaps going alone is not wise – even with my skills I don't wish to be overly heroic. The hooded stranger in the tavern is seeking companions for an expedition – that will provide a suitable reason to venture down and scout out what kind of beasts dwell in these depths.

Before this village can be saved – I need to stir up something to save it from.