THE GAME MASTER'S BOOK OF NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Illustrations by
John Stanko
& Jasmine Kalle

Foreword
by Jasmine
Bhullar

500+ Unique Bartenders, Brawlers, Mages, Merchants, Royals, Rogues, Sages, Sailors, Warriors, Weirdos and more for 5th Edition RPG Adventures

Jeff Ashworth

Plus
3 One-Shot
Adventures!

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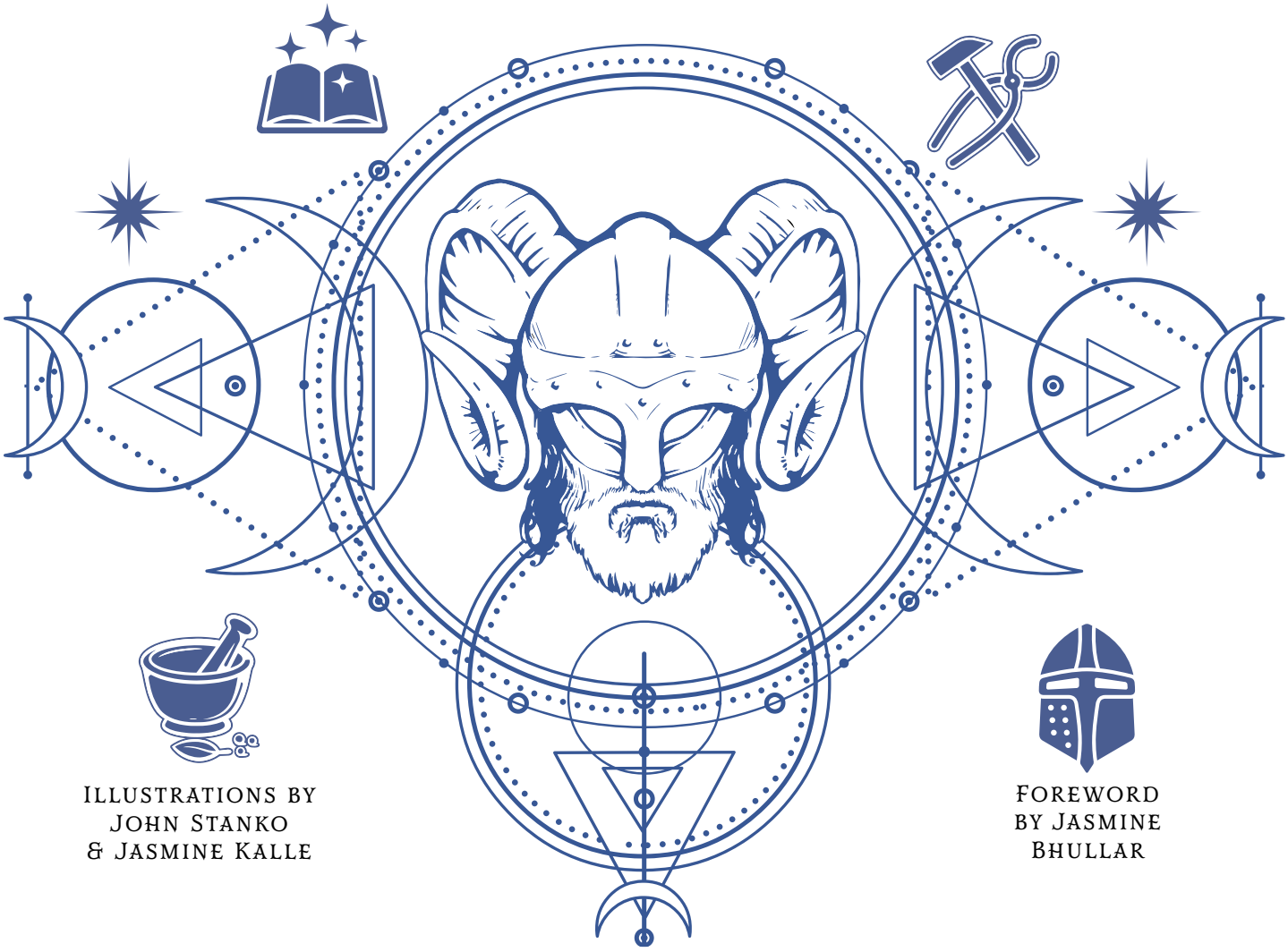

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"Where has this book been all my game-mastering life? Finally, relief for the beleaguered GM who dreads the thought of their players deciding to, ya know... talk to people! Stress no more. Everyone—and I mean everyone—is in here."

—***Philip Athans,*** **New York Times *bestselling author and former* Wizards of the Coast *editor***

"This book makes your spontaneous storytelling moments feel like you had planned for them all along. Every NPC becomes a potential jumping off point for a new adventure!"

—***Pat Kilbane, Director of the D&D documentary*** **The Dreams in Gary's Basement**

Foreword

The make-believe worlds we roleplay in are made real by the people and stories held within them. A sleepy town in the mountains is unremarkable until populated by the sassy gnome baker, the oafish town guard, the flirtatious mayor. At times we might write off NPCs as background characters that serve only to convey an idea or expository info to the adventuring party before melding into the backdrop. However, I've found exceptional NPCs can lead to exceptional character moments for the players. There's nothing more satisfying as a Game Master than when your adventurers fall in love with a random farmer and decide to "adopt" them into the party and bring them along on every foray into danger.

With this idea in mind, shouldn't we give the same level of attention and care to the odd shopkeeper or absentminded cartographer as we do to the boss fights and combat encounters we so meticulously prepare? Or course! But between designing dungeons, building worlds and planning boss fights, many GMs may find themselves overwhelmed at the prospect of creating and naming a multitude of NPCs. It's for this reason that *The Game Master's Book of Non-Player Characters* is such an invaluable tool in the Game Master's toolkit.

As Game Masters, nothing is more intimidating than feeling like an NPC you whipped up on the spot has become "main cast" material. You might find yourself starting to sweat as the players ask more and more questions about where they're from and what their motivations are. Fret not, dear GMs: With this book in hand, you can find an NPC for almost any situation or alter one to make it fit your story. May the brutally efficient security golem or the charming gnome who puts the "cloak" in cloaker amuse and delight your players to no end!

As your players interact with the world you've created, they'll inevitably come in contact with its denizens more frequently. While you may have some key heroes and villains in mind, when it comes to the "everyday" extras that make a world feel real and "lived in," it's always nice to have something ready to go on the fly. In that regard, this book will aid you in maintaining some narrative consistency while still having a veritable treasure trove of characters your players will find themselves invested in. *The Game Master's Book of Non-Player Characters* serves not only as a wonderful resource full of colorful individuals to populate your worlds, but also as a collection of launching points for what could be branching side quests, story arcs or adventure hooks. Let the wonderful cast of characters assembled in this book breathe charm into your campaign as they help (or hinder) your players through every turn of the adventure.

Jasmine Bhullar
@ThatBronzeGirl
Twitch.tv/ThatBronzeGirl

Introduction

THE BEAUTY of nearly every tabletop roleplaying game is right there in the name—role playing. As a GM you take on any number of roles. You're a rules arbiter; a detailed narrator; a challenge-rating scaler; an overworked showrunner marrying multiple story beats and character arcs; a desperate dialect coach attempting to assign memorable (but not so memorable that they're racist) accents so your NPCs don't all sound "vaguely British-ish." You're Kevin the Mason, Arlo the Grocer, Rictus the Barbarian, Salacious the Necromancerotica Author, and any of the other half-hundred NPCs your party forces you to present on the fly—and those are just the characters directly related to your ongoing story.

And then your party has the gall to ask what the peasant boy—the one you mentioned only because describing the city streets as completely empty seemed weird—is wearing? It's a role too far. But instead of unleashing a legion of ancient dragons in your role as vengeful god, the next time your party asks for in-depth details on a circumstantially created NPC, turn to this book.

What This Book Is

The Game Master's Book of Non-Player Characters is a collection of personalities ready for you to bring to life at your table complete with names, descriptions, common phrases, small backstories, motivating needs and desires and a few secrets or obstacles to explore. And because NPCs have a habit of losing their stuff, each entry includes a short description of what each person has on their person.

These NPCs are divided into four main sections, each with a collection of subsections. Because you will typically know where your party is before describing who they see, these sections are organized by environment (big cities, small towns, remote outposts and the realm underground). The subsections for each section organize these individuals by their proximity to power and their status as insiders or outsiders (commoners, nobles and leaders, lawkeepers or lawbreakers and those who—perhaps like your party—simply don't belong where they are). This approach allows you to pull up a person who'd make a great bartender in a big city, or easily flip to a potential noble who might be willing to host your party when they're in the middle of nowhere. That said, borders are made to be broken, so if you find someone in the Underdwellers section and can't wait for your party to fall into a densely populated cave system, feel free to augment any character presented in any way you see fit in order to bring them to your table.

This freedom extends to any element of a presented character's profile. Don't like their common phrase? Don't use it. Hate that they're carrying a bag of rocks? Change it to a sack of silverfish instead. Dismayed at a creature's proposed challenge rating? Adjust their HP like you always do. This is your book now. These are your characters. Embrace your ability to reshape everything about them as if you'd created them yourself. After all, you're the one who has to deal with them at your table—they should be someone you like.

This book also features three one-shot adventures. Some of the NPCs associated with the adventures are locked into place and others will be determined at random, but that shouldn't stop you from mining them for use in any capacity at your table or replacing the proposed NPCs or settings with some your players already know. And because every party finds a way to latch onto a small detail and spin it into a mountain they must climb, the **Side-Quest Generator** randomly links NPCs within this book with clear objectives and defined obstacles so the party can get to work chasing geese.

This book was created using the System Resource Document for the Fifth Edition of the world's most popular TTRPG but is compatible with as many RPG systems as you're willing to transcribe or transpose its inhabitants into. The license for the SRD is printed for your convenience on pg. 268. Passing references to material from this resource have been marked in bold (monsters and magic items) or are in italics (spells).

What this Book is Not

The Game Master's Book of Non-Player Characters is not a tome of tradesmen, bar wenches or king's guard. Well, it is—it's just not organized that way. Just as you are not defined solely by your job, marital status or birthright, the individuals in this title are presented as unique personalities with problems and pastimes, dreams and debts, curses and callings. Any one of them could be a blacksmith or queen in disguise. In some cases occupations have been assigned as part of a character's backstory, but lots of real people have two (or even nine!) jobs—the fantasy world is no different. The intention is that any character written could plug in as an NPC when you need one on the fly. Any one of these characters could be a tavern owner or cult leader or poor sap being chased down the street by an angry wyvern—in fact, a person could be all three simultaneously. So when you need a character in the moment, determine the relevant section and subsection and go from there. (For even more chaos, use the table on pg. 267 to choose a character at random and see where things go.) That doesn't necessarily explain why a queen would be the sole proprietor of the inn your party just walked into, but that brings us to our next point…

This book doesn't have all the answers. What it does contain are possibilities. Each character presented comes with a number of story hooks, but most of them will only matter if you choose to connect them to something larger. The details provided are meant to serve you, not slow you down, so if you aren't inspired by them (or simply have no idea where they might lead) feel free to exclude whatever you like, or change things to suit your needs. Sometimes the provided details will name NPCs that aren't outlined anywhere in this title. Sometimes arcane artifacts or magic macguffins will be listed among a character's belongings, wants and needs or secrets or obstacles. Some are described (in bold italics) but most are not. This is by design. Just because a detail exists does not mean it is relevant to your party's needs or aims. But it could be!

Finally, while the details presented for each character might line up in a way that seems as though each aspect of their lives are connected, not every listed particular of their personality is impacted or informed by the others. In fact, some of the details listed are just that—some of the details. Perhaps a queen's consort is described as being blind. Maybe he was blind before becoming her consort, or perhaps, as she wished him to look upon no other, he was blinded on their wedding night as part of their arrangement. The fact that this man is blind doesn't necessarily have anything to do with the fact that his current desire is to address the wraiths haunting his marital bedchamber—unless you as the GM decide he's the only one that can see them. In sum, if you introduce an NPC and they provoke a series of questions you aren't certain about the answers to, you may need to improvise a little—which you were going to have to do anyway! At least you'll know what everyone's carrying.

How to Use this Book

On each page, a character's name will be presented. (with appropriate nicknames framed in quotes). Most characters have an associated common phrase—a deft shortcut that'll help your players recall an NPC when your accents start to blend together. Common phrases are styled like this:

"If you say so!"

Because most of the action at a table takes place in your players' imaginations, descriptive copy has been written to be read verbatim upon first introduction and is styled like this:

> An average man of average height and average build in an unremarkable outfit but with spectacular shoes.

The rest of the material is for you to know and your players to find out. You'll see "For the…" notes, meant to be shared with particularly observant or perceptive or intuitive or intelligent party members at GM discretion. You'll then find relevant backstory information, followed by useful info broken out into the categories below. Some will matter immediately, some later on and some of it won't ever come up, which is a real shame, because I spent a lot of time on this stuff.

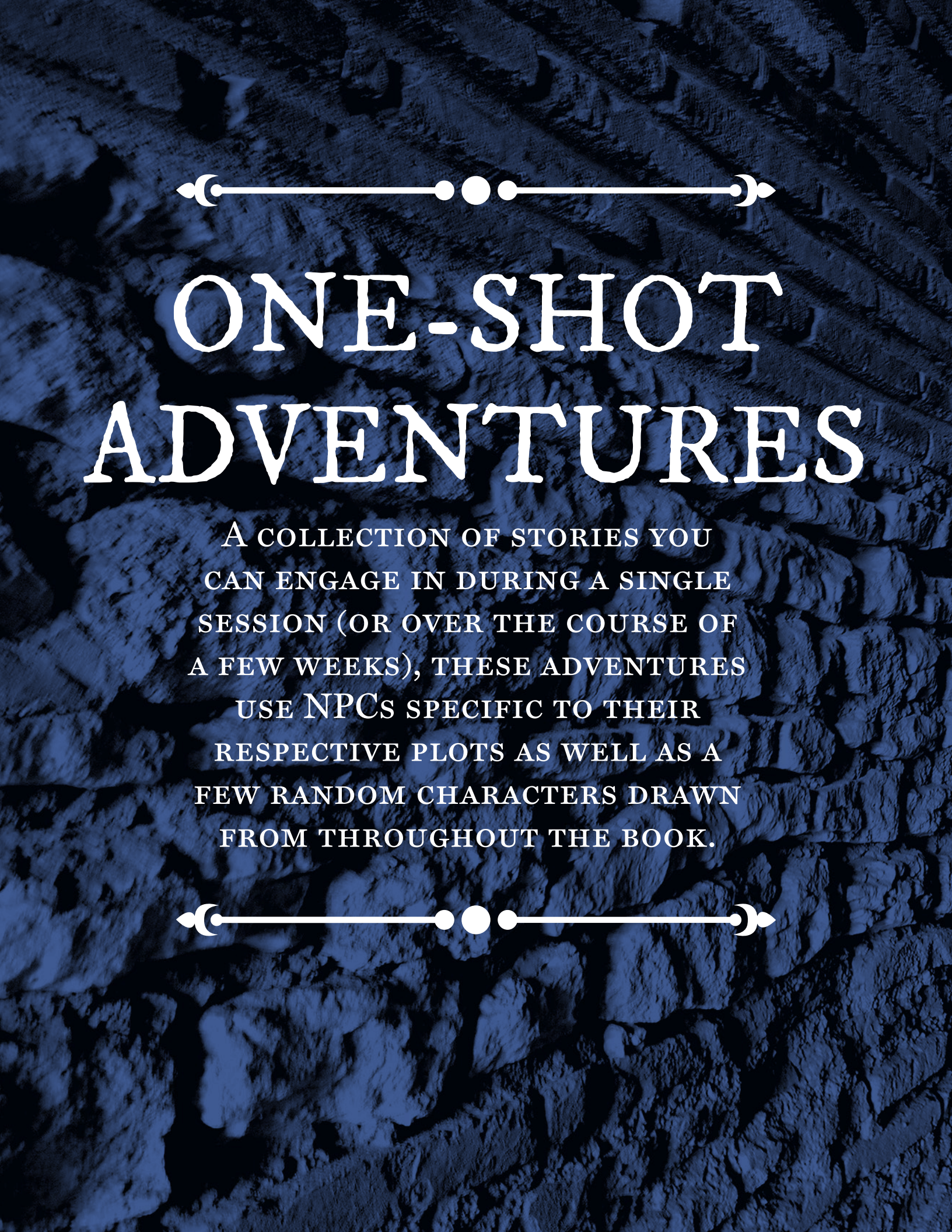
◆ **Wants & Needs** The thing(s) currently occupying the majority of this character's thoughts or motivating their actions. A person can offer your players directions while also worrying about their dying rose bushes.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The things(s) these characters might keep to themselves or the reasons they might seek the party's aid (those roses are cursed!).

◆ **Carrying** The stuff a character has on their person. Think they should have something else? They do.

In general, most of the characters presented should use commoner's stats unless otherwise noted, at GM discretion. In several cases expanded stat blocks with thematic features and abilities have been provided. Apologies in advance if they throw off the balance of power at your table and kill everything your players have ever loved—that wasn't my intention. Unless it was yours.

WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, please enjoy *The Game Master's Book of Non-Player Characters*. Similarities between characters presented here and individuals who exist in real life are purely coincidental. All efforts were made to apologize in advance to those for whom this statement is only partially true. If you run into trouble, reach out: @GameMaster_5e



ONE-SHOT ADVENTURES

A collection of stories you can engage in during a single session (or over the course of a few weeks), these adventures use NPCs specific to their respective plots as well as a few random characters drawn from throughout the book.

10
WHERE THERE'S SMOKE...
A simple job in a small town gets monstrous.

24
HIDDEN HORRORS
Searching for clues to abductions in a big city.

36
UPSIDE DOWN
Fighting for freedom in an underground kingdom.

Where There's Smoke...

After the party learns of a dangerous beast lurking around a small town, they must work with an up-and-coming adventurer to protect a rare crop.

An Adventure Suitable for Levels 1-5

Upon arriving in a small town abutting the wilderness, the party encounters a local, Benjamin Dabbler, being informed his livelihood (if not his life) is under threat from a terrifying **chimera**. This news comes from a budding adventurer, Cyndil Trueshot, whom Ben hired to guard his first planting of an experimental livestock feed. Ben asks the party if they're for hire while Cyndil offers a few elven tips for tackling this beast—as well as ingredients for ***Chimera's Bane***, a concoction she claims will take the creature down a peg. If the party wants Ben's coin they'll need to gather the ingredients for Chimera's Bane, then steel themselves for battle against one of the forest's most fearsome predators.

Adventure Location

This adventure takes place in the immediate area of Wayside, a predominantly human outpost which can be placed in any frontier region or borderland (or can be swapped out for a similar, pre-established town in an ongoing campaign at GM discretion). Wayside is far enough from civilization that there's potential danger from encroaching monsters (to say nothing of thieves and the nearby **goblin** settlement along the river), but close enough to the main roads to be utilized as a stopover for brave souls daring to explore the wilderness. As such, the residents here are accustomed to hiring adventurers—who more often than not are short on the coin necessary for supplies or upgrading gear—to do odd jobs in this relatively rural township.

So, why is your party here? That's entirely up to them. If incorporating this adventure into part of an ongoing campaign, the town of Wayside (or one like it) is well-known among adventuring types for its reliable supply shops, kind (if exploitable) populace and dirt cheap (if low quality) ale; it's as good a place as any to stop through as they're wandering from one adventure to the next. If this is your party's first adventure together, it could easily serve as the catalyst that bonds them for a full campaign.

Setting Up

Knowing this is the last place for supplies and a clean bed before embarking into the untamed wilds, there are plenty of reasons for a few adventurous types to be wandering around Wayside. Try to determine ahead of time what your party (or, if indivduals, party-to-be) would need from the Bargain Ben, the main supply shop in town. The action of this adventure begins outside the Bargain Ben, where its halfling proprietor Ben Dabbler (pg. 147) is gesticulating wildly at Cyndil Trueshot (pg. 128) an elven woman in scorched adventurer's garb. These characters, alongside Halodreth Emberwhite (pg. 139) are the primary NPCs for this adventure. The party is also likely to encounter some **goblins, a chimera** and "the Low Elves," a group of burgeoning adventurers who occasionally go on quests with Cyndil. The identities of the Low Elves can be determined at random by rolling on the table on pg. 267, and giving those characters **assassin, bandit, berserker, scout** or **noble** stats at GM discretion. If you're running this adventure for an entry-level party, it's recommended you include Grak of the Grick (pg. 121) and Preet Slyfoot (pg. 146) as their ability to heal others when the going gets tough may come in handy.

The adventure is intended to take place over the course of a 24-hour period, with a long rest suggested between Parts 5 and 6. Setting the start of the adventure around midday is ideal. In a town this size, an argument this heated would be spectacle enough to draw the attention of anyone with ears to hear. When Ben notices a few adventurous types looking on in earnest at his predicament he would immediately attempt to grab their attention and approach them for aid.

GM Note: Arriving at the Beginning

Benjamin Dabbler is just that—one who is willing to experiment here and there with just about everything. An arcane academy dropout with a bard's curiosity and a druid's green thumb, when he isn't minding his supply shop he dabbles in botany. He's spent sleepless nights hacking together hybrids of particular potion ingredients with several spell components in the hopes of uncovering some breathtaking breakthrough. For the most part, however, his creations immediately wither, prove incredibly toxic or never sprout. This pattern came to an end this past spring, however, when he created Heroes' Wort, (pg. 147) a proprietary blend of several potent plant species that he serenaded with absent-minded humming each night for a month. Initially thrilled the plant lived at all (heroic, really—hence the name) it soon outgrew his hobbyist's greenhouse and Ben invested his life savings in a plot of land on the outskirts of town to grow the stuff in bulk—all before determining whether or not he'd created the next *goodberry* or just good lettuce.

As it turns out, he created something in between: a crop that proved particularly filling for cattle, and alluring to some of the area's less docile beasts. Fearing encroaching creatures would devour his life's work before the first harvest, Ben hired a passing group of adventurers (the Low Elves, led by Cyndil Trueshot), to guard the crop for a few nights so he could build a perimeter fence. Cyndil's colleagues balked at the gig as little more than a babysitting operation, but Cyndil agreed and spent the next evening watching the field alone. While whiling away the hours, Cyndil decided to try smoking a bit of dried Heroes' Wort on a whim. The results were incredible. She felt faster, more focused, more in tune with the things that made her great—as if she'd been adventuring for years instead of months.

Rather than tell Ben about her discovery, Cyndil made a snap decision—she'd create a false controversy to keep others away from the crop and work with her adventuring pals to make off with as much of the Heroes' Wort as they could. They'd become legendary adventurers in no time, and besides, why does the world need a crop that makes cows feel super-sated? Her allies will be back in Wayside tonight and plan to make off with most of the Heroes' Wort by morning. Cyndil determined the best way to keep folks away from the crop in the meantime would be to generate a hoax that would scare them away from the field. Knowing there might be adventurous sorts about, instead of crying wolf, she cried chimera, setting herself ablaze and faking a few flesh wounds for maximum effect. But when it becomes clear Ben is willing to hire a new group of adventurers to guard the crop, Cyndil will have to improvise—a skill she possesses in spades.

Part 1: A Recipe for Disaster

Before reading the flavor text below, establish where each member of your party is in relation to the Bargain Ben, the supply shop run by Benjamin Dabbler (whom they may hear arguing from across town). Once they've maneuvered close enough to see the biggest supply shop in town, read the flavor text below:

> Outside a supply post that seems a bit bigger than nearly every building in town, beneath its sign "The Bargain Ben," with an E, you see two figures—a halfling man and an elven woman, whose red and blue leather armor looks scorched from flame—in a heated discussion. As you move closer the elf's voice becomes clearer, "It was a chimera! Swooped out of the sky and nearly torched the whole crop! I took a few shots at it and it lit off into the woods but it'll be back," she gestures wildly with a bow of elven make. "When I agreed to the gig you said I might be dealing with coyotes or maybe an owlbear at worst. You didn't mention I'd be fighting a three-headed fire-breathing monstrosity!" The halfling this charred woman is upbraiding wrings his hat in his hands, then stares blankly across the town square, as if he's watching his entire future dissipate like a morning fog. He sees you observing and immediately runs your way. "Excuse me! Hi! Yes! Are you...are you all... adventurers? I—I—I need help! I have coin! Supplies! I...have any of you ever...killed a chimera?"

This is Ben Dabbler, and the woman with the burned clothes and the beautiful bow is Cyndil Trueshot. Ben will listen intently to the party's response to his query, and posit the following information as appropriate:

- Ben hired Cyndil to safeguard his crop, a spectacular plant of his own invention that has proven quite tempting to some of the larger creatures in the nearby forest—including, to his dismay, a chimera.
- He can offer up to 400gp (though he'd start his offer lower) if they kill the chimera and protect his field. But mostly to kill the chimera, as he's already paid Cyndil to protect the field.
- Should the party successfully haggle any further (at GM discretion), once reaching his limit in terms of coin, Ben would offer to upgrade their gear by one AC tier if possible—and would do so upon their agreement to kill the chimera. The gold would come upon completion of the job.
- His crop, a plant of his own creation called Heroes' Wort, is particularly alluring to beasts of all types, but he's planning to market it as feed for livestock—particularly cows—as it is more filling than any other plant he's encountered, which means farmers in semi-rural areas won't need as much land upon

which to raise their cattle. Could change the world! It's the future! And his crop is all there is of the stuff.
• Heroes' Wort was created through ingenuity, a bit of wizardry and a not insignificant fluke of luck. He's tried to replicate the process since but has come up short, in part because he thinks his humming had something to do with the effects (he once dabbled as a bard) but he doesn't know what he was humming over the course of a month. The planted crop is all there is, so protecting it is incredibly important.
• Ben doesn't know anything about chimera—only that they've got three heads and one of them breathes fire and that's enough for him to know he should steer clear. He will refer the party to Cyndil for chimera questions.

While Ben solicits help from the party, Cyndil will evaluate the party while leaning on her bow. She appears displeased to see them but will flash a quick smile and nod to Ben to direct the party's attention back to his offer about the chimera. Once it appears clear these newcomers are willing to do battle with the chimera, Cyndil is compelled to intervene:

> "Sorry, I don't mean to pry," interrupts the elven woman, who takes a rolled cigarette from behind her ear and lights up, puffing smoke at all of you as if to create a smokescreen for her big debut. The smoke has a somewhat piney scent. As she exhales, the woman smiles and extends a bloody, ash-covered hand. "Huzzah. Cyndil Trueshot: Leader of the Low Elves and archer extraordinaire. What, exactly, makes you think you're qualified to take on a chimera? Do you know anything about them? How they move? How they attack? How much they enjoy playing with their food?"

Cyndil will press the party and provide information both as a means of showcasing her impressive pedigree and as a way of feeling out their skill levels to determine if they're a threat to her overall scheme. She will reveal the following as appropriate:

• Chimeras have three heads: one like a goat's, one like a dragon's and one like a lion's. To say nothing of its claws. It can attack with each head in a flash, and also breathes fire that's as deadly as a young dragon's.
• Oh yeah, and the thing can fly.
• Fighting one alone is lunacy even for an adventurer as skilled as Cyndil.
• The chimera swooped out of cloud cover and blasted her with flames but she dove out of the way (naturally) and it only managed to singe her. Its claw scraped her arm. She peppered it with arrows to scare it off, but it might return.
• Ben could agree to pay more (if he hasn't already) and if they're serious about killing the chimera, they should ask for more—because it's deadly work.
• Any Wisdom (Insight) checks into Cyndil's retelling of the chimera attack would, at best, reveal an individual prone to exaggeration as opposed to someone lying entirely.
• The party would be wise to steer clear of the field—that's her gig. And her allies, the Low Elves, are already on their way to serve as backup. She'll keep the field safe—they should focus on the chimera.

GM Note: Underlying Motivations

Cyndil will do her best to scare the adventurers off the job entirely, as she'd prefer them not to be snooping around the field. Ben, for his part, will try to reassure the party that chimeras aren't all that dangerous, but a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check would reveal he absolutely knows they are—he's just desperate to get someone to take care of this problem on his behalf. Once it becomes clear the party is interested in the job, Cyndil will redirect the conversation in order to buy herself and her allies a little more time. Thinking on her feet, and boosted by the effects of the Heroes' Wort, she will suggest the party get some Chimera's Bane—a concoction of her own spontaneous invention.

Once the terms of the contract with the party are established, Cyndil would state the following:

> "If you're dead set on getting eaten by the chimera, you should at least make it hard on the beast, hmm? What you need is Chimera's Bane. It's an old elven trick, but with a little tinkering by yours truly. Proprietary, of course, so not available in stores but pretty easy to make if you have the ingredients. Here—" She pulls out a scrap of parchment and an arrow. Scraping some of the soot of her armor with her arrow's tip she then uses the soot as a sort of ink and starts writing out a list of ingredients.

Cyndil will hand the party the list (pg. 13) and explain Ben might have some of what they need, but their best bet would be to check with Halodreth Emberwhite, the local alchemist/wizard, and owner of Scribbles & Nibs.

Any successful check related to the existence of Chimera's Bane or the ingredients on the list (DC 15) will reveal it seems similar to a concoction used to keep griffon mounts from destroying their hawsers and saddles, but that the name "Chimera's Bane" is novel. Spellcasters will recognize some of the ingredients as common arcane components, but the last few items on the list do not ring a bell.

✠ CHIMERA'S BANE ✠

Mix...

- 2 Lizard Eyes
- 8 Dragonfly Wings

With one handful each of...

- Sage Blossom
- Wizard's Breath
- Muckroot

Muddle to mash, then combine with...

- Two pints Goblin Knot

Stir over heat for 4-6 hours (preferably outdoors) until well-combined. Let cool before applying (unless you're immune to fire—in which case, lucky you...you get to be chimera bait).

If the party asks Ben about the list he too will direct them to Halodreth Emberwhite's apothecary, Scribbles & Nibs, which carries many arcane components and rare herbs. As a former adventurer himself, Halodreth may have the remaining items or be able to help locate them.

After providing the list, Cyndil will excuse herself to clean up and get back to work:

> Cyndil puts her half-smoked cigarette out on her armor, then tucks the remainder into her pocket. "Good luck out there. You're gonna need it. Just remember—if you see a chimera, the worst thing you can do is show fear. The second worst thing you can do is let it eat you raw. Better to let it cook you first—being burned alive is better than being eaten alive. Maybe. Huzzah!" And with that, she skips off toward the Buzzing Bee, an inn across the street. Ben Dabbler smiles and says "She's an odd duck. But pretty steady with the bow. Didn't know she was a smoker but...oh well. Nobody's perfect."

Part 2: Shopping Spree

Scribbles & Nibs is located on the opposite side of the street from the Bargain Ben. Ben, Cyndil or any local could provide directions to the plain door labeled simply with the word "Enter." Once the party locates it, read the following flavor text as they walk inside.

> The door creaks opens, revealing a dimly lit shop, candles placed at varying heights in odd nooks among the room's shelves and display cases. The air is thick with innumerable scents and a fair amount of dust. A raven on a perch near a window watches your movements with intensity. You hear a voice boom from above: "I'll be down in a jiff."

As the party waits, the ceiling groans occasionally from the movements upstairs. The party would have time to snoop around the shop before Halodreth descends to see what assistance he can provide. Basic spellcasting components, blank books, parchment, ink bottles and a variety of spell focus items can be seen—not so much "on display" as they are "part of the general clutter." Herbs and plants grow in boxes taking up the remaining free space. There seems to be no logic to the organization.

Halodreth will enter the room and get straight to business:

> You hear a few thuds from above and then ambling steps coming down the stairs as a middle-aged man with greying brown hair and a well-oiled beard appears, his face sporting laugh lines around his eyes, his loose hanging clothes not-quite concealing a considerable belly. He puffs on a simple pipe while absent-mindedly blowing smoke rings. "I'm Halodreth. My familiar Hubert over there already sized you up for me. What all do you need?"

GM Note: Ask and You Shall Receive

If the party mentions that they're planning to do battle with a chimera, Halodreth will make it clear he is keenly interested in chimera eggs. He will gladly pay 50gp for each intact egg they recover and 5gp for any egg shells. Both are unique components for some relatively obscure summoning rituals. Additionally, chimera omelettes are a particular delicacy in some circles.

If the party mentions the list (to Halodreth or in front of his raven familiar), he will ask to see it and lay it out on a counter to better read it, and will ask what the ingredients are for, mostly out of professional curiosity. If the party is evasive, he will shrug and move on with business. He's not one to pry.

Halodreth will respond as follows to specific inquiries about an ingredient or share all the details if provided the list.

- **Lizard Eyes:** *"I'm sure I've got a few around here somewhere."* He does. They cost 1sp each.
- **Dragonfly Wings:** *"I'm fairly certain I've got...yes. More than a few. 4 copper each."*
- **Sage Blossom:** *"I have bundles of the stuff. Over there. Under Hubert. I use it to...mask his make."* If the party balks at buying a product covered in bird droppings, Halodreth would tell the party they can pick their own from any hillside around Wayside. He would describe it as a low-growing weed with tiny gray-green flowers.

- **Wizard's Breath:** *"Over there, I think, no—that's Wizard's Barf...here, here—all you could need. One silver piece."*
- **Muckroot:** *"Never heard of muckroot. Heard of milkroot, though. Just thinking through what you're making here, that's likely what you need. Don't keep any in the shop. Stinks something fierce and it's only good fresh. You can gather more than you could ever want from the river banks just outside of town. The river's so low you can walk along the banks or right down in the bed if that's your pleasure. Just be wary—other side of the river is goblin territory. They like to snack on milkroot, the gritty buggers."*

  If asked for more intel, Halodreth will clarify if the party intends to travel upriver for milkroot they will need to go past the first few hills on the edge of town. He can also describe the plant as having willowy stalks with brown cones on the ends that weep a foul smelling white liquid when snapped from their roots.
- **Goblin Knot:** *"Goblin Knot? Not a plant I've heard of. Could just be a misspelling. Or maybe that K is an S? Yeah.* Parvus cobalus muco involuta. *Goblin snot. Bugbear boogies. Used in pungent poultices and unctuous ointments due to its veritable viscosity. It binds ingredients together, provided you don't care how noxious the result is. For reasons I'm sure you can imagine, I don't keep any around. You'll need to ask a goblin."*

If Halodreth is specifically asked his opinion about the recipe he will surmise the result will certainly be disgusting at the very least—enough to make any creature think twice about getting close to you, much less eating you.

Halodreth will suggest the party's best bet for gathering the remaining items on their list is a trip by the riverside, just over the ridge into goblin country. If they're lucky, they might find a lone goblin or two and simply ask for a little mucus. If they run into a group, they might want to tread lightly—goblins are small, but their arrows are as deadly as those of a creature three times their size.

Halodreth is also happy to sell the party any of the available items at his apothecary's shop, at GM discretion.

Part 3: Down by the Riverside

At this point the intention is for the party to make their way to collect the muckroot/milkroot and goblin snot they need to complete the recipe for Chimera's Bane. If they feel like wandering around town that's certainly their right. If they choose to explore the town, they may run into Cyndil Trueshot, who would likely be bragging about besting the chimera. Once the party start making their way to the river, read the following flavor text:

> You find the sun in your eyes as you head west out of Wayside. You follow the main road and as it starts to narrow over a hillside you see a small wooden bridge. Halodreth suggested you go up river, and even though the water level is extremely low, you can tell it's flowing—albeit slowly—to the south. There's a small track that looks like it's used by animals and maybe daring hikers along the river bank, but Halodreth mentioned you could also walk in the riverbed itself, and you can see a reasonable path down just by the side of the bridge.

The party can choose to travel in the riverbed or along the path that abuts it. The riverbed is a little muddy, whereas the path is somewhat meandering and natural cliffs caused by erosion rise and fall in various spots, meaning each path is likely to take the same amount of time to travel.

Whether walking along the river or down in the mud, the party will not see any signs of milkroot.

If walking in the riverbed, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check would reveal small footprints, that some in the party might recognize as goblinoid (at GM discretion). These tracks suggest somewhere between 5-10 goblins marching with purpose. Following them will lead directly to a patch of milkroot. Once the party discovers this milkroot, jump to the flavor text below.

If walking along the path, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check would reveal large paw prints as well as some hoofprints. It's clear that a heavy beast trod this path recently. Could be an **owlbear** or a **brown bear** tracking a ram for an afternoon snack or it could be a chimera. Difficult to say. The paw prints head upriver, but disappear at one of the banks overlooking the muddy riverbed. In the riverbed are a few plants matching the description of milkroot. Once the party discovers this milkroot, read the flavor text below.

> Rising out of the muddy riverbed, you see a few stalks of bright green topped with small brown cylinders. As they sway in the breeze and your eyes zero in on what you hope is some milkroot, you see a few more brown objects bopping into view around the low river's bend, roughly 60 feet away from you: Three goblins walking in a line, the largest carrying an egg the size of its head aloft, as if offering it to the gods. You become aware of two more goblins on the ridge of the high river bank on the western side of the river. Their arrows are nocked and trained on you. There is a momentary pause, before one shouts "You. You. You are in goblin place. Why?"

These goblins have just raided a large cave in the nearby hills and found an unattended clutch of eggs. They quickly stole all four from the nest and ran before the mother, in this case a chimera, returned. Now the goblins are stoked about their victory and looking to celebrate by feasting on some delicious muckroot (what the players know as milkroot).

These goblins are not spoiling for a fight but are nasty enough to get into a scrap at a moment's notice. The leader (the one with the egg, Grumple, should the party ask his name) does speak Common, and will attempt to scare the party off with boasts and challenges. If the party seizes the opportunity to negotiate, the leader will certainly be willing to trade some goblin snot for anything of credible value. He would attempt to take advantage of the party to wrangle the best deal possible. [*"You ask for rare prize. Need give good treasures."*]

GM Note: Keeping an Eye on Things

Cyndil Trueshot has been carefully following the party at a distance to ensure they don't get too close to Ben's field and ruin her plans. She will soon join the fray.

If anyone in the group is able to communicate in Goblin, the leader would preen under the presumed deference, giving the player advantage on any diplomacy-related checks. The party may also attempt to gain information from the goblins.

What the goblins would reveal and/or bluff about:

- The goblin band just explored a cave and are lucky to have escaped the demon creatures, dozens of them, that guarded the eggs. It was a masterfully executed raid. Both of these facts are false, and can be discerned with a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check. The goblins don't want to share the egg but might be interested in some kind of trade.
- Never heard of milkroot. The party can take all the milkroot they want but the muckroot belongs to goblins. (The goblin name for the milkroot plant is muckroot.)
- Are there chimeras? Hundreds of them. The party should flee before they get eaten. Only strong types like goblins can survive these lands. This is another fabrication—and much easier to deduce, at GM discretion.

If the party reaches a stalemate in negotiations with these creatures, either from bad die rolls or making demands instead of offering a trade, move ahead to the events in Part 4: Cyndil Arrives.

If an accord is reached the goblin leader will wave for a "volunteer" to provide a dose of goblin snot, which you should allow to play out before jumping to Part 4.

Part 4: Cyndil Arrives

At some point during the interaction with the goblins, Cyndil makes a surprise appearance. Perhaps a keen-eyed party member watching the surroundings for more goblins will see her appear. At GM discretion, the party would notice the goblins on the riverbank pointing to a nearby hilltop, directing the party's attention to where Cyndil is standing.

> On a nearby hilltop stands Cyndil Trueshot, as if posed for dramatic effect. Hat brim pulled low, cloak billowing, a red cinder glow flares. She takes a long pull on a cigarette, exhales the smoke while casually flicking ash into the breeze. With liquid grace she draws two arrows in quick succession. Both arrows fly into the chest of a goblin in the riverbed, sending its body cartwheeling into the weeds. The remaining goblins scream in rage and ready attacks. "Huzzah," declares Cyndil.

At this point there is no more negotiating, and the goblins will battle until they are run off or killed by the party and Cyndil. The battle will occur along the riverbank, with a relevant map on pg. 17.

GM Note: Where There's One Goblin...

Depending on the level of your party, you can adjust the number of goblins for this encounter to suit your needs, with at least one **goblin boss** (who carries a sack with 3 additional chimera eggs) and an average of 1.5 goblins per player. Cyndil will fight on the party's behalf. You can also add Flash Flood (pg. 16).

Presuming a party victory, Cyndil will advise the players how lucky it is she caught up to them or bad things could have happened.

> Cyndil scrapes a little goblin blood off her cheek. "Well well—lucky I was in the neighborhood!" She nods at you all. "Not bad for a couple of rookies. But now we must celebrate. Drinks on me at the Buzzing Bee."

A suitable amount of goblin snot, a subjective measurement at best, can be obtained from any goblin corpse. Milkroot is easy enough to find. If the goblin boss was dispatched, the party would find a sack containing three more chimera eggs (assuming the bag wasn't dropped or blown up).

If the party did not receive Halodreth's bounty for chimera eggs, Cyndil would comment that the eggs might

be valuable to a wizard. If no one searches the fallen goblins, Cyndil will, advising the party that any kill can yield a prize. If no one in the party tries to identify the eggs or just dismisses them, Cyndil will identify them in a somewhat amazed tone before recovering and indicating this is proof a chimera must be nesting nearby. Cyndil will gather the eggs if the PCs have no interest in them. At GM discretion she may ask for an egg as a cut for helping with the goblins.

Cyndil would discourage the party from tracking any goblins that ran (*"In my experience, where there's one goblin there's usually one dozen..."*) or attempting to find the chimera's lair (*"Last thing you want to be doing when the sun's going down is traipsing off into a cave that leads who knows where. We can explore the area in the morning—when we're fresh—plus, we gotta brew up some Chimera's Bane!"*).

Cyndil would remind the party that brewing Chimera's Bane overnight will make it more effective and a restful night's sleep will ensure they'll be fresh to deal with the chimera come morning. Why not head for the tavern?

GM Note: Thinking/Drinking on the Fly

Cyndil has plans to abscond with as much Heroes' Wort as she can overnight. Her companions, the Low Elves, are due to meet her back at the Buzzing Bee. She will attempt to get the party good and drunk and send them to bed. If any member of the party asks why she isn't guarding the field, she would wink and say "*Between you and me, ol' Ben isn't paying me enough to guard a field from a chimera. Certainly not enough to keep me from downing a few ales with my new mates. Huzzah!*" If the party is insistent, Cyndil would go so far as to feign alcoholism (*"If I don't get a beer in me soon I might pass out!"*).

Part 5: To the Tavern!

The primary goal of this section is for the characters to take advantage of a long rest. But first? Drinks.

You make your way out of the muck of the river and along the path back toward Wayside. By the time you arrive, evening has officially settled in and the small town is lit with torches and abuzz with the sound of a close community enjoying the night air. Cyndil leads the way to the Buzzing Bee, what she claims is the most popular tavern and inn in town—and upon arrival you can see that in this regard she's avoided hyperbole. The Buzzing Bee is humming with locals and as you approach you see a few figures leaning against the tavern's side wall, whom Cyndil immediately embraces in an awkward group hug. "My Low Elves! Meet...what do you call yourselves?"

Goblin River Bed

Though it's not a great location to seek out fresh drinking water, if you're looking for muckroot or an ambush, you've found the perfect spot.

Getting Around

The river bed as presented is just one portion of a long body of water (well, mud). The riverbed itself ***(1)*** is currently loose, heavy mud and plenty of farmers whose cattle have wandered into the muck can attest that moving through it is a slog. The bed of the river is difficult terrain. The banks are steep on both sides ***(2, 3)***, rising between 15 and 20 ft. along the river bed (at GM discretion) and requiring a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to scale. Landing on one's feet following a leap from the banks down into the river bed requires a bit of finesse in order to keep from slipping and falling prone into the mire, represented by a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. A fallen tree creates a bridge from one side of the bank to the other ***(4)***. A DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is required to cross at full speed. A creature can walk carefully, forfeiting half its movement, to avoid this check. This fallen tree is only sturdy enough to hold two medium (or three small) creatures at a time. If this total is exceeded (at GM discretion), the bridge gives way. Creatures on top of the bridge will suffer 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall. Creatures beneath can avoid similar damage by succeeding on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.

Take Cover

There are several natural elements in this area that provide cover or places to hide, a fact the goblins who dwell nearby love to use to their advantage. The dense trees along the bank can offer full cover ***(5)***, as do the rocks and boulders in and around the river bed ***(6)***, at GM discretion. Creatures at river level have partial cover if being attacked at range by creatures on the upper level unless the attacks are made from the edge of the banks, as the angle is relatively extreme.

Flash Flood!

For higher level parties looking for more of a challenge from this encounter, at GM discretion, a rush of water could come barreling down on the party—the result of a flash flood from storms in the highlands outside of town. At the top of the second round per initiative, a wall of water between the river banks begins surging toward the party from the top of the map. Starting the following round, the water moves 120 ft. at the top of each round. Players in the path of this surge of water must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) saving throw or be carried with the flood, suffering 1d8 bludgeoning damage per turn they are carried.

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GM Note: The Low Elves

These individuals are here to assist Cyndil with her plan to make off with the Heroes' Wort—but in general are good (if chaotic) adventurers. To determine who they are, roll on the table on pg. 267. If the level of the party is 3 or below, it's recommended you include Grak of the Grick (pg. 121) and Preet Slyfoot (pg. 146). For a Level 1 party, include two more NPCs so there are a total of five Low Elves (including Cyndil). Describe the Low Elves to the party as appropriate.

As part of introducing her companions to the party, Cyndil would encourage the party to come up with a name for themselves if they don't already have one (*"Otherwise, how will bards spin yarns about you that will echo through history? Huzzah!"*).

Cyndil would then invite the party into the Buzzing Bee for a round on her and the Low Elves (*"Huzzah!"*). The Buzzing Bee's bartender(s) and other patrons can be selected using the Random Character Generator on pg. 267 or at GM discretion.

As the bar scene unfolds, give your party time to settle in and relax for the evening with some well-earned cups of ale or its signature mead. As they crowd around a table with Cyndil, she would offer them a chance to enjoy some tavern games, as detailed below.

GM Note: Last Call

Tavern games are fun. But if you're attempting to close out this session in short order, they could extend your session by 15-45 minutes—assess and include at your discretion.

Between, or perhaps even during, the games or over mugs of mead in the bar, Cyndil is approached by locals

Buzzing Bee Tavern Games *(Optional)*

To add some opportunities for your players to test their skills, choose a challenge from the list. Cyndil will flatly refuse any challenges involving archery because, *"It wouldn't really be fair, would it?"* Prior to any difficult portion of a challenge Cyndil would have a quick smoke of her hand-rolled cigarettes, improving her odds. Feel free to use actual chance or just have Cyndil win, showing an amazingly high skill at crucial moments, as long as she takes a drag of Heroes' Wort. Cyndil's main goal is to keep the party occupied and inside the tavern while the Low Elves prepare for the next stage of her plan. Her secondary goal would be to claim a chimera egg as an ironic souvenir (if possible).

- **Darts (Basic).** Each player throws three darts. Roll a d20 for each dart. Add the participants' Dexterity modifier and proficiency bonus to each roll. The total of the three rolls is each participant's score, highest score wins.

- **Darts (Expert).** Each player throws five darts. Prior to each roll the player selects a single number on the die as the bullseye. If the die roll matches the selected number the throw is a bullseye (30 points). The winner is the player with the highest raw total from the five rolls, including bullseyes.

- **Quick Draw.** Each player stands an equal distance from a target, dagger sheathed. On a mark they both draw the dagger and throw in one motion. Distance from the center of the target is determined by the total of a thrown weapon attack with a natural 20 being a bullseye. Closest to the center (that is the highest total result) wins.

- **Pinfinger.** Each player places a hand palm down on the table with fingers spread apart. Taking a dagger in their other hand, the player stabs back and forth between the fingers, hopefully not hitting them. Players set the DC for this task using an appropriate skill check such as Dexterity (Sleight of Hand), or perhaps even Constitution, at GM discretion. The check represents the level of challenge, so the higher the skill check, the faster the player goes. Players can continue to take turns upbidding one another to higher difficulties until failing a check or backing out. Failing a check results in 1HP of damage and an automatic loss. The winner is the "fastest player," i.e. the highest skill check successfully completed.

- **Target Practice.** Someone consecutively spins three playing cards into the air. Each player tries to pin the cards to the wall with a knife toss. The tosses get progressively more difficult since they come one after the other. The To Hit DCs are as follows: First toss DC 12, second toss DC 15, third toss DC 18. Each hit is worth progressively more. One hit equals one point, two hits equals three points, three hits equals six points. First player to 12 points wins.

to hear about the chimera attack and how she survived. She will regale any who ask with a vivid description of events which include her daring ambush full of precise bow shots, barely dodging gouts of fire from the beast's dragon head, nearly being gored by the horns of the goat head and surviving a few paw attacks from its leonine claws. Perceptive players may notice the details of the story have grown more complicated over the course of the day as her original account merely involved avoiding the fiery breath weapon and a claw swipe. If confronted about the details of the story Cyndil would merely comment, *"Remember this: people don't care about the truth—they care about the story. You'll see. Stick with me, rookie."*

The party may attempt to find Halodreth to turn in their chimera eggs for coin, but they'll find his shop is closed.

The party can also use this time to try and make the Chimera's Bane. The ingredients are ground together into a pulp then placed over a fire until dissolved into a gummy paste. The salve is green, slimy and pungent.

When things are winding down, read the following flavor text:

> The tavern door opens and in walks Ben Dabbler, cap in hand. The moment Cyndil sees him she tips her hat your way— "Shhhhh I was never here! Let's rally in the morning, the beast is as good as dead..." before slinking away from the table and disappearing into the crowd. Ben approaches you all, fighting his way through the throngs of locals and finally to your table, holding a few sets of keys. "I heard you got what you needed today—hopefully you'll be ready for tomorrow. Here are some keys. Rooms upstairs on me. Just...please. Please. I'm begging you. Bag that chimera, hmm?"

GM Note: Final Arrangements

Level 1 or 2 parties could be leveled up during this long rest. Meanwhile, Cyndil would use this time to get in a quick 4-hour trance before exacting her plan. Once she's rested, she'll make her way to the field and rendezvous with the other Low Elves, who brought a wagon with them, and they'll begin cutting and packing the Heroes' Wort for transport to a warehouse a few towns over. If, the party is awake before dawn they might observe an adventuring group quietly leaving the inn with a wagon. Very perceptive characters may recognize this group as the Low Elves. If asked, Cyndil's compatriots merely say they are getting an early start to move ahead of any goblin raiding parties. They have already planned to head out of town and circle back to the harvest, just to be safe.

Part 6: Where There's Smoke...

> The sun is barely in the sky when you hear a clamoring in the hallways of the inn "Help help help!" You hear screaming, the nervous cries of Ben Dabbler. As you make your way into the hallway you can see Ben is pretty upset, and about to rip his hat in half with jitters. "The ch-ch-ch-chimera...it's back! The field...I can see smoke! Cyndil might already be done for!"

If the party asks questions of Ben, he does not know much beyond what he already told them—he woke early like he always does and noticed a bit of smoke coming off his field. He believes the chimera returned and finished off Cyndil before starting to devour the harvest. He continuously implores the party to hurry out and deal with the beast. The party can take a moment to gather their things and prepare to go out to the field. Ben will attempt to harry them along the entire time, reminding them to apply their Chimera's Bane if they remembered to mix the stuff.

From a distance there is nothing for the party to see. If they wait, despite Ben's protests, and observe from a afar a party member may eventually spot a small flicker of fire. The harvest does not appear to be burning, but something's not quite right.

Regardless of whether or not the party stayed back to observe, once on the move, observant characters would also detect signs of flames. The fire will appear to be slightly higher than crop level (from torches being moved by Cyndil and the other Low Elves). Perceptive characters will detect sounds of movement and maybe faint whispers. Once the party gets close enough to the crop, read the flavor text below.

> As you walk along the pathway into the crop rows, tall-stalked, wide-leaved plants blow in the wind—as if a storm is on the horizon. As the wind waves the crops, you see a momentary gap between the rows—and notice a clearing lit by two torches. The torches burn low on the far side of a wagon. A handful of shadows cast by the torchlight reveal at least three individuals carrying bundles of cut plants and loading them into a wagon. Hopping down off the wagon and silhouetted in torchlight, wearing a widebrimmed, telltale hat, is Cyndil Trueshot.

Can't we all just get along?

Should the party go the diplomatic route, Cyndil will take the lead for the Low Elves. She does, after all, already have a rapport with the party. Despite how outrageous it sounds, she informs the characters she took initiative to save the crop from a chimera attack. They have met Ben, so they know how timid he can be, and she did not want to bog him down in the details. He will be thrilled to discover the Heroes' Wort gathered and safe from any future harm. If fact, things are going so well the party ought to return to Wayside and relax. Cyndil will come across as very nervous and only vaguely invested in her reason for being in the field before dawn, and her ruse would be revealed with a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Attempts to convince Cyndil to tell the truth will be met with incredulity. Attempts to convince Cyndil to return to Wayside will be met with dismissal, as she's come too far and the work needs to be finished before dawn. If the party attempts to use magic to influence Cyndil while visible to other members of the Low Elves, they will view this as a threat. Move on to The Gloves Come Off. If the party draws out the confrontation too long, one of the Low Elves (not Cyndil) will attempt to subdue a party member. Move to The Gloves Come Off.

If Cyndil somehow convinces the players to return to Wayside, move on to the flavor text prior to Part 7 just as they begin to move away from the wagon or back into the field. This applies even if the party is only pretending to be headed to Wayside.

The Gloves Come Off

Eventually, scrappy adventurers will do what they do best: Scrap. Either the party will decide to resolve the issue by force or the Low Elves will become fed up with the party's interference and move to neutralize them. Facing off against Cyndil and her crew should feel like a showdown for the party, the climax of the adventure, using the encounter map on the opposite page.

GM Note: Fireworks Before the Finale

For lower level parties, make it seem like the Low Elves are gearing up for a fight, but just before things get going jump to the flavor text that leads to Part 7. For higher level parties (Level 5 or higher), feel free to let this aspect of the encounter go for a few rounds.

If the party decides force is in order the Low Elves will defend themselves. Cyndil's group aren't really looking to tarnish their reputation, and none of them are interested in murder. In the beginning all attacks

Heroes' Wort Field

The fruits (erm, leaves) of Benjamin Dabbler's labor for most of his adult life are entirely represented by this tiny field of Heroes' Wort. Sadly, the entire thing is about to go up in smoke.

Getting Around

This portion of the field is accessible from the surrounding area, and is divided by several paths ***(1)*** that crisscross the land and divide the Heroes' Wort into smaller croprows. The crop itself (as opposed to the pathways that divide the croprows) is difficult terrain. Walking through the crop does offer the advantage of partial cover, however.

Take Cover!

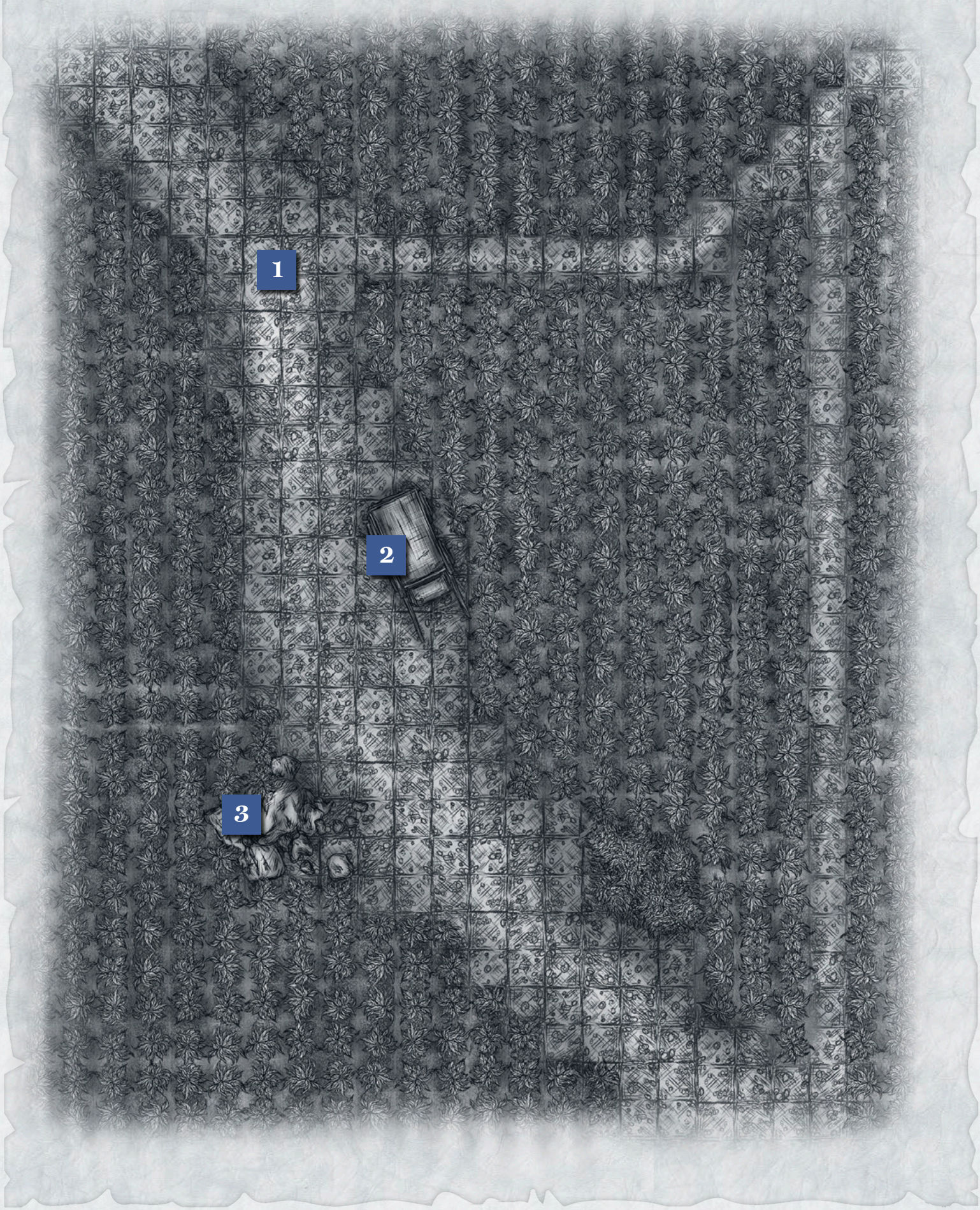
The wagon ***(2)*** Cyndil and the other Low Elves were using to load bales of Heroes' Wort can be used for three quarters to full cover at GM discretion, as can an additional pile of fertilizer and farm equipment ***(3)*** across the path from the wagon. Hiding behind the fertilizer does not come without its risks, however. Due to the overwhelming stink from the pile of mostly manure, any creature that spends more than one round within 5 ft. of this pile of fertilizer bags must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, or fall prone as they lose their dinner.

Ablaze

Heroes' Wort, as cultivated by Benjamin Dabbler, is as tall as corn stalks, with wide leaves like tobacco. When consumed, it is particularly filling, if extremely bland. A single leaf would make a medium creature feel full for approximately 4 hours. For reasons that have yet to be understood, this effect is doubled for creatures of bovine origin.

Heroes' Wort is also exceptionally flammable, taking only 10-20 seconds to fully combust once ignited. When burned it emits a scent not unlike fresh-cut pine. Any creature who inhales the smoke is subjected to the benefits of Heroes' Wort (+3 to Proficiency for 6 seconds), a fact Cyndil Trueshot has been using to her advantage ever since she discovered these effects. She's been carrying a handful of hand-rolled Heroes' Wort cigarettes with her ever since.

Starting with Part 7 of this adventure, the crop will be set ablaze by an incoming chimera. The fire will spread from the area around the wagon, the flames spreading 2d6 x 10 ft. at the start of each round. Any creature in the area where the flames spread is subjected to 9 (2d8) fire damage unless on the path separating the croprows.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will be meant to subdue the party. For casters, spell selection will lean toward restraining or neutralizing, i.e. *hold person* or *sleep*. For martial types, attempts will be made to grapple and pin opponents in order to bind them. All the Low Elves have access to the nets used to gather the harvest. Each Low Elf has at least one net in their inventory and can use them to entangle the party. The party would notice the Low Elves aren't trying to kill them, but will use any means necessary to drive off or defeat the party short of killing them.

During combat Cyndil will avoid melee range and use her bow. She, too, does not really wish to injure the party and may fire warning shots. She would call out things like, "*A bunch of silly cow feed isn't worth dying for,*" continuing to convince the party to leave the field.

If half of either party becomes incapacitated Cyndil will immediately call out an attempt to end combat.

> Cyndil surveys the scene with obvious shock. She raises her bow above her head . "Hold. Hold, I say. This has gotten way out of hand. I never meant for this to happen! I just wanted to be a better me—a true Trueshot! This stuff isn't just cowfeed…if you smoke it you—" Before Cyndil can finish there's an eruptive roar from the sky above. The torches sputter and the wagon rocks. A gout of fire billows past setting a patch of Heroes' Wort ablaze. You see flashes of dragon scales. A pair of goat horns gleam in the night and suddenly with a ground-shaking thomp, a massive beast drops from the air onto the wagon, splintering its wheels and scattering the gathered harvest, its resplendent lion's mane tossing in the wind as it bellows a horrifying roar. None of you have ever seen a chimera up close. That's no longer the case.

Part 7: …There's Fire!

The final battle has arrived. The recently encountered goblin scavengers have provoked a mother chimera by stealing its eggs. The chimera has been searching for her clutch. She can smell them. She has decided to take out her rage on the exposed creatures making all the noise. At this point the chimera is prepared to fight to the death. Before running this encounter, it's worth reading the "Leveling the Field" note on the opposite page to determine how best to challenge your party.

As the party surveys the scene, Cyndil will rally the Low Elves, to protect themselves first, the party second and the Heroes' Wort last.

> "…as the flames rip through this field on the wind, you're surrounded by smoke, a piney-scent in your nostrils. As you breathe in you feel invigorated—as if you've been adventuring for years."

The encounter concludes when the chimera is defeated or leaves the battlefield with the eggs.

Part 8: Aftermath

Ben Dabbler arrives in the aftermath of the battle. If Halodreth Emberwhite is not already on the scene he will be accompanying Ben. If the party managed to save any portion of the Heroes' Wort he would shower them with praise and assure them he will be able to obtain some kind of reward. But without the harvest, Ben's ability to raise funds is reduced. The party will receive half the payment, 200gp, if they managed to stop the spread of fire within three rounds. If the party stopped the fire at all, Ben is still grateful and pays 100gp. If the crop is completely destroyed (7 rounds) Ben argues he has no way to raise the offered amount but says he can sell a few things in the store and get them at least 50gp instead.

If the players managed to keep the chimera eggs, Halodreth makes good on his bounty and will pay 50gp for each egg that survived. He will also pay the 5gp for any amount of eggshells he verifies are from a chimera.

Once Cyndil's plot is revealed, Ben demands she face local charges. For her part, Cyndil confesses the plot at this point, acknowledging she earned her fate and will go along willingly. (*"I just wanted to live up to the Trueshot name. It was selfish. Sloppy. Careless…and unelflike. I really am a Low Elf. And I'm truly sorry. I hope you all can forgive me. Huz—huzzah. Huzzah."*)

Cyndil will also turn her things over to the PCs, explaining they have earned it defeating the chimera and that it helps compensate for Ben not being able to provide a full reward. The players would receive the rest of the dried Heroes' Wort she's been smoking (2d6 doses). This gives the players a chance to continue to benefit from the Heroes' Wort a short while longer.

Optionally they could give the Heroes' Wort to Ben and explain the advantage of smoking his creation. This salvages the loss of the harvest and Ben realizes it will save him financially. He would provide the full reward to the party for the return of these doses.

GM Note: Leveling the Field

A chimera is a challenging foe, particularly for a low level party, but there are a lot of pieces available for GMs looking to adjust the encounter's difficulty level in either direction.

Heroes' Wort (**Easier**)
By setting a fire to the crop of Heroes' Wort the chimera gives the party the benefit of the +3 to proficiency for the entire combat. Regrettably, the Heroes' Wort is likely to burn up completely in a few rounds. The bonus to proficiency should be given regardless of party level, but could be decreased at GM discretion.

The Wagon (**Easier**)
If the party is of particularly low level, you can have the chimera's crash into the wagon become an event in and of itself. The chimera might make its first few attacks on the wagon—it's certainly the biggest, flashiest target in the field. The wagon's structure could also trap the beast, forcing it to use its action to succeed on a DC 20 Strength check in order to escape.

The Chimera (**Easier**)
The beast uses its breath weapon upon arrival, which you are not required to recharge. You can also have the aforementioned wagon attack damage the chimera's wings, such that it's unable to fly, giving melee characters a chance to get into the fray (assuming they want to get that close). The area is also particularly smokey, so while a large and thrashing three-headed beast might be easy to spot, a medium creature moving among the burned or burning crop rows would be tough to spy. Forcing the chimera to succeed on Perception check at disadvantage may help keep the party marginally safer. Additionally, the Chimera's Bane created by the party—assuming they brought it along with them—could prove effective against the beast, forcing it to make attacks against anyone wearing some at disadvantage.

A Peaceful Solution (**Easier**)
If any of the party are carrying chimera eggs, offering them to the chimera would soothe its rage and send it back to its lair, assuming a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) or Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Cyndil Trueshot (**Easier**)
At GM discretion, Cyndil can provide a round of safety for the players and a dramatic story point to improve her chances at redemption. She can expose herself to the chimera in an attempt to rescue a party member, only to be knocked, apparently lifeless, to the ground. Alternatively Cyndil can provide a method of restricting the chimera's breath weapon. Taking a net she can leap onto the creature's back and entangle the maw of the dragon head, preventing it from using its fiery attack for one round—after which the chimera attacks and knocks her off.
If she is being targeted because she has one or more of the chimera eggs, Cyndil will attempt to hand them over to the party member with the highest perceived Animal Handling or Nature skill. If the characters won't take the egg(s), Cyndil will lay it at the chimera's feet herself as a peace offering.

The Low Elves (**Easier/Harder**)
This group is here to absorb the chimera's initial assault. They can be used to fill in any situation to assist a GM. If the party try to make a stand near the wagon, an NPC can charge out from the cover of darkness only to be swatted down by a chimera claw. Allow the Low Elves to be seen getting an effective stab or slice on the chimera before being taken out. NPCs with healing skills should stay hidden, reviving fallen party members and keeping the group in the fight.
GM Note: The Low Elves can be held back if the party does not need assistance (maybe they run to town to take cover instead of hanging around to be eaten). If the party is a higher level the Low Elves may hang back 'til the chimera is defeated, then turn on the party when they're weakened in order to make off with the loot.

Halodreth Emberwhite (**Easier**)
Hearing the rucous, the local wizard could arrive to provide assistance to the party during the second round fighting the chimera. After arriving he can use his **wand of earthbind** to bring a flying chimera to the ground, use combat spells to help reduce the creature's hit points, and most importantly move around the combat field and dose the party with healing potions from his apothecary. Halodreth could also suggest the party present the chimera with any eggs they may have gathered, while emphasizing his original offer.

Goblin Raid (**Harder**)
A goblin strike force retaliates for the attack on their clan the previous day. 3d4 goblin raiders join the fray with the element of surprise, using the cover of the field to ambush the party. Oh—and they are breathing in Heroes' Wort.

Six Heads are Better Than Three (**Harder**)
To bring the difficulty level way up, two chimeras arrive—and both mom and dad are out for blood.

Hidden Horrors

What starts as a missing persons investigation quickly devolves into a race to stop a group of cultists from summoning an ancient evil.

An Adventure Suitable for Levels 6-10

Adventure Location

The entirety of this adventure occurs in the city of Eastenmoor (or a similar city at GM discretion). A large coastal port city on Harragan's Bay, a body of water fed by the confluence of two large rivers in the region, the Sellmin and the Iredan. Beyond the bay is the Theruvian Expanse, a great ocean that stretches several thousand leagues to the west.

This city was once two towns—a fisher's village above and a gnomish tinkering hub beneath the surface of the Anderseer mountains. Following an agreement between the two towns it became one, and trade, rather than fishing became its main economic driver. Governed by the Council of Mastermerchants, seven of the wealthiest traders and businessmen in the city, Eastenmoor has become one of the most prolific ports in the realm.

As ships outfitted for catching trout were replaced by larger vessels for shipping across the sea, the area's import/export business has, unfortunately, displaced a lot of the fishing community that the city was originally built to sustain. As a result, the part of town that was the most attractive during the city's first boom is now one of its seedier, less reputable locales—the Dredges. Over the past few months, the typical crimes of pickpocketing, burglary and assault in the Dredges have given way to reports of missing persons. There have been dozens of disappearances in the past few weeks, with some reporting their loved ones have been taken from the street, while others describe waking to find their family members have vanished. With news from the Dredges having spread, the entire city is increasingly on edge, with people afraid to stay in or leave their homes. But because most of these disappearances are happening among the poorer class nothing's really been done, and the locals—many whose parents and grandparents helped build the city—have watched helplessly as the Mastermerchants have ignored the growing crisis. Unrest is starting to simmer.

The Mastermerchants, recognizing something needs to be done, turned to "The Guppy"—Constable Grindlethorpe Thistlespine, one of the gnomish community's most accomplished detectives (who happens to be roughly a week away from retiring for good). Constable Thistlespine suggested hiring a group of adventurers who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty, alerting his contacts across the realm that the city of Eastenmoor is in need: Any willing to come to her aid should gather at the Eagle & Drake, one of the last outposts for working class stiffs. It is here where the party's adventure will begin.

Setting up

This adventure is designed to be run as a one-shot adventure, beginning and ending in the city of Eastenmoor. It will be up to you and your players to decide how their characters came to be there. If incorporating this adventure into a larger campaign, perhaps your party heard from someone they trust that an old ally, Constable Grindlethorpe Thistlespine, is seeking aid in the city—or maybe they overheard a rumor to that effect while passing through the city on their way to another port. If you're running this adventure for a new party, determine their individual reasons for being in Eastenmoor then establish that as seasoned adventurers they heard about The Guppy's call for aid and have gathered in the Eagle & Drake.

This adventure features a few primary NPCs, including Constable Grindlethorpe Thistlespine (pg. 76) and Tarek Harborlan (pg. 94), a concerned citizen from the Dredges, as well as a few commoners named throughout. The party will encounter several wererat cult fanatics (pg. 94). Any other NPCs, such as people in the streets of Eastenmoor or adventurers at the Eagle & Drake can be generated using the table on pg. 267.

It's important to know up front that Tarek Harborlan is not just a local with a bone to pick with those in power: He is the leader of the Cult of Yargathal, and the force behind the recent disappearances. Tarek's main goal is to lead the party into a trap. He requires the

blood of powerful creatures for his ritual and is hoping adventurers' blood will do the trick. Should the party suspect Tarek early on, he'd reveal he's a pawn in a larger scheme before leading them underground. More details for other ways to keep this story moving forward in the event Tarek is "found out" will follow where appropriate.

Finally, this adventure will pit the party against cultists dedicated to Yargathal, a scion of the Old Ones, and will culminate in an encounter with an Avatar of Yargathal. The party will not be able to "kill" this creature, only stop it from fully manifesting in this city. If the party fails in this endeavor (or discovers a larger, intercontinental plot based out of Eastenmoor), they'll need to rally a much larger force of powerful allies—a great hook for another leg of an ongoing campaign.

Yargathal, Scion of Pestilence

In the times before cities marked the realm and learned scholars started writing down the histories of civilization, perhaps even before the pantheon of gods came into being, the Old Ones existed in the dark reaches between the stars. Incomprehensible alien minds, powerful and vast, they live in the fabric between realities. Yargathal, a creature of malicious intelligence, is one of those Old Ones. This entity, one of concentrated pestilence and corruption, is believed by some scholars to be the progenitor of all diseases from which humanoids suffer. It revels in death and slow-wasting rot. One of this creature's acolytes is Tarek Harborlan, who believes the only way to reestablish the commoners' place within this now decadent city is to sacrifice a few of them so that the Great Corruptor can rise and cleanse every inch of it. You know: classic cult stuff. Yargathal worship corrupts the body, transforming those who fully commit to its rise into shapeshifting vermin who wish to consume, and manifest Yargathal's insatiable hunger for the living.

Part 1: The Eagle & Drake

The mood in Eastenmoor is bleak—dim and foggy—and the interior of the Eagle & Drake is an extension of that. To set the mood, read the flavor text below:

> Damp sawdust covers the floor of this cramped haunt, one of the only places some of the locals can still afford a pint. You can see rain leaking through the thatched roof in several places, pooling in globs of woodshavings beneath you. As you look over the scant few faces gathered here methodically drowning their sorrows in ale, it's clear they're going to need a bigger barrel. The bartender looks at you with the eyes of someone who knows out of towners by sight, and says: "What brings you in here?"

Offer the party a chance to get settled into this pub. If they are unacquainted, it's as fine a time as any to have them introduce themselves. Although the denizens of the Dredges are a notoriously tight-lipped lot, should any of your group reach out to the few locals in this space, they would likely learn the following:

- People began disappearing two months ago.
- Those missing have left without a trace. In more than one case it appears they have just walked away from what they were doing, meals half-eaten on the table, tasks left barely begun, much less complete.
- Some speak of beastial demons, claiming foul creatures with red eyes have been seen lurking in corners near where disappearances had occurred.
- None missing have been seen or heard from since.
- The Council of Mastermerchants have done little about the matter, but through the lobbying of a respected Dredgedweller named Tarek Harborlan, have resorted to hiring "The Guppy," an accomplished investigator. The locals have their doubts given that The Guppy is a gnome (Constable Grindlethorpe Thistlespine), but they also heard he plans to hire some adventurers to help him out.

Once the party has settled in, or should they ask to speak directly with Grindlethorpe Thistlespine or Tarek Harborlan, read the following flavor text.

> The door swings open and from out of the rain walks an older gnome barely taller than 3 feet, in robes of vibrant yellow that contrast sharply with his bright red hair and tired blue eyes. Two large medallions hang conspicuously around his neck. The rain continues to pour outside—but this gnome appears to be relatively dry. He is trailed by a middle-aged human man in a leather cloak with a severe-looking knife on his belt, his face a mix of scars and scorn. He looks local, hardened by the city's circumstances. He whistles, a distinct, clipped pattern, and all the locals in the bar stand and shuffle outside.

This is Constable Grindlethorpe Thistlespine and Tarek Harborlan. They would observe the gathered company in the Eagle & Drake, assessing whether or not any of them look like the adventuring sort.

GM Note: For the Perceptive

The medallions Constable Thistlespine is wearing are the same: the Mark of the Watchful, an award granted to those who serve in a post with merit and/or distinction for more than 100 years. The blade Tarek carries is similar to one a fisherman might use to filet a fresh catch.

Before getting down to business Thistlespine will order a round of drinks for any adventurers present. Once settled he will begin to speak.

> Thistlespine's voice is nasal and high pitched, though not unpleasantly so, as he begins to speak, "On behalf of the Council of Mastermerchants I welcome you to the fine city of Eastenmoor, though I wish the circumstances weren't so dire. Most egregious things are afoot in my fair city, and the Mastermerchants...do not believe the guard need assistance. They hired me instead. But I'm too old not to have some assistance. Too old for this stuff in general. So...I'm using my discretionary fund to pay whomever can help me sort out the disappearances occurring under the guards' very noses. What makes you think you're up for the challenge?"

Tarek would stand by Constable Thistlespine's shoulder as the party is invited to convince The Guppy they're willing and able to take the gig. If he's convinced, Thistlespine will fill the players in on any information the party may not have learned by asking around the bar. In addition, he could tell the party the following:

- The majority of the disappearances have been reported in the eastern area of the city called the Dredges, a poor, working class neighborhood.
- The most recent disappearance was reported by Tarek Harborlan (present) a somewhat beloved resident of the Dredges. Thistlespine will suggest they begin by exploring Tarek's neighbor's house, where an entire family has gone missing.
- Thistlespine will offer the party a reward of 500pp if they are able to get to the bottom of this threat.

If the party asks questions of Tarek, he would state what he knows about the most recent disappearance:

> "I already told the City Guard, lot of good that did. I was on my way home from the docks, late shipment, when I heard it. Screaming, bloody murderous screams, shocked me to the bone. They was coming from Rufri's house. That's by my house, you see. Five blocks from here on the river. She's a sweet lady. Well...was? I don't know. Always gave me fish pies if she had extras. When I got there it was dead quiet. I called and called for her, for her boys Graham and Filli...but no one answered. They was just...gone."

Tarek would allow the party to ask questions, revealing the following as appropriate:

- Tarek is adamant that "new blood" be brought in to take part in the investigation, knowing locals in the Dredges aren't likely to share any intel with the city guard (and not much more with outsiders).
- Tarek doesn't much care for the Mastermerchants as it's clear they don't care for the locals in the Dredges. His efforts are part of why there's a formal investigation at all. Hiring outsiders was his idea, though he doesn't mind The Guppy suggesting it was his.

GM Note: An Eye on Tarek

Despite being the leader of the cult involved in all the abductions in Eastenmoor, Tarek is telling the truth about all of the above. Any Insight (Wisdom) checks related to his truthfulness would reveal a man who may be guarded, but most folks in the Dredges are—a fact to which Constable Thistlespine can attest. If the party is suspicious, perhaps have Thistlespine suggest overtly that the goal is to find the missing persons. Bringing the perpetrators to justice is a bonus.

Thistlespine will urge the party to not waste time in their investigation, but he will answer any additional questions they may have about what is going on and about Eastenmoor in general before encouraging them to follow Tarek to the Dredges. At GM discretion, for lower level parties, it may be appropriate for Thistlespine to join them.

Part 2: The Dredges

> A low clinging fog winds its way in tendril-like paths through the cramped streets of the Dredges. Tarek leads you along the cobblestone streets of the city of Eastenmoor down a few less traveled alleyways, as rats scamper and scurry beneath your feet. "Mind these little savages," he mutters "City's crawling with 'em." After a brisk walk through another set of slim passages you find yourself at sea level on a residential street, the houses here all stacked against one another as if they were built at the same time to accommodate the same sorts of people. "This is the Dredges. This is my street. Used to be quite picturesque when the tide was rolling out...the sunlight bouncing off the waves meant fine fishing. These days we're lucky if the stench from those factories doesn't block the sun altogether. This way."

If your party asks about the area during this journey, a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check would reveal that the area is visibly less affluent than where they just were. They would also observe the following:

- There is more standing water in the streets, storm gutters clogged with mud and debris all over.
- And rats. Lots of rats. (Note: Those with a connection to nature might feel there are "too many" rats—something unnatural is happening.)
- Some of the houses here are vacant and most are run down, however, a few appear well cared for and maintained. (Note: Insightful characters might ascertain this is due to the fact that these homes are the only thing their respective occupants have left).
- Each home features a second floor balcony overlooking the street. (Note: Roguish types would note these homes are so close together it would be easy to hop from one balcony to another and slip through a window or escape from one via rooftop.)
- The streets are relatively free of people, a fact Tarek would explain is due to the abject fear sweeping over the populace here. He is telling the truth.

Upon arrival at his neighbor's, Tarek would open the door to the house. Read the following flavor text:

> A tall, narrow structure lies before you, a fresh coat of ivory paint on the exterior. A stout, wooden door is half open and an entry and sitting area are immediately visible, with a small kitchen and dining area toward the back. A set of stairs leading to the second floor is straight ahead of the doorway on the home's righthand side.

As your players explore the space, a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check would reveal the following:

- There is no sign of struggle.
- The kitchen is spotless.
- There are a few "valuables" still accessible—a silver candelabra, a few pieces of fine china, a vase from a foreign land—implying nothing's been stolen.
- The second floor is a series of connected rooms, most of which have beds. All are empty and unmade.

A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check would reveal a few holes in the wall along the baseboard. Not too large, but big enough for, say, a rat to crawl through.

As the party investigates this house, the moment one of them steps out onto the second floor balcony (or at GM discretion), read the following flavor text:

> From here you can see the great expanse of the bay and the ocean beyond, as smoke from the nearby factories billows up and collides with the clouds overhead. For a moment all is quiet—a quiet shattered by the crashing of broken glass and a guttural yell, followed by an ear-splitting scream.

The eruption of noise comes from several blocks to the south of the square. The voice of a woman screaming for help draws the party toward their destination.

> Screams emanate from a narrow, two story house, the outer walls covered with grime. A sturdy oak door secures the front of the property. A small picket fence in the alleyways next to the structure shields the backyard from view.

To enter into the house the party can bash their way through the front door which will take a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. The lock can also be picked by making a DC 15 Thieves' Tools check. Should the party desire to go around to the back, where the majority of the noise is coming from, they will need to get over the fence. The upper balcony has an open window that players could also access if they notice it with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. A player can either make an Athletics or Acrobatics check (DC 15) to either climb or vault over the 5-ft. fence or ascend the wall to get to the balcony.

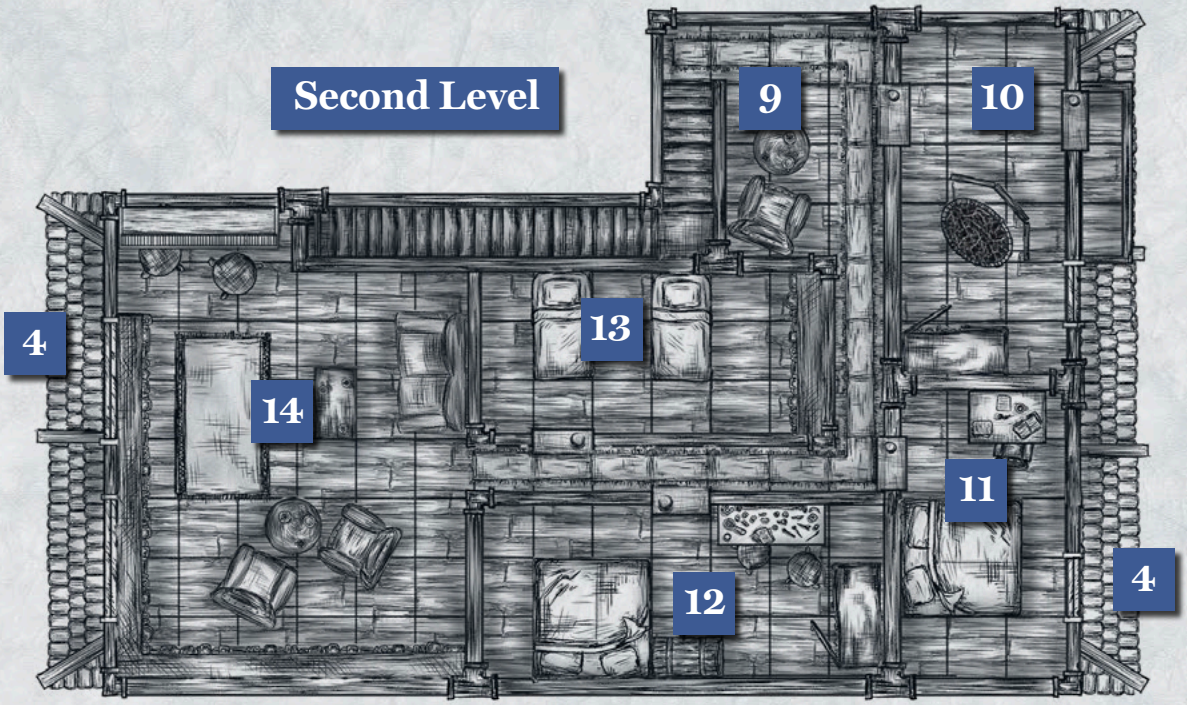
When they enter the home read this:

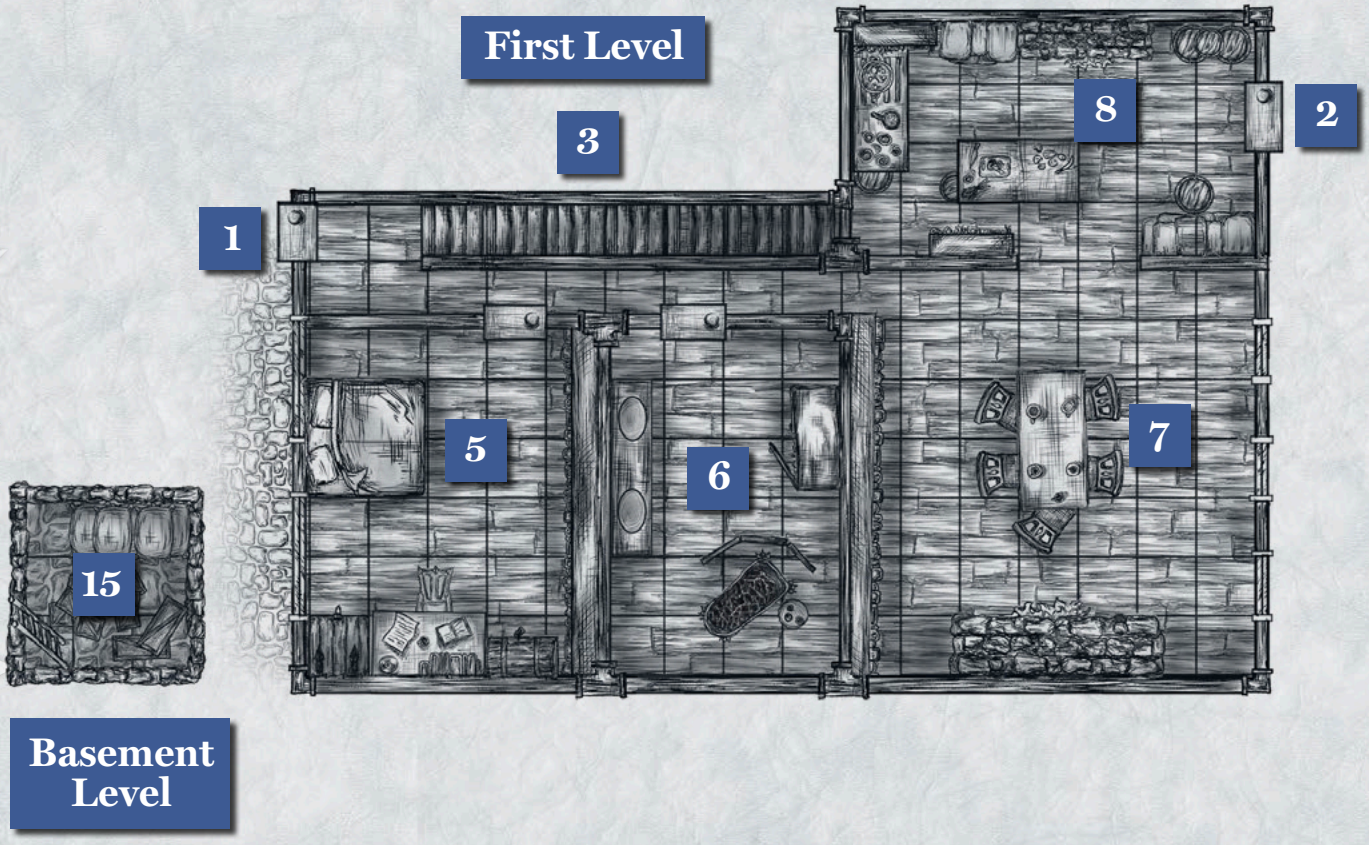
> Despite the grime on the outside, this house is well cared for on the inside and the layout is similar to the home you were just inside—a small sitting area and combined dining area and kitchen on the first floor, with stairs leading upward. Beneath a trophy fish mounted on the wall you see a slumped figure on the kitchen table—blood pouring out of gaping wounds in its torso, its entrails spilling onto the otherwise spotless wooden floor. Screams can be heard coming from the floor above.

Four figures, wererat cult fanatics, are trying to drag a woman, Etrenia Glowd, out of the window on the second floor. The slumped figure on the kitchen table is Matrim Glowd, her husband.

At GM discretion, more wererat cult fanatics can be added to this encounter as necessary, having split from the rest of the group to explore other rooms in the house.

The party has stumbled onto an abduction in progress. The cultists will fight to the death in this townhouse (pg. 29), but are under orders not to kill any "adventuring types" here. Their goal would be to subdue and capture the party if they're able. Although the party will likely have a few things to say about that....


Second Level
9
10
4
13
14
11
12
4


First Level
3
8
2
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5
6
7
15
Basement Level

Two Story Townhouse

One of several rowhouses in the Dredges of Eastenmoor, this narrow dwelling is fully furnished and currently packed with cultists trying to abduct its owners.

Getting Around

This townhouse has two main levels as well as a small basement. The first level has two entrances, one at the front of the house ***(1)*** that leads past a small bedroom and bathroom and into the kitchen and dining area and one in the rear ***(2)*** that leads directly to the kitchen. The basement is accessible through a hatch in the kitchen floor. The hatch could be discovered with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The second floor is accessible via the stairs ***(3)*** or by using one of the balcony windows on the second level ***(4)***. The hallways of this home, like most in the region, are incredibly narrow (less than 5 ft.), making passing by another individual in the hall a challenge.

First Level

The ground floor of this home features a small bedroom ***(5)***, bathroom ***(6)***, dining area ***(7)*** and kitchen ***(8)***. The furnishings on this floor are sturdy and could support the weight of two creatures (although standing on the dining room table is considered poor form in someone else's home). This floor of the home seems well-maintained, as if the owners were expecting company at any moment.

Second Level

Accessing this floor from the stairs would reveal a landing with a small reading chair ***(9)***, and another narrow hallway that feeds into a bathroom ***(10)*** and three bedrooms ***(11)*** ***(12)*** ***(13)***. The hallway terminates in a sitting room with a balcony ***(14)*** overlooking the street at the front of the house. The furnishings on this level of the house, given that it's primarily only used by family, is less valuable and therefore less sturdy. This floor is more cluttered as well, as if the family who maintains the home spends so much time keeping the first floor free of junk that they have all agreed to keep their personal messes confined to the second floor.

Basement Level

This damp basement ***(15)*** is used primarily for storage, and is only accessible through a trap door in the floor of the kitchen. If players discover this space they would find it meagerly stocked, as if the supplies saved for emergencies have long been burned through. At GM discretion, this space could also hold 1d4 wererat cult fanatics.

Part 3: To the Werehouse

Assuming the hooded figures have been defeated and assuming she survives this assault, a shaking Etrenia Glowd would immediately run downstairs to be with her husband Matrim, distraught over his apparent death (at GM discretion). It would take a DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check to calm her down to the point that what she is saying makes any sense. Magical means such as *calm emotions* would also work. Tarek would come to her side, holding her still, offering the Help action to any attempt to ease her pain. If Etrenia is calm enough to speak she says:

> "I was upstairs getting ready for bed when I heard the glass break. I thought perhaps Matrim…I thought he had broken a glass or something, so clumsy at times…I heard grunting and yelling, and…I came down and…saw their eyes…red as blood, horrible red eyes…They…one…one said to get me and go to Tawlney's. I screamed. I still feel like I'm screaming."

The party can continue to question Etrenia, but she is fairly overwhelmed and doesn't remember much more than what she has already shared. Her husband was a good man. Decent. No enemies. Just like the rest of the souls who've gone missing in the Dredges.

Tarek would offer the following information:

- There used to be a warehouse, run by a man named Tawlney Fletcher, that sat right on the Sellmin River.
- He will also inform them that the warehouse has been shut down for several years and the structure sits abandoned.

If the party chooses to search the bodies of the wererat cult fanatics, they might discover the following, depending on the success of their roll:

- **DC 10:** Each wererat cult fanatic has a coin purse containing 13sp and 24gp and a crooked dagger.
- **DC 15:** One of the wererat cult fanatics will have a large iron key in a belt pouch. It is heavily rusted, as if it spends a lot of time near salty water.
- **DC 18:** A medallion around each wererat cult fanatic's neck, embossed with an image of a gaping hole surrounded by writhing lines. A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check will reveal it is a holy symbol of Yargathal, an ancient Scion of the Old Ones.
- **DC 20:** The cultist's front incisors are a little larger than normal, and there is tearing and bleeding around the cuticles of their nails, as if something larger, like claws, have recently ripped their way free of the surrounding flesh.

With this information in hand, the party should surmise their next step is to head to Tawlney Fletcher's warehouse. (Note: If the party isn't putting this together, Tarek would step in and make the suggestion himself, stating "If you were running a criminal enterprise or shipping bodies out of this city you could do a lot worse than Tawlney's...nothing good has happened there in 20 years.") Tarek could point the party in the direction of the abandoned building. He asks the party if they'd mind if he stays with Etrenia. If they insist he join them, he would relent without hesitation.

GM Note: Very Suspicious

It's possible at this stage that the party might begin to suspect Tarek, particularly if they give orders to leave the cultists alive and he continues to attack. In the event of a confrontation that turns violent, or if a particularly high Wisdom (Insight) check reveals Tarek has ulterior motives, the party may attack. Tarek does not want to kill the party in this house—he needs them for the coming blood ritual (and you, the GM, need the party to get to Tawlney's warehouse—otherwise everything that follows here will be useless). At GM discretion, Tarek would either reveal himself as a cultist, explaining "*We need new blood*," and sharing that the ritual has already begun beneath the city—at which point he could take them to the warehouse. If the party attacks Tarek and attempts to slay him, he would attempt to kill himself instead. If he is successful, or if a member of the party lands a meaningful hit, his body would burst into a pile of snow, revealing himself to be a *simulacrum* (a boon from his patron allowing him to be more effective in the trials to come).

Once the party begins their journey to Tawlney's warehouse, read the following flavor text:

> You make your way toward the Sellmin River, following Tarek's directions. The skittering rats that were once hard to avoid stepping on are no longer anywhere to be seen, a fact notable only because their presence earlier was so conspicuous. You can hear the water lapping along the docks as you approach a decrepit edifice abutting the coast. The windows of this building have either been broken out or boarded up and an air of decay surrounds the crumbling structure. The double doors on the eastern side of the warehouse that face the street are secured with heavy, rusted iron chains and do not appear to have been used for several years. You're vaguely aware of something illuminating the interior of this warehouse, as well as a handful of shadows moving around the light.

GM Note: Stirring Shadows

The shadows within the warehouse belong to three wererat cult fanatics, under orders to ensure the adventurers hired by Constable Thistlespine follow them further into the bowels of the city. If they perceive the party, they would attempt to flee through the warehouse's hidden tunnel—a set of stonework stairs masked by a large crate—making sure their escape is noticed. If they do not perceive the party, the moment the party's existence is revealed (by an attack, for example), the wererat cult fanatics would Dash to the tunnel and attempt to escape.

The lock securing the chains at the front of the building has completely rusted solid. Its mechanisms will not function even with the application of oil. The doors are still stout. A DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check can break the chains and force these doors open. Magical means will also open the lock, but it is impossible to open the front doors quietly.

If the party has the key carried by the wererat cult fanatic, they would find it fits this lock, but thieves' tools would also be effective (DC 18).

> The interior of this warehouse is dark and gloomy. Water rot is everywhere and it's a wonder the building is still standing. Broken crates and barrels litter the floor. Bats squeak in the open rafters above your head. Collapsed wooden walkways hang down from the floor above blocking much of your view beyond the door. A single lantern sits atop an old crate—part of a group of them.

If the party did not observe the wererat cult fanatics escaping through the crate into the underground tunnel, a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check would reveal one crate in this group seems newer than the rest. Raising its lid leads to a set of dugout stairs. Once the party begins examining these stairs, or if they follow the wererat cult fanatics into the crate entrance, read the text below.

> The sound of dripping water and the smell of damp assault your senses. The stairs lead down to a smaller cellar-like space, where mud and debris have been pushed aside, creating a pathway toward a collapse in the warehouse's foundation—a narrow stone tunnel curves to the left—away from what you would know is the river and back beneath the city of Eastenmoor.

If the party has pursued the hooded figures from the warehouse into this room there is no sign of their quarry. At GM discretion they may notice the following:

- There are only two ways into or out of this cramped storage cellar, the stairs they have come down and the passageway beyond the collapsed wall. The tunnel clearly travels back toward the city and the walls are damp with runoff and condensation.
- A DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check will reveal boot tracks, turning into large rat-like tracks in the muddy floor of the natural tunnel leading away from the stairs.
- A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal drag marks, as if a body has been pulled through this area. Specks of blood and a few broken fingernails can be found in the area around the entrance to the tunnel.

Part 5: Descent into Madness

The cultists of Yargathal have set this room up to delay and damage any pursuing foes. The cultists use their ability to transform into rats to avoid triggering the traps set up in this room. Any creature that crawls on their hands and knees will avoid triggering the two traps in this room (detailed below). Any creature over 4 ft. tall that walks upright through the areas of the trap will trigger them. The first trap is located 30 ft. into the chamber.

Any creature wearing the medallions of Yargathal (possibly discovered on the bodies of the wererat cult fanatics) would feel compelled to crawl through this tunnel, helping them avoid the traps that follow.

The first trap, Yargathal's Rage, is triggered 30 ft. into the chamber. The second trap, Yargathal's Breath, is triggered 90 ft. into the chamber. As the party begins to move into the tunnel, read the following flavor text:

> The narrow stone tunnel stretches down into the darkness, spiraling lower and lower as well as deeper beneath the city of Eastenmoor. The walls and floor are slick with water and algae. The smell of copper begins to overpower the scent of damp and mildew as you descend. There are scrawlings on the wall, some clearly written in blood—the ravings of madmen etched into the stone of the tunnel. Precious few of these scrawled writings make sense, but those that do speak of the coming of end times, the arrival of Yargathal, and the coming death of the world as you know it. A pale green glow meets your eyes as the tunnel lets out in a room about a hundred feet long and twenty feet wide. The low ceiling and walls are etched with runes that seem to glow with an arcane light. More entreaties to Yargathal are scrawled on the walls here in between the runes, scratched into the rock, written in blood and worse, each more deranged than the last.

GM Note: Madness Rising

As soon as the party steps into this chamber, a wave of pressure rolls over them and a maddening chittering rings in their ears. Each creature that enters the room must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure the creature is charmed for 1d4 hours. While charmed in this fashion they must roll all ability checks and saving throws with disadvantage. Additionally, an affected creature who targets a creature with rat-like features with an attack or a harmful spell must first succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell.

Trap 1: Yargathal's Rage

A DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check would reveal two small holes in the walls on both sides of the tunnel about 4 ft. up from the floor. There is no way to disarm this trap, as there is no visible method of activation. Stuffing something in the holes will have no effect. Each hole lets out a 15 ft. wide fan of flame at head height, covering the entire width of the chamber for 30 ft. Any creature in the area of effect must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) fire damage, or half as much damage on a successful save. The only way to bypass this trap without taking damage is crawling on one's hands and knees.

Trap 2: Yargathal's Breath

A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal an area on the ground where the stone is pitted and corroded. Looking up the party would see numerous small holes in the stone ceiling. Any creature that comes within 5 ft. of the ceiling will activate the trap, filling a 20 ft. cube at the end of the hallway with an acidic gas. Any party member caught in the area must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) acid damage, taking half damage on a successful save. Crawling would allow the party to bypass the trap.

The tunnel, and its dangers, continue...

> In the gloom above the door leading out of this chamber there is a large circular seal of dark metal set in the stone. A large gaping toothed maw surrounded by writhing lines that are clearly tentacles. An aura of wrongness seeps from the strange dark metal.

The unholy symbol of Yargathal rests above the door leading to the cult's inner sanctum. Any creature that enters through the doorway into the tunnel beyond hears a horrible sucking noise in the depths of their mind that builds to a pressure so painful they feel their eardrums and eyeballs might burst.

The seal radiates enchantment magic under a *detect magic* spell. The effect can be dispelled and functions as a 4th-level spell for the purposes of *dispel magic*.

Each creature that crosses the threshold with the seal still active must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer a form of short-term madness for 1d10 minutes, rolling on the Madness of Yargathal table. Madness is curable as a disease.

As the party continues through this tunnel, read the flavor text below:

> As you continue deeper beneath the city of Eastenmoor the temperature around you drops noticeably. There are no lights in this tunnel, but here and there patches of bioluminescent moss cling to the natural stone walls of the narrow passageway. Patchy aqua-blue pale light bathes the infrequent patches of the visible tunnel in eerie gloom. As you make another turn you're all aware of the sounds. Echoing down the tunnel you hear subtle chanting as well as dozens of distinct voices screaming for aid. But there is another sound filling the silence between ritual commands and cries for help: the collective screeching of a gathered horde, like a wave washing over you.

If the party follows these sounds they will find themselves in the expansive ritual chamber of this cult of Yargathal (pg. 35), and face to face with an avatar of the Old Ones. The party is about to walk in on an ongoing ritual to summon an elder being. It's unlikely they'll leave without a fight. Once they agree to walk inside, read the flavor text at the start of Part 6: Yargathal's Chosen.

Madness of Yargathal

The elder being known as Yargathal has found purchase in your mind. Your bond is replaced with one from the table below.

1d6	I must...
1	...consume everything I see, the more corrupted the better.
2	...cover myself in filth so that I might become clean.
3	...supplicate myself before Yargathal, falling and crawling prone until I myself am consumed.
4	...dispense with my material possessions—my armor, my weapons, my silly trinkets. Yargathal will provide.
5	...ensure all follow Yargathal. All others must be reduced to ash.
6	...stand in awe of Yargathal. I am physically paralyzed by its unknowable pestilence.

Part 6: Yargathal's Chosen

> As you enter an immense cavern at the end of this tunnel, the first thing you notice is you can't see the floor as it's writhing with a sea of dockrats, backbiting and screeching, jockeying for position around a pool in the center of the chamber. Numerous torches burning along the walls with bright emerald fire reflect off of a large still pool of inky black water. Several commoners, bedraggled and beaten, are bound with heavy iron rings set into the stone walls opposite the space where you entered, rats nibbling their feet and legs. Between you and this wall, on the other side of the pool, a large green fire burns wildly behind a stone altar, a humanoid figure bound and displayed atop its surface. The rats at your feet begin surging, nipping at your ankles and shins—you can feel some of them breaking through your armor, piercing your skin.

As the party steps into the room, give them a few moments to look around and perhaps go over to help the hostages kept here. Once they begin to approach the altar read the flavor text below.

> A voice, somewhat familiar, calls from the area behind the large fire near the altar, "Welcome, honored guests." A figure wearing a mask that looks like a demonic rat's visage, its fur formed of writhing tentacles, steps into view. The figure is flanked by hunched creatures in crimson robes, with rat-like snouts, vicious incisors, and whiskers poking out of their cowls.

The voice cackles...

> "Yargathal will cleanse this city. The masters who have sullied Eastenmoor with their material trappings will be consumed. All that will remain is the Dredges and Yargathal's chosen. The dreck of the Dredges were not enough to make my master rise, but here—with new blood, powerful blood—see how he grows."

A DC 15 Perception check will reveal the voice of this masked man is familiar because he is none other than Tarek Harborlan. The body strapped to the altar is Etrenia Glowd, the woman the party rescued earlier. Once revealed, Tarek would remove his mask to thank the party for their blood.

GM Note: Two Tareks?

If Tarek Harborlan has been journeying with the party this far (either of his own volition or by force) the formerly masked figure would call out: "I see you've met my simulacrum. A gift from my patron. Two heads are better than one, I suppose." Tarek's simulacrum has the statistics of a wererat cult fanatic.

> The rats by your feet seem empowered by your blood, and hungrier still, but shift away from you toward the pool, gathering in a mass and intertwining with one another into writhing tentacles comprising thousands of vermin—and with a great sucking sound a huge maw of sharp, chisel-pointed, rodent teeth rises from the center of the ritual pool. It's a bad scene. You hear cries of "For Yargathal!" in the tunnel behind you. Tarek smiles. "For Yargathal,"—raising a ritual dagger and stabbing into the body on the altar. Roll initiative.

The party is now part of the ongoing ritual to maintain the presence of the Scion of Yargathal. The party will be facing off against Tarek Harborlan and 2d4 wererat cult fanatics. Additionally, swarms of rats menace the party and the captives chained to the wall at the start of each round, as outlined as part of The Ritual of Yargathal's Rise.

As the party battles Tarek and his fellow cultists (as well as the risen horror), stones begin to fall from the walls and ceiling as the cavern starts to collapse around them. The party must try and rescue the hostages and flee before being buried in rubble with a starving avatar of the Old Ones.

The Ritual of Yargathal's Rise

The Scion of Yargathal will grow stronger each time blood is spilled in this space. If the captives, members of the party or the cultists take damage (at GM discretion), the Scion of Yargathal will continue to rise. The following information will help inform this encounter:

Tarek's desire is to ensure the ritual is successful. He will seek to inflict as much damage on the party as possible, but if all seems lost he will sacrifice himself—spilling his own blood—in order to maintain the ritual.

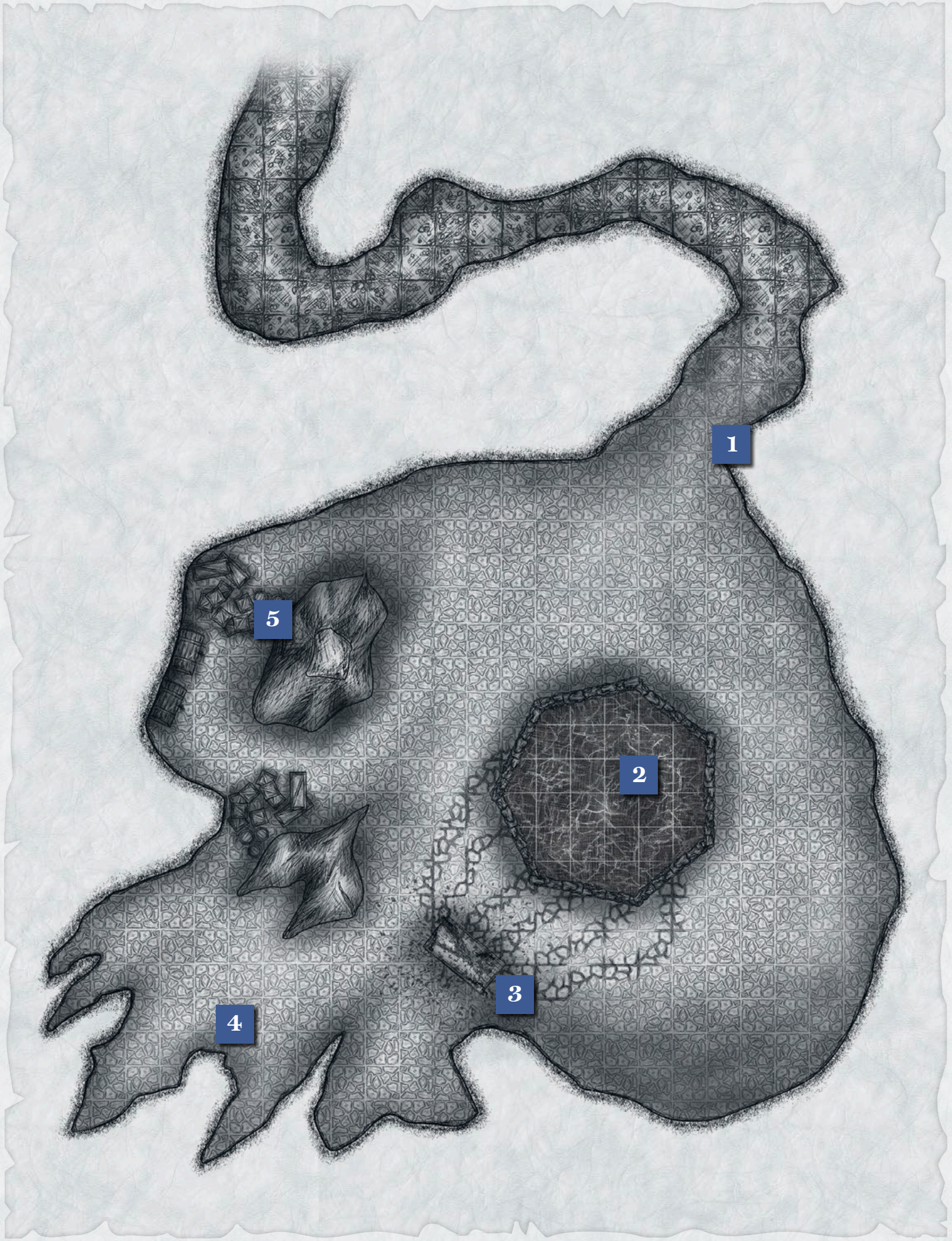
- **The wererat cult fanatics** will seek to wound the party to spill their blood to ensure the Scion of Yargathal can grow stronger. If they are unable to achieve this primary objective, they will turn their attention to the commoners chained to the wall, seeking to inflict as much pain and spill as much blood as possible. They will attack the commoners without hesitation in order to achieve this aim.

- **The rat swarms** act on initiative count 20. On the swarms' turn, roll 6d20. For each roll above 10, consider blood spilled, deducting 1d6 piercing damage from the party and the commoners (at GM discretion you can split the damage equally or choose specific party members and/or commoners).

- **The Scion of Yargathal** grows more powerful each time blood is spilled, represented by the Blood Credit table (pg. 35) At the top of each round, the action taken by the Scion of Yargathal is determined by the number of Blood Credits accrued in the previous round. For the purposes of this ritual, the blood of an adventurer counts as three Blood Credits. Blood Credits reset by half at the start of each round.

GM Note: Stopping the Scion

The party can attempt to attack the Scion of Yargathal but it should become clear that doing so is like trying to punch the ocean while you're drowning—the best thing you can do to survive is to tread water and hope to stay afloat, while seeking a way to get to shore. In this case, "getting to shore" means staunching the bleeding—literally. Each time a creature in this space takes damage that causes bleeding, the Scion of Yargathal will grow stronger. The party cannot "stop" the ritual. They are already in it. What they can do is prevent the flow of blood needed to sustain the ritual. That means rescuing the captives, dispatching the creatures attacking them and getting out as quickly as they can.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Summoning Chamber

This cavern beneath a warehouse in Eastenmoor is the perfect spot to call forth a city-swallowing horror from the void between the stars.

Getting Around

The entrance to the summoning chamber is free of rats and leads back to the surface ***(1)***. Within the chamber is a large ritual circle ***(2)***, from which the Scion of Yargathal will rise. Adjacent to this circle is a stone altar ***(3)***. Behind the altar is a group of alcoves ***(4)*** which are being utilized by the cultists as makeshift holding cells for the captives they've gathered over the past few months. At GM discretion, there are 10d8 captives being held in these alcoves. The cavern also features a few natural rock outcroppings ***(5)*** that can be used for partial or full cover at GM discretion.

Freeing Captives

The abducted citizens of Eastenmoor are bound and chained to the cave walls with a single lock (DC 15) holding as many as eight captives (the Cult of Yargathal values efficiency and thriftiness), meaning an action used to release one lock could free eight captives at a time. The cultists each carry a set of keys for these locks. If freed, the captives would fight to protect themselves and aid the party as much as emaciated commoners can.

The Scion Grows

Each time a creature in this chamber spills blood, add a Blood Credit (Adventurer's blood counts as three credits). The Scion of Yargathal grows more powerful based on the amount of blood spilled, as detailed on the Blood Credits table.

Assuming they are victorious over the cultists and escape the Scion of Yargathal, read the flavor text below:

> A thunderous impact rocks you on your feet as you flee into the darkened tunnel and away from the madness of the chamber. Stones crack and break and with a roar of noise the tunnel leading into the cavern containing the pool begins to collapse. A shrieking hiss of impotent rage from the creature is lost in the cascading crumble of stone. With a final clatter of rubble, all seems silent.

Part 7: The Aftermath

All the party has left to do is make their way back to the surface, report to Constable Thistlespine (if he wasn't traveling with them), see to their rescued hostages (if there are any), and collect their reward. And maybe take a shower. After processing the events that transpired, Constable Thistlespine would express a bit of shock then state the following:

> "Well thank the gods for you all. I must say, that Tarek fellow didn't seem quite right, but to think he was orchestrating all of this right under my nose is...all the more reason for me to retire. I'm just getting too old for this stuff. This city is in your debt. As am I. Please—take this."

Constable Thistlespine would reward the party 500pp as promised, and—at GM discretion—would also offer his *wand of wonder* if the party was able to save the majority of the captive commoners.

Blood Credits

	The Scion of Yargathal...
1-5	...is perpetuated on this plane.
6-8	...can use its tentacles to attack striking out at 1d6 members of the party. At GM discretion, targeted adventurers must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage (spilling blood).
9-12	...can use its tentacles to attack as outlined above. On a hit, the creature attacked is restrained. To escape, the target must use their action to succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Other creatures can attempt to free a creature restrained in this manner with a similar check. A restrained creature takes 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage at the end of its turn. This effect ends if there aren't enough blood credits to sustain it.
13-15	...can use its tentacles to attack as outlined and also pull restained creatures toward its maw. A grappled creature is pulled 10 ft. closer to the center of the maw at the end of their turn, suffering 5 (2d4) piercing damage as they are raked across the Scion's teeth. After being pulled this way a second time, a creature takes 17 (3d10) piercing damage and is swallowed, consumed by the madness of Yargathal (rolling on the table on pg. 32 at GM discretion). A creature attempting to escape being swallowed must first succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, then attempt to escape by succeeding on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. This effect ends if there aren't enough blood credits to sustain it.
16+	...is more fully formed. Any blood spilled counts double toward any blood credits for that round. If the party is completely slain, the ritual will be complete.

Upside Down

The party must participate in a dark, dangerous ritual trial in order to escape a city far beneath the surface.

An Adventure Suitable for Levels 6-10

After the party attempts to seek an audience with the ruler of H'angontite, an ancient drow city, they are taken to a series of holding areas for questioning. As the hours of questioning turn to weeks of hard labor, it becomes clear they are not guests of the city, but rather prisoners of it. When the party learns of a possible method of escape, the mysterious Trials of Shao Ganiz E'Cord, they must choose whether or not they're willing to risk their lives for their freedom. As part of their participation in this ritual, the party will learn much about H'angontite's past, and may have a direct impact on its future.

Adventure Location

This adventure is fully contained within the drow city of H'angontite, a large urban outpost built in and around a massive stalactite deep beneath the surface of the realm. The city is so remote, and its residents so reclusive, that its very existence is barely more than a rumor. What's more, those who have seen the city in person are typically never allowed to leave, as those who dwell within operate with an almost militant xenophobia, capturing "Outsiders" and putting them to work as part of the city's labor force. Like most drow cities, it is populated with backstabbers who value power above all, but H'angontite is unique in that there hasn't been a proper coup or uprising in several years. Most attribute the length of the Matron Mother Reclusia's reign to the diligent, aggressive curiosity of Vlar T'sarran, the city's High Inquisitor, who snuffs out regicidal plots before they can be fully formed. H'angontite is a dangerous place. Most of the workers appear to be slaves. Everyone else seems preoccupied with the view over their own shoulders. So why would anyone want to visit? That's up to you and the party. It is rumored that a visit to H'angontite could result in the delivery of even your wildest dreams. Perhaps the party needs access to shadowglass, a rare arcane material that is practically falling off the walls here. What the party seeks from Reclusia, or life in general, is what has brought them to the center of her web. Whether or not they escape with their treasures is an entirely different matter.

Setting Up

For reasons that are their own, the party seeks an audience with Reclusia, the Matron Mother of H'angontite. This adventure begins with the party in captivity within the holding rooms of the city, where they will be subjected to questioning by Vlar, the city's High Inquisitor. If you're running this adventure as part of an ongoing campaign, it'll be up to you to facilitate the party's arrival to captivity here, helping the party determine what would be valuable enough for them to risk coming to this dangerous, heavily guarded city to speak with its most powerful resident. It's possible they were dragged here against their will, and are now officially prisoners, or perhaps they came upon the heavily guarded city and announced their wishes to speak with Reclusia, at which point they were escorted under guard to the city's holding rooms (read: prison cells). Either way, they're currently trapped here, so they may as well get comfortable. In sum, how your party arrived at the holding rooms in H'angontite is for you to determine in the session(s) preceding this one.

The same setup should be considered for individual players if you are running this campaign as a one-shot adventure for an unestablished party: "What do you seek from the Matron Mother?" is a question that will come up, so ensuring your players know they should have an answer will clarify their motivations as the story progresses. How each member of the party came to be trapped in H'angontite's holding rooms can be part of each character's backstory, but is less important than what they were hoping to get out of coming here.

This adventure features a few primary NPCs, including Vlar T'sarran (pg. 240), Cody Nightingale (pg. 242), and the Matron Mother Reclusia (pg. 222). Vlar's Brood Guard and Cody's Brute Force serve as those characters' respective heavies, and are detailed on pgs. 240 and 242. Additionally, players will encounter a three-legged centaur named Henrick Steedcastle (pg. 194), as well as a few more random NPCs within the confines of the city's holding rooms. Each should be determined by rolling on the Random Character Generator (pg. 267).

Finally, the central feature of this adventure is the Trials of Shao Ganiz E'Cord, or "Trials of Organized Chaos" in the common tongue. Reading about the trials will be helpful in building an overall mood for your players, and will also help you understand the two phases of these trials and how they work, as each is effectively a puzzle as opposed to turn-based combat.

The Trials of Shao Ganiz E'Cord

Whether worker or citizen, prisoner or power player, all who dwell in H'angontite are familiar with the Trials of Shao Ganiz E'Cord. The trials are open to all who "declare," including "Outsiders," though most agree any foolish enough to participate are deserving of the imminent death that awaits them during the ceremony. No Outsider has ever completed the trials. Most who were born in H'angontite do not declare. Those who complete the trials are allegedly granted the freedom to dwell in H'angontite as full citizens, and are afforded the opportunity to commune with the Matron Mother herself. In some ways, the trials are a key element of keeping the underclass underfoot: because they have the option to pursue their own freedom, albeit in a dangerous ritual where death is all but certain, most choose a life of docile servitude instead.

NPCs who serve as workers speak of the trials with a hushed reverence, fear or incredulity. Drow NPCs who speak of the trials will scoff or outright laugh at the notion of a group of "Outsiders" participating in them.

Part 1: Here in H'Angontite

You find yourselves milling about in a large open space, not unlike a clearing in a cave. Your armor and weapons have all been replaced in favor of roughspun tunics—and in this case roughspun means itchy. And a bit sticky, as if the fabric was once part of a spider's web. Those of you with magical abilities are immediately aware of a distressing fact—you can't cast a single spell. There appear to be a number of stone doorways carved into the walls here, but all are closed. You see a few others dressed like you milling about, their faces tired, their backs a bit hunched from a long day of hard labor.

The party is in an area of H'angontite referred to colloquially as "the Yard." It is, effectively, a common area of the city's holding rooms, where those who are imprisoned here can walk around, stretch their legs and complain about the food.

If members of the party are meeting one another for the first time, feel free to encourage them to introduce themselves and interact with one another in this space.

The Yard, as with other areas in this adventure (unless otherwise specified) are under the influence of a powerful anti-magic field. Should your party attempt to escape this space through other methods (digging, climbing, pleading with their captors) they will find them futile. All who come to H'angontite are submitted to the holding rooms. And those who struggle here will always discover their own breaking points.

After the party has explored the Yard and exhausted themselves trying to escape, they will discover they are being watched by a woman, Vlar T'sarran, who has entered this space through one of the stone doors.

Entering the room in which you now stand is a tall, dark elf, with gray eyes that see everything from beneath a curtain of black, blunt, symmetrical bangs. She carries herself with the aura of someone who knows everything about everyone—and is not to be trifled with. The 10-foot lance she keeps at her side sends a similar, more overt message. She wears a rich purple kimono-like robe and would stand out in any crowd. "Welcome to H'angontite," she says with a steady but also unwelcoming smile. "I am Vlar, the city's High Inquisitor. This is the Yard. What brings you to our city? Before you answer, please know this: I will know if you lie. And I would hate for your final words to be...untruthful."

If the party suggests that they are there to see the Matron Mother Reclusia, Vlar will ask pointed questions to understand the specifics of their requests.

Jobs in H'angontite (Optional)

If you do not wish to extend your party's time in H'angontite (or convince them they should do all they can to leave) you can jump to Part 2 of this adventure. Otherwise, after Vlar asks what they seek from the Matron Mother, she will ask members of the party "their purpose." Based on their answers, she will assign them jobs in H'angontite.

Most of the work in H'angontite is meant to serve the city's upper class, and in general it is all backbreaking, soul-crushing or both. Most inquisitors in the city work to find a proper role for all who dwell here, endeavoring to find a job that most can tolerate (if not fully enjoy) by selecting them for a service that is as close in spirit to their respective interests as slave labor can be. For example, a dwarf who grew up in a mine but left for less cramped surroundings might find himself with a pickaxe in hand in the city's Shadow Mines. Or, if a half-elf were invested in becoming a chef before being brought to H'angontite, they might be assigned a chance to work in the stench-ridden Dust Kitchens of the city, mixing water with bone meal to create the gruel that

sustains the working class. If members of your party love(d) a specific type of task, assign them a role that most closely represents something they might at least tangentially be interested in. It's what Vlar would do. Alternatively, they can roll for a job on the table below.

Jobs in H'angontite (Optional)

1d6	"You will serve H'angontite…
1	**…in the Husk Garden."** Workers in the Husk Garden must collect bones from the desiccated, web-covered corpses of a giant spider's last meal. The bones are delivered to the Dust Kitchens.
2	**…in the Shadow Mines."** Workers in the Shadow Mines spend their entire day mining shadowglass, preparing it for delivery to the Dark Forge.
3	**…in the Dark Forge."** Workers in the Dark Forge endure the intense heat generated by the arcane furnace that melts and shapes shadowglass into useful magical items for the city's mage-class.
4	**…in the Dust Kitchens."** Workers in the Dust Kitchens batter bone from the Husk Gardens into piles of dust, then mix it with water to create a thick paste that is then used to feed the worker class.
5	**…in the Looming Room."** Workers in the Looming Room sew the roughspun tunics worn by the worker class out of spider webbing.
6	**…in the Spider Barn."** Workers in the Spider Barn spend their days struggling with the giant spiders who dwell here, attempting to milk their fangs to gather poison. It's a dangerous job.

If you plan to let your party spend a bit of time imprisoned in H'angontite you may wish to allow them to interact with at least one NPC who is also a worker here, to be chosen randomly by rolling on the table on pg. 267. Any of these NPCs might share the following:

- H'angontite is the greatest city ever to exist.
- To serve H'angontite is to serve the Matron Mother. To serve the Matron Mother is to serve Lolth herself.
- The Matron Mother is very powerful, and anyone who would dare say otherwise would most definitely die. But she's definitely old. Very, very old.
- Vlar is not to be trifled with or lied to. The Matron Mother is in charge, but Vlar is the one everybody truly fears.
- There is no way to escape the city, though there are ways to advance within it.
- With a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check, an NPC might mention the Trials of Shao Ganiz E'Cord, but would do so with reverence to the Trials, and incredulity at the notion that an "Outsider" would even attempt them.

Part 2: A Way Out

As Vlar exits the Yard, there is a bit of shouting and grunting as you hear the clip-clopping of hooves and a few choice curses in Sylvan. A massive, drafthorse-sized centaur who stands proud on only three legs is covered in lash marks but is wearing a smile. "Oh great, you found a few more slaves did you?" he sneers at the three driders and four ettercaps who force him into the Yard, poking and prodding with spears. "What brings you lot here?"

This is Henrick Steedcastle. He will introduce himself to the party, explaining that he was captured underground after slipping down a deep ravine in a cave system he assumes isn't far from here. After asking the party what they're doing here and, if applicable, listening to them complain about their respective jobs in the city, would share the following:

- He's pretty sure the Matron Mother could kick the bucket any minute, at least based on what he's heard from shifty-eyed locals who definitely would never say the quiet part out loud: She's super old.
- He wouldn't piss off Vlar. He's brave, not stupid.
- He knows a way out of the city. It's dangerous.
- He'd rather die trying to get out than continue working as a slave.

"They've got me pulling a cart," says Henrick. "And I don't pull carts. So they whipped me a bit. I told them I'd rather die than pull a cart. They said if I wanted to die I should declare for the Trials. I said 'what trials,' and they whipped me some more. But then they said they've got this ritual that gets you direct access to the Matron Mother herself. If you can speak to her, she might grant you leave. If I can get out of here with some of that shadowglass, or at least my pride, I can pull a cart 'til the time is right. And that time is now."

Henrick turns to the driders, their spears still trained on him. "I declare for the Trials of Shao Ganiz E'Cord." The driders, as well as the ettercaps, all lower their spears. One leans forward just enough to whisper "You have declared. You will die. And we will watch."

"Better than pulling a cart," says Henrick.

Henrick will try to convince the party to declare for the Trials. He doesn't know much about them, just knows they're likely to be dangerous, and danger's always more fun when you have a few folks to share it with.

If the party wishes to declare for the Trials, Henrick would explain they must state "I declare for the Trials of

Shao Ganiz E'Cord." Once a party member declares (or when all have, at GM discretion), a man surrounded by several armed attendants will arrive in the Yard to speak with them. This is Cody Nightingale and his Brute Force.

> Walking toward you—wearing a burgundy vest, his toned torso exposed, his harem-style pants flowing as if in a breeze—is a lean dark elf who oozes charm and malice in equal measure. He is flanked by brutish elven men who seem to have been bred with the express purpose of crushing things. When he opens his mouth, his words linger like fine cologne. "I am Cody Nightingale, the Matron Mother's Premier Consort. You, Outsiders, have declared for the Trials of Shao Ganiz E'Cord. You will most certainly die. But if you do not, you may be given that which you most desire. And giving people what they desire is a particular specialty of mine. So tell me this: what do you seek of the most beautiful woman who has ever lived, The Matron Mother Reclusia, may we be so lucky as to lick her boot....?"

Cody Nightingale will listen to the party share their desires. He will nod at each, as if making mental notes. If they press him on anything about H'angontite or the Trials, he might reveal the following at GM discretion:

- The Matron Mother has served H'angontite as long as anyone can remember, and he is happy to serve her however she asks.
- The Matron Mother enjoys nothing more than watching Outsiders declare for the Trials and die.
- The Trials will most certainly kill them.
- The Trials are not only physical—they are mentally and emotionally draining. They include two phases, called "The Mind Trial" and "The Time Trial."

After the party has asked a few questions, Cody will cut things short and exit with his Brute Force, motioning to the driders and ettercaps, saying:

> "Vlar and her Brood Guard will come for you in the morning. For the Trials. Then you will die. Though you would be wise to remember: There are some fates worse than death." He motions to the driders and ettercaps that continue to skitter around the yard. "Some of these handsome creatures you see here were once Outsiders like you. They declared. Now they serve H'angontite more vigorously than ever. It is too late for you to change your Declaration—but not too late for you to serve this city. You will see." He turns and walks away.
>
> Henrick spits a mouthful of blood where Cody stood.

The party should spend the rest of their day/evening preparing for the Trials however they would like. At GM discretion, if any of your party have befriended the NPCs with whom they work, they can attempt to convince them to join the Trials with a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Part 3: The Mind Trial

The following morning, the party will all awake, gathered in the Yard. Vlar is already there, waiting for them, as are Henrick Steedcastle, three NPCs chosen by using the Random Character Generator (pg. 267) and any other NPCs who have declared for the Trials, at GM discretion.

> Vlar stands before you in the Yard, a group of her Brood Guard standing on either side of her. Henrick is to your left, a few other Declarees to your right.
>
> Vlar speaks: "You have Declared...and are ready for the Trials, yes?" She chuckles low..."Tck... Most of you are lying. But I can forgive this. Confidence in the face of certain death can be viewed as a lie to oneself. Not to me."
>
> She cracks the base of her lance on the stone floor beneath your feet. It echoes upward.
>
> The walls of the Yard begin to expand, or contract, or perhaps fade away. It's hard to say whether you are rising or descending. But you suddenly find yourselves in a new space, like an arena but more intimate. There are rows of well-dressed drow in stadium-like seating observing what is about to occur. Far above, on a platform, peering down, roosts a frail-looking elderly elven female in purple robes. Cody Nightingale stands by her side.
>
> Vlar approaches, and you watch as several of her Brood Guard peel off in a line, marching toward you, then splitting formation to walk around on either side of her, enveloping you in a circle. They all pull their lances, taking one step forward, the sharpened tips unmoving, trained on you with ruthless discipline. Vlar cracks her lance down again and a drow duo steps forward carrying a heavy shadowglass box marked with silver spiderweb inlays. They slide the lid off and pull out a number of blades. Each of you is handed a shadowglass dagger that glistens with a dark purple sheen, the handles made of bone. The blades feel warm in your hand, and a little hollow. There's a rattling inside the bone handle of each. Vlar taps her lance on the floor with a resounding crack before stating: "Slice your hand along the top."

This request is not optional, and Vlar will wait until all have complied. Any who attempt to back out of this stage will be killed slowly and painfully, at GM discretion. Vlar will also personally inspect the hands of any she suspects might attempt to fake their way through this aspect of the

trial, and will—at GM discretion—ask any character who might attempt to put one over on her if they've followed through on her request. She cannot be lied to, but will offer those who haven't sliced their hand one (and only one) opportunity to do as she asked.

GM Note: Blind in the Dark

Once players slice their hands, they are subjected to a magical toxin that causes the blindness condition. There is no saving throw against this powerful arcane effect, and it can only be reversed through the solution presented as part of the ritual.

As the blade slices through your skin, you feel your vision fading.

The last thing you see is Vlar's smile as she says—"The Mind Trial begins."

Each of you is now blinded.

Her next words wash over you in an archaic mix of elvish and undercommon, but for some reason each of you can understand the meaning of every phrase:

Two of red and two of blue,
only one of each will do.
The blade will take or save your life,
the mental strain is half the strife.

As she speaks, the blades in your hands seem to hum with a dark energy—and each of you feels compelled to slash your own throats. Make a Wisdom saving throw.

Rules of the Mind Trial

To begin the trial, have each member of the party make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 10). On a failed save, the blade moves directly under the wielder's chin. On a second failed save it begins piercing the flesh. On a third failed save in a row, the blade plunges into the PC's brain and they are effectively dead—they cannot be healed by normal means and only powerful restoration magic can revive them.

Have your party make a new save every 30 seconds (or at GM discretion) with the DC rising by 2 every minute (i.e.: 1 minute = DC 12, 3 minutes = DC 16, 5 minutes = DC 18 and so on).

Solution Rattling within each blade's bone handle are a set of four small pill-like capsules, which can be discovered in the handles' compartments with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, revealing that the handle's end can be removed like a stopper. Each pill feels identical. There are no distinguishing characteristics setting the pills apart from one another, but if players have enough trust in the riddle presented they'll ascertain that two of these pills are red and two are blue. The riddle suggests they eat one of each, but because the players are all blind they cannot tell which is which. The most elegant solution to this problem is for players to use the knives to slice each pill in half, swallowing half of all four pills and discarding the other halves. This guarantees they'll only eat two halves of each color pill, or "one of each."

Other solutions are permissible at GM discretion.

- If players choose to eat two pills and hope for the best, have them roll 2d6, one for each pill. Odd numbers represent a blue pill, evens a red one.
- A creature that consumes two blue pills will immediately begin to transform into a dryder. This transformation can be reversed with a *greater restoration* or similar spell.
- A creature that consumes two red pills will immediately begin to transform into an ettercap. This transformation can be reversed with a *greater restoration* or similar spell.
- A creature that consumes all four pills permanently transforms into a giant spider. This transformation can only be reversed by the *wish* spell.

You each feel your hand shifting higher, drawing the blades toward your chin. There's a sound of rattling and then a horrifying gurgle as you feel a warm mist flash over your flesh, followed by the sound of a body slumping to the floor.

The party must now determine what they will do to get themselves out of this jam. If they cannot solve the puzzle, the blades will eventually find their way into each member's respective brains.

As they puzzle things out, the following events/moments will transpire in an effort to help guide them toward the proper solution.

GM Note: An Observation

After players discover the capsules, or after discovering them himself after two minutes have passed, Henrick will state: "How do we know which is which? It's just blind luck? Normally I say never tell me the odds but...what are the odds?"

At minute one (DC 12):

> You can hear Henrick's frustration growing. "This isn't bravery, this is a stab in the dark—what's the worst that can happen? Guess there's only one way to find out."—you hear him curse in Sylvan. His deep voice bellows, then suddenly stops, then surges in a monstrous scream, as you hear flesh ripping, bone creaking and cracking, the clipping and clopping of his hooves cacophonous and then silent. "Don't….. Don't guess" you hear him stammering, his voice rattled and somewhat transformed. He whispers "Don't guess...unless you have no choice…"

At minute three (DC 16):

> You hear someone beside you "No...please...no... Lolth be with me!"—as a gout of blood splashes on you, followed by the sound of a skull smacking the ground with a thud.

At minute four (DC 16):

> Another body hits the floor with a thump. You don't know if it's a member of your party or not.

GM Note: A Meaningful Clue

At this stage, the party is entering into dangerous territory as far as the DCs go (if they're not there already). As a hint to keep them alive, remind the party of the riddle's language, and note that one of them might recall that elvish riddles typically feature words with more than one meaning (in this case, the riddle suggests the word "half," as well as that the knife they are holding might save their life). These hints could be shared in part or in whole after a particularly good Intelligence or Wisdom check, or at GM discretion.

If there are any remaining NPCs after minute seven (DC 20), continue rolling for them.

The Mind Trial will come to a close when the party solves the puzzle or when the final member of the party is no longer standing (ending the adventure).

If a member of the party has chosen to eat pills at random and has undergone a transformation, they can continue through this adventure in their new form.

If the party solves the riddle and/or takes one of each type of pill, prepare the following flavor text:

> As your vision returns to you, you witness the aftermath of the Mind Trial.
>
> To your right, a handful of bodies— [resolve any names, if these NPCs were recruited by the party]
>
> [Describe any party members who might have been transformed]
>
> To your left, a large, seven-legged spider with a humanoid torso, its head hung in shame, turned away from you.

- Henrick has been transformed into a drider. He does not want to live this way. Vlar will observe as the party assesses their current circumstances, signaling to some of her Brood Guard in case Henrick starts to get unruly.

- Cody Nightingale watches with interest from a perch by the Matron Mother Reclusia.

- As the party reacts to their brush with death, and what they see, Henrick will take his situation into his own hands.

> Henrick looks at you, his face flush, his mighty haunches now an enlarged arachnid cephalothorax. His eyes dart to Vlar, who speaks calmly, reassuringly. "You are proud, horse man. But you may still serve H'angontite. In the Husk Garden, or the Shadow Mines. You will find your purpose," she smiles, her voice steady, her long lance raised, its end dropping to the floor once more.
>
> Four members of the Brood Guard step forward, surrounding Henrick. He looks at each of you, dripping sweat, his eyes glistening with tears that haven't yet dropped.
>
> He suddenly surges forward, slamming himself on the end of Vlar's lance, it plunges his side then slips out as he rears up high and drives his chin down onto it—impaling his skull. His heavy body hangs there for a moment.
>
> Vlar is stone still. She takes a step back, with Henrick still supported on her lance. She tugs it toward her and he slumps in a heap on the floor, as his dark blood begins to pool at your feet.

Vlar will observe as the party reacts to this series of events. Cody Nightingale can be seen snickering to himself. The Matron Mother sits with a hungry stare fixed on Henrick's body. These images are the last things the party sees before the next phase of Trials continues:

Your vision starts to fade as you hear Vlar's voice—steady, but with an apparent respect for the dead: "The...Time Trial...has already begun." Your vision shifts once more. The room around you and everyone in it starts to fade from your view as a swirling mist envelops you. It's cooler, and the air here is slightly damp. The entire area surges with arcane energy, and those of you who are able to cast spells feel those abilities returning to you. As you observe one another, it appears you're wearing your favored gear, your preferred weapons polished and gleaming in your hands.

Part 4: The Time Trial

Allow the party a moment to take stock of one another and decompress after whatever might have transpired during the Mind Trial. As they begin exploring their surroundings, offer the flavor text below:

As you get your bearings, you see you're in the center of a ring of six pillars, each roughly 60 feet apart, and about 60 feet from you in every direction. The floor beneath you is polished shadowglass, a dark reflective surface that pulses with magical energy.

Suddenly, forming itself from underneath you, an illusory city—stunning in its construction, every piece of stonework a celebration of art and architecture—begins to rise up from beneath you, stretching higher with each moment. Describing it as a city is unjust, as it's more like a series of cities which form a ring, that rises... encircling itself concentrically, each level building higher—improving upon that which came before.

The city spins around you, as if it longs to show you every part of itself, an entire civilization that appears as if it were constructed like a melody, with harmonies flowing in and around itself.

GM Note: Right-side Up

This city is an illusory, and inverted, version of H'angontite, and any who have read up on the city or those with expertise in stonework would recognize some elements of the construction as similar to those that have presented themselves within the city they've been trapped in.

Allow the party a moment to observe this city and consider its architecture and learn more about what they see.

At your discretion, begin the Time Trial by reading the flavor text below:

A nefarious-looking shadow creature holding a pitchfork bursts out of one of the pillars. Then another, and another—they begin to assault the city, taking it apart piece by piece. As you watch the city's destruction begin, a sudden realization takes hold. You may be able to stop this. You can save this civilization. But you have to act fast.

Rules of the Time Trial

Starting with the arrival of these creatures, track the number of rounds of combat, as this number will come up at the start of the next phase of this adventure.

The creatures appearing are **shadow demons** of different shades, as detailed below. On initiative count 20, each pillar will spawn a new shadow demon until the pillar is shut down.

Each demon carries a pitchfork with a specific number of tines (1-6), which act as keys that shut down a specific pillar, as detailed on the map at right and corresponding with the table below.

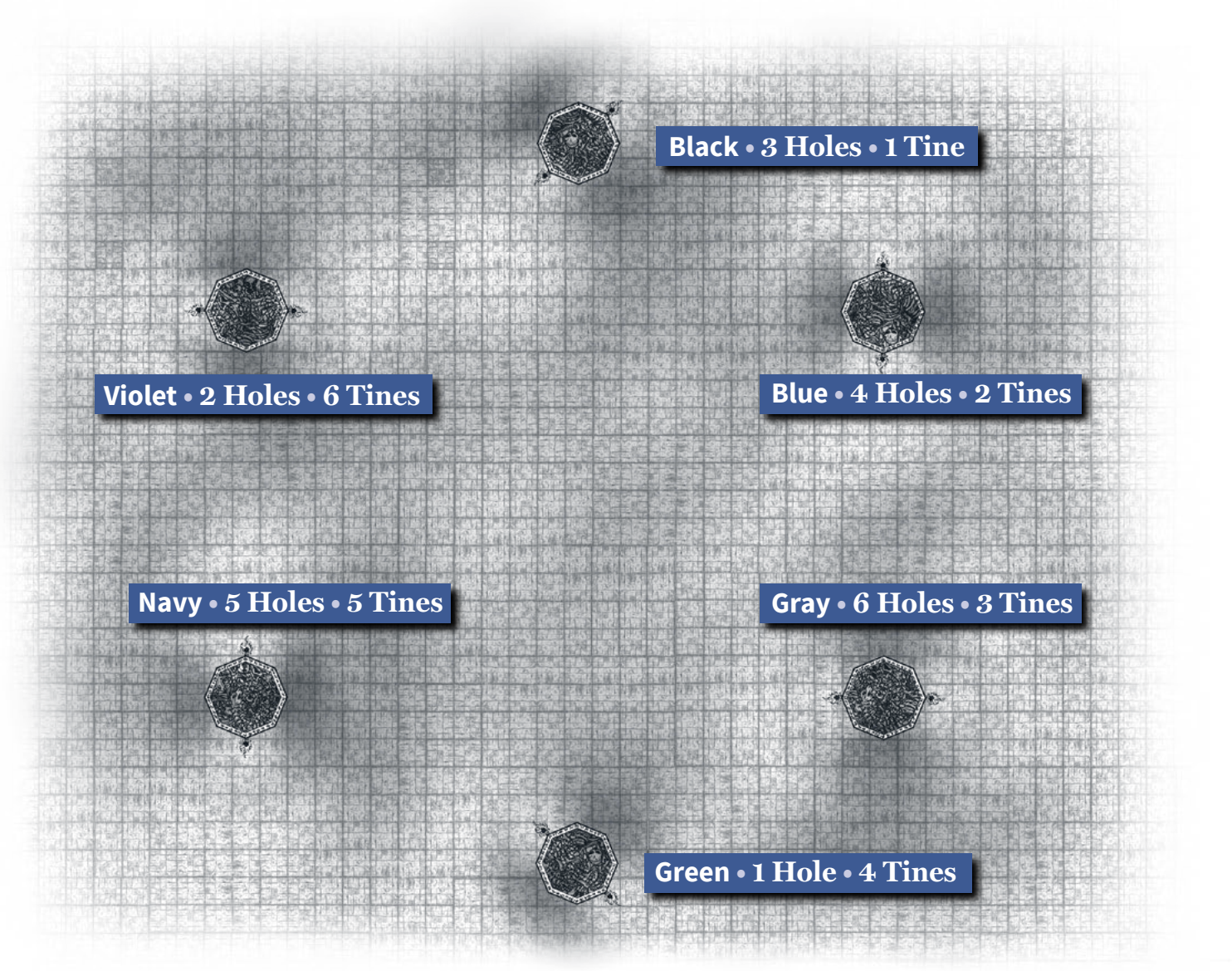
The top of each pillar has a specific number of small holes in a row (1-6), corresponding with the size and number of the tines of one of the pitchforks. These holes can be discovered via a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check (DC 15)—though shorter characters may need a boost, as each pillar is 8 feet tall. A pillar is shut down when a pitchfork that fits into its holes is placed within it. Shutting down a pillar in this way takes one action. At GM discretion, shorter characters will have trouble interacting with the pillars in this way and may need to climb or claw their way up to the pillar's top in order to shut it down.

Example: The Green shadow demons spawn from a pillar with 1 keyhole and carry pitchforks with 4 tines, that act as a key for the Blue demons' pillar.

Shadow Demon Pillar	Holes for Fork Key	Tines on Demon Fork
Black	3	1
Blue	4	2
Gray	6	3
Green	1	4
Navy	5	5
Violet	2	6

The Time Trial ends when each pillar is deactivated and there are no longer any remaining demons.

At GM discretion, roll 1d4 on a newly spawned shadow demon's second turn per initiative. On a 2, the shadow demon splits in twain, creating a new demon carrying its respective pitchfork.



As the Time Trial begins, the party will notice that each demon is carrying a pitchfork. Each time a demon is killed, its pitchfork will clatter to the ground with a sound that echoes with clarity. Anyone investigating these pitchforks should be told how many tines each one has, per the table on pg. 42.

The demons should hover around and attack the illusory city, tearing it apart piece by piece and causing visible, though still illusory, destruction. They may also attack the party, and will certainly do so if provoked, but their main goal seems to be damaging the city.

The first time a pillar is deactivated, read the flavor text below:

> As you insert the pitchfork into the pillar there is a low hum, and the pillar illuminates then sinks into the floor. As it drops into the floor, you notice the first tier of the city is sinking as well, visible beneath you, and safe from these creatures that seem to wish it harm.

Each time a pillar is deactivated, it will sink into the floor, and another tier of the city will dip as well, as if the large, towering spires are inverting themselves and extending lower and lower beneath the reflective surface.

At the start of the third round of combat, read the following:

> You all notice you're feeling a bit sluggish and heavy, as if you can barely stand. Your movement speed is now halved.

If the party requires more than 7 rounds of combat to complete this task, impose a similar penalty at the start of the 8th round, cutting their speed in half again (rounded down to the nearest unit of 5).

Once the final pillar is deactivated, read the following:

As you deactivate the final pillar, the last remaining tier of the city sinks, extending lower and lower, until it reasserts itself at the top—or bottom, depending on your perspective—of a newly established seat of civilization. Its residents seem happy, cheerful, full of life. Safe, underground, in the dark.

If there are still demons swirling around, the party must dispatch them in order for them to complete the trial. Once the Time Trial is complete, the party will feel themselves shift to a new location, as outlined in the flavor text at the start of Part 5.

Part 5: Down and Out

GM Note: Another Time

The Time Trial advances time in H'angontite at a rate of your choosing: weeks, months or years—one for every round of combat the party required to complete the trial. The flavor text below will reference the passing of time and its effect on the party, as well as the world around them. Adjust it at your discretion, based on how much (or how little) you wish to advance time in this adventure or your campaign.

As a result of this passage of time, the party is currently suffering 5 levels of exhaustion, and cannot move on their own.

As you clear the final entity, and watch the light fade from the city beneath the surface of the shadowglass, there is a momentary pause, as the darkness enveloping you shifts slightly. Walls begin to come into view around you, as does a descending staircase of cut shadowglass in the distance. The gear you wore in the Time Trial is now the common, roughspun clothing you had at the start. Standing before you are Vlar T'sarran and Cody Nightingale.

And you realize you cannot move—exhausted. Truly so tired you cannot take a step forward. You look at one another...You all seem older somehow. Like what you've experienced has caused a weathering to your faces.

Allow the party to assess this situation on their own. If you've chosen to advance time in years, for example, PCs with human blood might have gone from being visibly in their teens to their mid-20s. Those with the ability to grow facial hair might find that their smooth cheeks are now covered in wooly, unkempt beards.

Vlar speaks:

"Well met. You have succeeded. This is unexpected. Many do not. Have not. Will not. The Trials come to a close. Do not tell me what you have seen. I will not ask. For the truth of the Trials is only for those who Declare, and Arrive. You may now serve the mighty city of H'angontite. You may now see the Matron Mother. You are nearly in her magnificent presence. To have come this far. Outsiders. I am pleasantly surprised. And I am at your service." She bows, swinging her lance wide, before stepping back. "We will learn what path the Matron Mother will choose for you. But you cannot meet her like this. I will prepare the way. Cody will prepare you to travel."

Vlar exits down the stairway. Cody Nightingale will, with his attendant Brute Force, dress the party in their favored gear. As he does this, he will telepathically connect to the member of the party he perceives to be the easiest to persuade.

"Cody Nightingale will sing to you now. You have succeeded in the Mind Trail. And in the Time Trial—only [insert length of time] have we waited. This is no time at all in H'angontite. I have waited far longer, serving at Reclusia's side. But now the time is right. Reclusia is weak. She can be taken. But not from within—no, by Outsiders like you.

There is not much time. I will give you all you desire. I already know what you want. You must only strike when I say. I can restore your vitality. And then—we will kill the Matron Mother, kill Vlar and her precious truth...ha. The truth. The truth is whatever we say when we sit the throne. Reclusia knows this.

And when we are finished, you will bow to me. When I give the signal, you must strike."

Once the party is wearing all of their gear, members of the Brute Force will carry them down into the throne room (pg. 46) to meet Reclusia, placing them in a line facing a narrow ramp lined with spider pits, which leads to a dais—the seat of the Matron Mother's throne.

As your vision shifts and you take in more of the room in which you now stand, you see Vlar at the top of this room's central ramp. Standing ahead of her, on either side of a throne, are six members of Vlar's Brood Guard and a row with Cody Nightingale and his Brute Force. In the center is an elf with a wrinkled, wretched face bathed in dim purple light—the Matron Mother Reclusia.

Vlar steps forward. "Matron Mother Reclusia. These Outsiders have succeeded where nearly all have failed. They have survived the Trials of Shao Ganiz E'Cord. They are thus worthy to serve H'angontite in any capacity you desire."

As Vlar speaks, the Brute Force, with a nod from Cody Nightingale, walk forward, handing each of you a small vial as the Matron Mother observes.

"We do not need Outsiders," says Cody. "They are nothing to us, only good for our entertainment. We should watch them drink poison and die. I have distributed it. Please. Drink and die. Or, if you like, dive into the spider pits. Either way, you will have served your purpose."

GM Note: Vitality Restored

The small vials Cody has distributed are advanced potions of *greater restoration*, which will remove the levels of exhaustion currently keeping the party from walking on their own accord.

• Cody Nightingale stands at the Matron Mother's side, his hand on her shoulder. His Brute Force stands directly behind the party.
• The Matron Mother seems pleased with the idea of watching a group of Outsiders consume poison.
• The party is still unable to walk on their own, but if they drink the vials in their hands at any time, they will find all 5 of their levels of exhaustion lifted.
• Vlar is displeased with what she perceives to be an unfair deal. She will step forward and defend the party, as well as her understanding of the city, in a full-throated retort:

"The Trials are for all of H'angontite. For those of us who willingly serve the city—they are a promise. A truth. If we cannot keep our word to these Outsiders, why do we conduct the Trials at all? Purely for the enjoyment of a shriveled crone who can barely stand?"

The Matron Mother raises her trembling hand and speaks: "There are only liars here—you lie to me when you claim to serve anything other than yourself."

Vlar takes one step back, interposing herself between you and the throne. "I serve H'angontite. But if you wish to kill these Outsiders, you will have to kill me first."

Swift as a whip crack, she swings her death lance directly at Cody Nightingale's throat, then throws a dagger directly overhead. There is a burst of dark light, and those of you with arcane abilities feel them surging back through your fingertips.

• At this stage, Vlar will attack Cody Nightingale. If he survives the attack, he will call out to the party to drink their vials and save him.
• All six members of Vlar's Brood Guard can be convinced to fight at her side with a successful DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check, either from Vlar or a member of the party. This check is made at advantage.
• Cody's Brute Force will fight to protect Cody from any threats. At GM discretion, Cody will curse Vlar for foiling his plot to kill the Matron Mother and claim her throne, and attempt to persuade the party to kill both of them on his behalf.
• Vlar will fight to protect the party unless they turn on her. After striking a first blow against Cody she will focus the rest of her attacks on the Matron Mother, at GM discretion.
• The Matron Mother will feebly fight to protect herself from any threats, and—at GM Discretion—could make a promise to the party that might sway them to defend her from what she perceives to be at least one usurper (Vlar). If Cody makes a move against the Matron Mother, she will protect herself to the best of her ailing abilities.

Part 6: The Aftermath

If the party survives the encounter in the Matron Mother Reclusia's throne room, resolve as necessary based on the following information:

If the party helps keep the Matron Mother alive, she will reward them by granting them an audience, listening to their respective requests (as determined as part of this adventure's set up phase), and weighing them against her own interests. At GM discretion, Reclusia will offer the party some version(s) of what they seek with a successful DC 20 Charisma

(Persuasion) check, as well as their freedom if they wish to leave H'angontite.

If the party helps keep Cody Nightingale alive, he will reward them by politely listening to their requests, after which he will laugh and thank them again for their assistance. If pressed on the promises he made to them he will sneer:

> "You have your lives, Outsiders. And you can leave with them. This is all you are owed. Do not darken my throne room again."

If the party helps keep Vlar T'sarran alive, she will thank them for their assistance, then ask what they saw during the Trials. If the party mentions the elven city sinking under the surface of the shadowglass, Vlar's face will drop as she concludes that she's been lied to for much of her life.

> "I have long served as H'angontite's High Inquisitor. I have put to the blade so many who lie—who harbor untruth. I am very good. Yet I have been deceived. There was once a rumor about our city—a fairy's tale. That it once existed above the ground. A gleaming city from another age. It was attacked by dark forces, seeking out our shadowglass. To protect our city, and the memory of its people, the elder sages hid it. Underground. This was nonsense to me of course. The Matron Mother insisted that I snuff it out. But if this is what you saw in the shadowglass, then perhaps there is truth to it. And more to this city than any of us know."

Vlar would ask the party what they wish of the new Matron Mother of H'angontite. She will listen with seeming interest and genuine concern, and will offer to assist in as many ways as she can, at GM discretion. She adores the city of H'angontite, but could possibly be convinced that its current way of doing things is a little repressive. She will also offer the party a small crate of unrefined shadowglass (worth 7,000gp) as well as gems of cut shadowglass (worth 3,000gp), a +1 shadowglass dagger and a polished orb of shadowglass, which can be used as a +1 arcane focus. She will also grant the party full citizenship in H'angontite, and they may come and go as they please.

Reclusia's Throne Room

The permanent nest of the Matron Mother in H'angontite, this throne room sits at the tip of the stalactite that serves as the city's foundation, its scant windows overlooking the expansive emptiness of the cavernous darkness beyond.

Entrances and Exits

Reclusia's Throne Room can be accessed from the level above either through the hole in the ceiling ***(1)***, or, for those who cannot crawl up and down walls with ease, via the staircase on the opposite side ***(2)***.

The Seat of Power

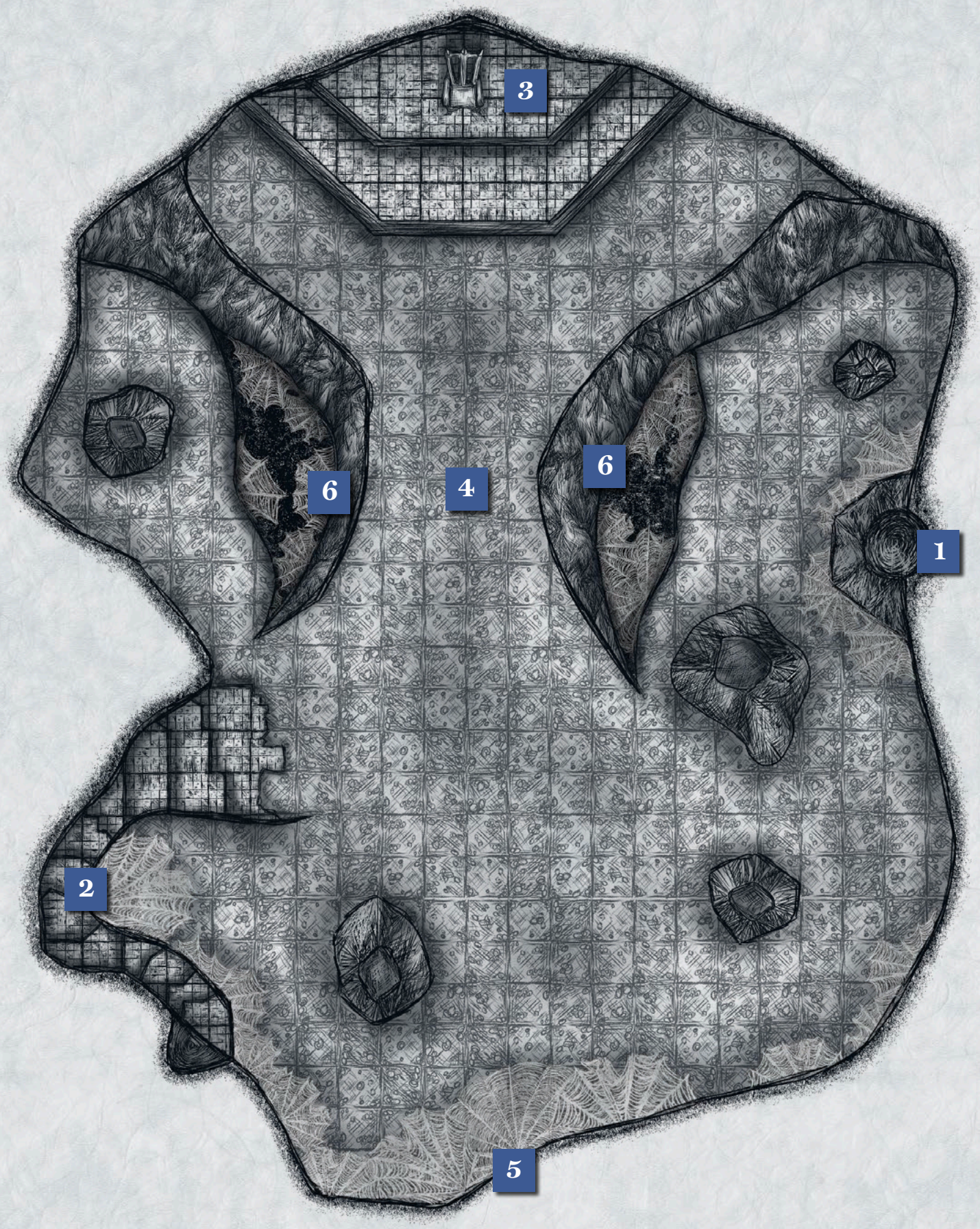
Reclusia's throne is at the center of a dais ***(3)***, raised on platforms that boost her high enough to look down on any permitted to see her in person. These platforms are each 5 feet tall. The platforms tower over the rest of the chamber from a position at the top of a natural rise ***(4)***, a ramp-like feature that also makes the area where Reclusia spends most her time easier to defend. The ramp rises a total of 30 feet, placing the throne roughly 40 feet higher than the base level of this chamber, which also features a few natural columns that stretch to the ceiling. Many of the walls in this chamber are covered in dense sheets of webbing ***(5)***, which (at GM discretion) could prove difficult to navigate for those unaccustomed to these sorts of hazards.

The Spider Pits

Like any quality drow settlement, H'angontite is teeming with spiders, and this chamber is no exception. Along either side of the ramp that leads to the throne are pits that harbor nests of poisonous spiders ***(6)***. If a creature falls into one of these pits they will land in a series of webs and are Grappled. At the start of their next turn they can attempt to escape these webs with a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check, or other method at GM discretion. If a creature remains grappled at the end of their turn, they take 15 (5d6) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes an additional 18 (5d6) poison damage and is stunned for 1 minute, as a swarm of spiders prepares to feast on their body.

Anti-Magic Orb

Much like other locations in H'angontite, this entire chamber is under the effect of a powerful anti-magic field, generated by an orb along the ceiling that is hidden from view. Reclusia can dismiss or reestablish this device's properties as a bonus action, and only her closest allies know of its location. The orb has 10 HP and AC 10. Vlar destroys this orb at the outset of this encounter.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BIG CITY DENIZENS

Large urban areas make up for a lack of environmental diversity with a plethora of people populating every palace, prison or parlor room. Whether members of a royal court, the nobility who seek to charm them, the urchins in the square or sneak thieves in the alley or the butcher, baker and candlestick maker who consolidated his various businesses and now just sells birthday meat pies, there's no shortage of interesting individuals in the realm's big cities, which means there's plenty of adventure to be found in each—even if you're simply asking for directions to get the hell out of town.

What Sort of Governance?

Roll 1d10 to determine the nature of the city in which your party has arrived.

1d10	This city is ruled by...
1	...a Matriarchy.
2	...a Monarchy.
3	...a Council of 10.
4	...an Oligarchy.
5	....a Democratically Elected Leader.
6	...an Autonomous Collective.
7	...a Military Force.
8	...a Fated Child.
9	...the Gods.
10	...no one.

Common Folk

These are masons and merchants, blacksmiths and barkeeps, "the rabble" or otherwise underclass—the sort who are used to dealing with out-of-towners and therefore tend to be more open to speaking with them, at GM discretion, naturally. Whether or not the working class in this part of your realm pride themselves on hospitality or nativism is entirely your call.

"Tall Duffy" McGill

"Fair is fair is fair."

A man who looks to be in his mid-40s with thinning brown hair; very thin and extremely tall, with a steady gaze and a flat smile.

For the Perceptive

Tall Duffy's pant legs seem sewn from a different type of fabric starting just below the knee.

AN EXCEPTIONALLY thin human man, whose gaunt features are exacerbated by his above-average height, Duffy McGill ("Tall Duffy" to all who know him and many who don't) is soft spoken but sturdy in demeanor and used to hunching down a bit to look folks in the eye. Which he always does. Perhaps for too long.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Tall Duffy has but one dream: to ride a horse tall enough to accommodate his height.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** In his dreams, the horse Tall Duffy rides is actually a centaur, taking him far from this city, never to return.

◆ **Carrying** 51cp, 4sp; a single gold piece of foreign currency; a book of poetry about centaurs.

Helena Slate

"Oh, quit yer whingein'!"

A broad-shouldered woman who looks to be in her mid-50s, with thick, flowing red hair, skeptical eyes and a mug of ale cradled between her hands.

For the Perceptive

This woman can't be human, or fully a dwarf—she's likely some kind of hybrid.

A STOUT, half-dwarven woman with dense red hair and the disposition of a cast-iron pan, Helena Slate has no time for those who can't do for themselves, and is quick to cut off any who might be perceived as complaining. At 108 years old (on account of her dwarven heritage) she manages a rock and gem appraisal business on the side.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Helena Slate would most like to be left alone, particularly if she's being kept from her work by non-dwarves, especially humans.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Helena is exceptionally disrespectful of humans, in part because her no-account human father left her dwarven mother nearly a century ago (and even half a dwarven grudge is enough to last four lifetimes).

◆ **Carrying** 18cp, 2sp; 24gp in assorted gems; a rock hammer; a tattered map marking the location of a nearby mine with the note "Pa's Last Stand."

Art Fabenforth *"There oughta be a law!"*

An elderly man in darned clothing, whose thin gray beard and messy white hair are accentuated by a cloud of pipe smoke trapped under a floppy hat; he is the very definition of "an old coot." You also get a whiff of his breath when he opens his mouth, and it's decidedly unpleasant.

For the Insightful

It's possible a lot of this man's anger and frustration stems not from the fact that the city (or province or world at large) changed, but that change has ultimately left him behind. Maybe he just needs a hug?

AN ELDERLY human man with a bad back and worse knees, Art Fabenforth is an incredulous shopkeep—if you can call the nearly empty shack he's often sitting outside a shop—who does not like the way things are going in his city (or his province, or his realm, or his life). He thinks things should be the way they used to be. He has a hard time expressing why without getting agitated. His breath, combined with his tirades, are literally exhausting.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A stiff drink and a time machine. Barring that, he'd like there to be some kind of law that would get things back to the way they was. Back then. When things were better. At a nonspecific time. And if you can cure curse-induced halitosis, he'd be interested.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Art's biggest problem is his inability to concede that he might be complicit in his own ostracization. And his breath, which is not great.

◆ **Carrying** 22cp; something he calls "a plugged nickel"; a stick that always points the way to clean groundwater; an empty tin holding remnants of peppermint leaf.

Incredulous Breath. Any creature within 10 ft. of Art when he's upset and breathing heavily must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer two levels of exhaustion.

Hattie Nottingham, *with Barnabus the Beetle*

"That sounds exciting! Not like this crap store."

A teenage girl with wide eyes, a freckled smile and brown hair that's never been cut, she is toying with a bright blue beetle she lets crawl on her calloused hands.

For the Perceptive or Nature-minded

The beetle looks quite exotic, and would likely be worth a lot of money to the right buyer. It's also deadly poisonous.

A YOUTHFUL and starry-eyed student of the natural world, with rosy cheeks and outlook to match, Hattie Nottingham would love to spend more time outside of the city. Alas, someone has to watch the family store, so she and her pet beetle Barnabus are stuck here for now.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Hattie wants to get out of this city and see the world. And would do just about anything to achieve that goal. If only she didn't have to stick around to watch this stupid store.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** As long as the family's store is in operation, Hattie's dreams will have to wait. Sometimes she whispers quietly to Barnabus as she fantasizes about poisoning her family so she can finally get away from the city. It's mostly talk. Mostly.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp, 8sp; a key to the family store; three tiny vials of ***blue beetle poison*** (which she would consider selling, but would rather give away to anyone willing to watch the store for just like...three hours).

Blue Beetle Poison

(contact), rare, 300gp

This poison must be harvested from a dead or Incapacitated blue beetle. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target suffers 1d6 poison damage and is Paralyzed. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the creature fails this saving throw by more than 5, it drops unconscious and will die within 24 hours if it does not receive medical attention.

BOOKER VARENDOLT *"Could be! Who knows?"*

A heavy-set man with a jolly face and positive disposition, his teeth seem just a little too big for his mouth.

For the Perceptive

Hard to say for certain, but it looks like Booker is being followed.

A MIDDLE-CLASS citizen with upper-class aspirations, Booker Varendolt believes the city presents opportunities for any and all who pursue them. He trusts the city watch implicitly, and can't imagine why anyone wouldn't. After all, if you stay on the right side of the law, what could you possibly need to worry about? Booker seeks investors to help publish a book he's written, but in the process may have run afoul of the very people he's been hoping to impress.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Booker would love investors to print his manuscript, *The Secret Art of Optimism*, a guide that touts the power of looking on the bright side.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Booker has been asking so many nobles to invest in his book that they've started to think he has an ulterior motive, which is why he's being followed.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 8sp, 1gp; a dogeared handwritten manuscript, *The Secret Art of Optimism*—the only one in existence.

"SURLY JANE" ARGENTO *"SHUT IT."*

A young woman in plain clothes, with dark braided hair and a severely clenched jaw, whose green eyes spark with a mix of anger and restlessness.

For the Insightful

Jane has seen too much, perhaps knows too much, about people in general to treat them with unearned kindness or respect.

JANE ARGENTO, "Surly Jane" to the locals, might be considered one of the region's great beauties if she weren't also among its most temperamental. The fact that this is a universally accepted truth in her town is only part of what makes Jane seethe with rage. Her father Karl beats her mother Ada, her mother beats her brother Thom, and Jane has had enough.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Jane wants to get her brother away from her parents, by any means necessary.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Jane saved up enough money to buy a *fireball* potion from a local mage, and plans to use it the next time her parents start yelling—or perhaps if one more person tells her to smile more.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 3sp; a journal cataloguing all the things that make her angry; a *fireball* potion.

RALLY O'MALLEY *"Try to keep up!"*

A young, blond half-elven man with quick feet and a chip on his shoulder, his angular features and lithe build suggest a body built for speed.

For the Athletic

Rally looks like he could win any short foot race, but his body is built for speed, not endurance.

RALLY O'MALLEY works as a courier in the city, delivering all manner of parcels and packages. He is as quick-witted as he is fleet of foot, and his cocksure attitude regarding his natural abilities have led to numerous friendly wagers among the populace. He's rarely lost, a fact he is quite proud of (and also never shuts up about). He has a movement speed of 45 ft., but he needs to catch his breath if he runs top speed for more than five rounds.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Rally needs to get the package he's carrying across town. But he has plenty of time! Wanna race?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** There are some in the city who wish to break Rally's legs. They've been waiting until today to make their move.

◆ **Carrying** 11cp, 4sp, 2gp; an unmarked package containing the still-beating heart of a devil; a small bottle of ointment to prevent chafing.

Ophelia Clink *"Mind holding onto this baby?"*

A flinty-eyed woman in tattered clothes, wearing a dull holy symbol, she is carrying a wailing infant under one arm and a sack of turnips under the other.

For the Religious

This woman is wearing a symbol of Pelor, but does not strike you as an acolyte of life.

For the Perceptive

This mother and this child look absolutely nothing alike.

LIFE HAS BEEN unkind to Ophelia Clink, and she has responded in kind. A generally unpleasant woman, she's wearing or carrying everything she has in the world, and it's all for sale. Ophelia thought having a child would make begging a little easier. She's mostly right. But the child she has isn't exactly hers.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Coin. Maybe a hot meal. Anything you don't need. And a private word with anyone lacking in both children and scruples.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ophelia would be willing to sell this child, which she took off a lovely couple's hands a few nights ago, to the right buyer. She'd say as much in Thieves' Cant.

◆ **Carrying** 3cp; a small tin cup; a crust of bread; a slip of paper that reads "Mortimer Dawes, 400 gold, crossroads, next full moon."

Obediah Monsoon *"Ready as I'll ever be."*

A bearded old man with a gentle aspect and crows' feet earned from a lifetime of smiling, wearing a dark tunic and breeches, with a black thistle pinned to his top.

For the Scholarly

In some philosophical circles, wearing a black thistle is a sign that you are ready for the next phase of your life: death.

A KINDLY MAN with a generous spirit if relatively empty pockets, Obediah Monsoon and his wife Angelique met in their early 20s and spent nearly every day of the next 68 years by one another's side. He'd very much like to be with her again, but wants to make sure she's laid to rest according to her wishes, a somewhat costly endeavor under the circumstances.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Obediah wants a pass for a private trip aboard an airship, *The Steady Breeze*, so he can spread his wife's remains over the city where they shared their lives.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Obediah plans to join his wife's ashes as they fall to the city below.

◆ **Carrying** 23cp, 3sp, 3gp; a hand-carved wooden box containing the cremated remains of Angelique Monsoon; a flyer for *The Steady Breeze* (which details charter rates at GM discretion).

Pollie Korda *"Anyone care for a game?"*

A smiling, elderly woman standing a shade below five feet, a height made to seem shorter by her pronounced slouch, carrying a large gaming set under one bony arm.

For the Perceptive

If playing a game, Pollie would be observed giving her opponents helpful, though discreet, hints.

NO ONE is quite sure how old Pollie Korda is: there are elders in the city who don't remember a time when she wasn't an old widow, sitting on her front porch playing some version of solitaire or another, sometimes playing both white and black on a chessboard. She values company above everything else.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A best-of-nine series in her favorite game, a variation on backgammon.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Pollie is difficult to beat, as her years of solitude have given her time to become an expert at every game her game board can replicate (which is to say any game you can name and some you can't). She is looking for a player who is true to the "spirit of the game," so she can pass on her gaming set and the magic item she carries.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 2sp; her magical game board; 10d6 hard candies; a rare magical item (at GM discretion).

CHESTER "CHET STAIN" STAINEROKOVSKY

"And another thing..."

A full-cheeked man with greasy chest hair poking out of his tunic, sucking his fingers and gesturing with a turkey leg.

For the Scholarly

Chet's complaints may be marked with legalese and references to litigation, but don't line up with any laws or statutes you're aware of.

IN A CITY where the squeaky wheels get the grease, Chester Stainerokovsky ("Chet Stain" to the locals) is among the greasiest wheels around. It's hard to say what he enjoys more, eating or complaining. When it isn't full of food (and often when it is) he's using his mouth to upbraid someone over some slight or another, and his modest legal background helps these complaints pack more punch. Recently he was taken advantage of by a group of local pickpockets. And he tripped on a loose cobblestone while chasing after them. And the puddle he fell in got some mud on his tunic. Who's going to pay for all this? Did you know he used to work for a lawyer?

◆ **Wants & Needs** A group of pickpockets rolled him for nearly 12sp in coin and IOUs and took his mother's amulet, worth at least 200gp. And no one seems to care.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Chet has never worked for a lawyer, and his threats to sue are primarily used as a shrewd tactic to get those he's complaining with to settle.

◆ **Carrying** 2sp, 3gp; a backup turkey leg wrapped in greasy paper; a list of petty grievances; the dirtiest handkerchief.

SEDONA MYTH

"You didn't hear it from me..."

A blonde-haired woman of middle age, with almond-shaped eyes, gapped teeth and a voice louder than it needs to be.

For the Insightful

Sedona seems to prefer shifting the conversation to other people's troubles than talk about her own woes—which are considerable.

A GOSSIP-TRADER with a gift for gab, Sedona Myth knows a little something about nearly everyone in the part of the city she calls home. She has a lovely family, a habit of making boring stories more scandalous and a price on her head—a consequence of an embellished tale about Janeen Montclair that made its way to Janeen's father Kart, a powerful merchant with deep pockets and a strong sense of honor.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Protection. At least until she can sort things out with Janeen, who's definitely cheating on her husband...with...an orc! Can you believe it!?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Sedona can't stop herself from spreading stories about folks in town and has very few true friends (if you can believe it).

◆ **Carrying** 13cp, 18sp; a hairpin sharp enough to function as a dagger; a rudimentary disguise kit.

JIG JOINER

"Are you an elf? Or just elf-ish?"

A young halfling with an eager outlook and somewhat slim build, wearing a screen-printed tunic that says "I Heart Elves."

For the Perceptive

Jig looks fairly trim, but their skin hangs a little loose in some areas, indicating they might have once been on the heavier side.

JIG JOINER was lost in life, with little motivation other than the pursuit of affordable food and drink. But waking from a dream where they experienced life as an elf, Jig felt invigorated with renewed purpose: to become one. Maybe you have some ideas? Or know some elves who might? Jig would very much like to become an elf, and will pursue any reasonable method. Some say it's a foolish dream. But Jig knows a true elf would never let pessimism stand in their way.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Jig was once told consuming a diet of elven hair could lead to a transformation, and as such has been attempting to collect as much as possible.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** There are no known means, outside of a *resurrection* or *wish* spell, for a non-elf to become one. And elven hair has no nutritional value.

◆ **Carrying** 17cp, 13sp; an extra "I Heart Elves" tunic, in green; several locks of elven hair in an envelope.

IGGY RIPASSO *"You're not from around here, are ya?"*

A diminutive man, short even for a dwarf, with bushy red hair parted down the middle and a beard to match in a leather apron that keeps getting caught under his feet.

For the Roguish

Iggy carries himself with the confidence of a street savvy operator, even if his operation seems fully legitimate—suggesting he might have some sort of criminal background.

AFTER LEAVING the comfort of a dwarven mine nearly a century ago, Iggy Ripasso (formerly Ignatious Stonebeater) has since made a reputation for himself as a humble shopkeep who somehow connects buyers and sellers all over the realm. He's what the underworld refers to as "a cart"—a legitimate go-between who can lend credibility and a good word when various gangs want to parlay or trade in goods and services. If it exists and it's on this plane, Iggy can usually find out who's got it and what they want in exchange.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A day off. And a new courier. His last delivery was intercepted by highwaymen. Iggy needs a few items picked up from the Lizard King of the Undercity.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Sometimes Iggy will tip off local bandits about his legitimate deliveries, collecting insurance money on the stolen goods—an old habit he can't seem to break.

◆ **Carrying** 31cp, 81sp, 30gp; a few maps outlining the sewer system's most clear cut routes under the city.

PATSY FOXENHEIMER *"You trying to...butter me up?"*

A big-armed woman with a focused gaze and incredibly smooth hands, wearing a blue bonnet and a simple yellow frock.

For the Charismatic

Patsy seems to believe the pun is the highest form of comedy.

PATSY FOXENHEIMER is a beloved member of the city's trade class. Prince and pauper alike agree her butter has a rich flavor that's simply unmatched. Anywhere. At any price. She makes a modest living, despite the fact she could sell her product for a significant sum, preferring to keep her operation small, local and available on a first-come, first-served basis. A single pat is as good as gold in the right circles. Perhaps it's for this reason that she's receiving anonymous letters suggesting she give up her recipe to a local milk magnate, "or else."

◆ **Wants & Needs** To make her butter in peace, and for Logan Boondurger and the thugs from Udder Bliss to "churn in the hells."

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The heavies at Udder Bliss have stolen Patsy's churning stick, which they think is the secret to her success.

◆ **Carrying** 21cp, 26sp, 1gp; a pound of Patsy's Pats of Butter, worth roughly 50gp; an invoice for several gallons of owlbear milk.

IDA HEDGEBURROW *"That sounds nice."*

A scrappy, dark-haired woman with a build like a badger's, wearing a heavy, handknit shawl and sensible shoes.

For the Druidic

Ida seems very in tune with the natural world, almost as if there's a bit of beast in her.

CITIES LIKE THIS ONE depend on the steady, unrelenting work ethic and sensible practicality of citizens like Ida Hedgeburrow. She is crafty, but not too ambitious. Dedicated, but not looking to rise beyond her station. Content, but not necessarily happy. She has a strong sense of smell. She lacks a strong sense of self.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ida doesn't know what she wants. A tea?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ida is a werebadger, a trait that skips a generation in her family. She has no idea that many nights, she transforms and wreaks havoc on any and all who have underestimated, undermined or underappreciated her. And folks in the city have started to notice.

◆ **Carrying** 42cp, 18sp; a set of gardener's tools; a modest darning kit; a half-knitted scarf.

ALÉSIA TELESZ *"Of course, it would be my pleasure."*

A youthful-looking, spindly woman with waist-length platinum hair, dagger sharp eyes and a gilded teapot in her hands, adorned in a flowing, long-sleeved silk gown which gives her the appearance of floating rather than walking.

For the Perceptive

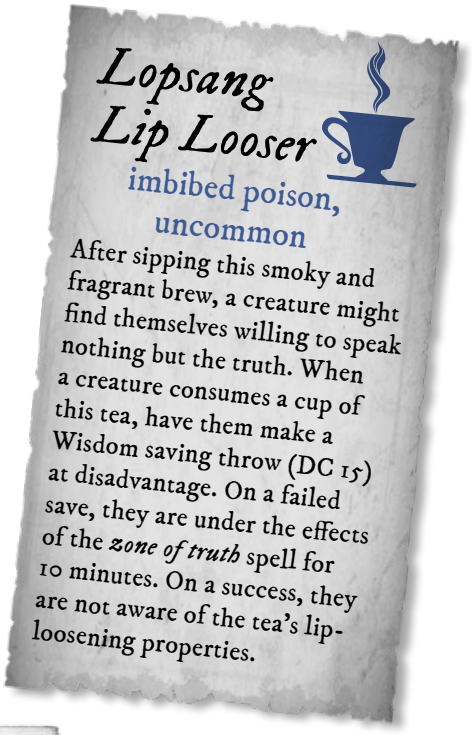
This woman is far too pale, graceful and statuesque to be fully human—she must be part-elf.

A TALL, THIN, half-elven woman with a voice so faint it sounds as though it's coming from another room, Alésia Telesz is the discreet hostess of a storied tea room that caters to the realm's elite. Known for her exotic rare blends and impeccable memory, the 147-year-old proprietress glides between tables holding her antique teapot at all times, making light conversation with her exclusive clientele while serving steaming cups of tea and the occasional bit of local gossip, never failing to pair a face with a name (nor discerning the reason for their visit).

◆ **Wants & Needs** Alésia would like to open a second tea room and expand her business, but needs the money.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Well... the secrets of the area's rich and powerful could certainly be of value to someone. And a few of her teas have a way of loosening her clients' lips.

◆ **Carrying** 17cp, 4sp, 8gp; 13gp in assorted tea blends, as well as four sachets of ***Lopsang Lip Looser***; a ruby ring worth 44gp; gold bangles; a little black book.



SILAS EAVES *"That'll be the day."*

A young man with steel gray eyes and wild red hair, wearing a long black coat, boots and gloves, and pacing in circles like a caged animal.

For the Insightful or Orphaned

Silas's unspoken grief hangs around him like a dark shroud, but he seems eager to please. He might be an orphan.

AN INTENSE-LOOKING young man with a piercing gaze, Silas Eaves has long suspected his father's wealthy and well-connected cousin, Richard, was responsible for starting the fire that killed Silas's family. As Richard's right-hand man in the family's trading business, Silas plans to make off with Richard's fortune and slip away to forge a new life elsewhere, having never shaken the feeling that he might be next. But word spreads fast in closed circles, and Silas might have let slip a hint or two of his plan to a few partners whose loyalty isn't quite as deep as their debts.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Silas wants to liberate his family's wealth from his cousin and find a small town far away from here to call home. Maybe he'll settle down and start a farm like his old man wanted.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Silas has been pocketing small amounts of Richard's profits since he was a boy and has arranged to have a fisherman help him find safe harbor at a foreign port.

◆ **Carrying** 30cp, 7sp, 5gp; a blue ribbon that belonged to his sister; an unsigned deed to a small plot of land downriver.

TILLIE TREFUSIS *"Just once, I'd like to shine."*

A teenage girl with cropped dirty-blonde hair and wide hazel eyes, wearing what looks to be a hand-me-down green dress with orange embroidery.

For the Insightful

When Tillie speaks of her famous brothers and sisters, her words are laced with monstrous spite.

THE OVERLOOKED auxiliary child in a family of seven famous and ridiculously good-looking siblings, plain Tillie Trefusis has long lived in the shadow of her family members' accomplishments. During the day Tillie works at the local crypt. At night, she is the backup flautist for Dante, the village bard. Every night around sundown, Dante receives cheers and acclaim for his fantastic singing and dancing as Tillie performs in the background, barely even noticed. She deserves a moment to shine. At least, that's what the voice in the crypts keeps saying.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Dante has sung ballads about her brothers and sisters' exploits and adventures, but despite having performed with Tillie for three years, he has failed to so much as remember her name.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Tillie confided her desire to be noticed to a persistent voice she converses with in the crypts. She left her flute in the crypt overnight like it asked.

◆ **Carrying** 10cp, a flute touched by a **ghost**; the sheet music for an outlawed ballad; lip balm.

MIRIAM MACTAVISH *"What do you think, Morty?"*

An elderly woman with a sing-song voice and pink complexion, wearing a brown apron. Her curly silver hair is swept up under a red handkerchief.

For the Perceptive

Miriam frequently pulls out a piece of cheese from her pockets, claiming it's a snack. She never eats it.

AN ELDERLY WIDOW and homemaker, Miriam MacTavish dreams of winning the local greenthumb competition with the mushrooms she's cultivating in her cellar. Also in her cellar are a family of mostly friendly giant rats that enjoy nibbling on her carefully cultivated fungi. Although their presence occasionally proves frustrating, Miriam would rather have a few rats in the house than be plagued by an otherwise empty home.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Miriam wishes she could protect just a few of her mushrooms from the rats so she can enter the greenthumb competition. But she can't figure out a way to do that without killing them.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Miriam would love to stop the rats, even the big one she dotingly calls "Morty," from eating her mushrooms.

◆ **Carrying** 12gp; a slice of aged Gruyère covered in rat hair; a pair of reading glasses; a pocket-sized book on botany; an ancient-looking love letter signed "Love Always, Mortimer."

SEVE ROBARTS *"Bring out your dead!"*

A round man with a powerful (if pudgy) build, dressed in canvas work attire covered in unidentifiable stains.

For the Perceptive

Seve seems like he once was pretty athletic but is clearly letting himself go, a notable fact given all the digging he's allegedly doing.

PUSHING HIS cart through the streets every morning, Seve Robarts collects the cadavers of plague victims and, he claims, buries them all himself for a few coins. His hulking figure is a staple in the city's slums, even if that figure has grown more rotund of late. He's quick to brag about the money to be made with nothing but a pushcart, but when asked if he's hiring is quick to walk away. Too quick, really.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A steady flow of coin to sate his growing hunger.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Seve isn't burying the bodies at all, simply emptying his cart into a ravine each day at dawn. He's essentially robbing the poor to feed himself.

◆ **Carrying** 75cp, 3sp; a sack lunch featuring a high-end liverwurst sandwich; a crudely drawn map of the area highlighting a ravine.

WES HUXLEY *"Got any candy? Pleeeeeease?"*

A fast-talking boy with frizzy, straw-colored hair whose grin reveals he is clearly losing his teeth, fiddling with a brightly-colored candy wrapper, balling it up in his hands.

For the Perceptive

This child appears to be quite comfortable walking alone, despite his age. He must know something about the city you don't.

A CLEVER, EXCITABLE and impressionable 6-year-old boy, Wes Huxley enjoys nothing more than exploring the city in search of sugary treats. While his parents toil away at a local tavern, Wes slips out for adventures across town, where sympathetic strangers are known to toss the precocious lad an occasional confectionery or two. It's become something of a habit, as there's nothing else for him to do, but not everyone appreciates his propensity for wandering about.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To find and eat ALL the candy. And to figure out which one keeps giving him horrible nightmares.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Wes wonders whether or not someone has given him cursed treats. There was that time he accidentally wandered into a room full of hooded people chanting something in Undercommon… Where was that, again?

◆ **Carrying** 10cp worth of candies, bonbons and chocolate truffles.

DANILO FOP *"Wanna bet I can't?"*

A sinewy farmer dressed in ill-fitting work wear and carrying a large keg of ale on one shoulder and a bale of barley on the other.

For the Insightful

Danilo's over-the-top dedication to physical strength seems to suggest he's lived through a trauma or embarrassment for which brawn would have been the ultimate solution.

A SMALL-TIME sharecropper and widower who manages a tiny plot within the city limits, Danilo Fop has worked his entire life, as hard as possible. Told early on that hard work was the only way to please the gods and make them favor him, Danilo has never uttered a complaint about his lot in life. He does, however, hope to create a better environment for his daughter. To that end, he's taken betting on his strength in barroom contests with the hope of supplementing his income.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A few more gold pieces and a ride out of town. He's won enough money that he has nearly enough to send his beloved daughter Danila to study in the country, far away from big-city life, to become a high priestess.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Danilo can be a little too eager to put his money where his mouth is, and while he hasn't met his match yet, one hubristic setback could cost him everything.

◆ **Carrying** 350sp; thick boar-hide gloves; a good luck note from his daughter.

ALEXIS GELLFARER *"Halfling my arse. I'm whole!"*

A halfling woman with dark hair in a messy bun, her lavender eyes gaze ahead.

For the Perceptive

Alexis rarely, if ever, cranes her neck or looks up—as if she refuses to make eye contact with anyone taller than she is.

LAID OFF from her job at Turlington Textile Exchange, Alexis works odd jobs, and is quick to speak up if it's implied halflings can't achieve as much as their more vertically blessed peers.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Alexis is all about halfling pride and doesn't want others of her race to suffer the embarrassment she felt after being deemed "too diminutive to efficiently organize warehoused goods." She also wants payback.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Alexis hides the fact that she wears lifts in her shoes so she'll seem a little taller than most halflings.

◆ **Carrying** 3sp, 1gp; a detailed schedule of the comings and goings of Rictor Turlington, her former employer; a loud whistle.

URSULA VERTE, "THE CANNONBALL"

"Family? No. I have a corporation."

A short, solid and bullish woman, with a clipboard in hand, glasses way down her nose and an extremely determined demeanor.

For the Seafaring

There's a bit of red cloth pinned to Ursula's top with a pearl brooch, signifying a need for a discreet seaborne courier.

URSULA VERTE has been the de facto manager of her father's grocery since she was 10 years old. Her customers affectionately—and a bit reverently—refer to her as The Cannonball. She has turned the grocery into a thriving stopover for all kinds of merchants. All around the shop her dozen-odd children stock shelves, do calculations on small abacuses and generally make themselves useful. Even the youngest, unable to reach above the first shelf, are being groomed for the family business.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To start a Verte's Greengrocer on a nearby island with no business district—yet—as it is currently overrun with **gnolls**.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Verte is so invested in her dream of a grocery store empire that she's willing to do anything to make it a reality.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 50sp, 100gp; garden clippers; a worn notebook detailing a 17-phase expansion plan.

JOACHIM OGLEPINE

"You stress too much, my friend."

An intimidatingly large man, both tall and broad, sipping a cup of wine and smiling like he's been kissed by a god.

For the Perceptive

If in an appropriate setting, Oglepine will covertly produce a small vial and add a few drops to his first cup of wine. If pressed about it, he grins gamely and says it's his "hangover helper."

NO ONE is sure where Joachim Oglepine came from or how long he plans to stay, but anyone who bellies up to a bar next to him is glad they did. The mysterious barfly seems to infect those around him with his optimistic, devil-may-care attitude. He's never worried about what comes next, but always seems prepared, even excited, to find out.

◆ **Wants & Needs** If he has any, they aren't readily observable to those around him. Maybe a good story? Spin a yarn?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** An unspoken worry that the contents of his vial will become common knowledge. If anyone presses him about it, he will share some with them in exchange for their silence.

◆ **Carrying** 100sp, 200gp; several small vials of an amber liquid, his ***"Angel's Spit."***

Angel's Spit

wondrous item, potion

An amber-hued, incredibly thick liquid harvested from a celestial named Starandrel, this Angel's Spit functions as luck in a bottle. A creature that consumes one shot of Angel's Spit feels blessed throughout the day, and can add 1d4 to any ability check, attack roll or saving throw for eight hours.

Nobles & Leaders

The moneyed, powerful or both, these individuals carry a hefty amount of influence within the city walls and in many cases far beyond them (or else would very much like to). Whether born into power or having toiled to attain it, their names command respect in most corners of the city, and their problems typically require tact, discretion or the professional touch. Whether they are working with, for or against the party is entirely up to GM discretion.

Lord Wallofer "Wally" the Forgetful

"Do I know you?"

A middle-aged human with long, curly hair so dark it appears almost blue and a well-manicured handlebar mustache, dressed in formal military attire with full regalia, a gleaming sword and a tricorn hat.

For the Perceptive

Wally doesn't blink much, as if he's constantly standing guard, and his eyes appear bloodshot, as though he hasn't slept in days.

LORD WALLOFER the Forgetful, known to his friends as Wally, serves as the counselor to High Lord Utren. Wally was a valiant, fearless commander in Utren's army, but after taking a club to the head during battle, he forgets most things after only seven days and has since taken on a more advisory role. Lately, he hasn't been able to sleep, and suspects his maid Charla, presumably a **vampire**, may be plotting to kill his employer. He's having trouble remembering things. Another vampire plot?

◆ **Wants & Needs** To protect Utren from all threats (real or perceived) as he once was able, refusing to allow his disability to affect his job performance. He's proud, loyal and has no time for pity.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Wally suspects his maid, Charla, is a vampire who has been attempting to sneak into Utren's quarters and turn him into a vampire. Because of his memory loss, Wally does not recall he's been stalking Charla—for months. He only thinks she's a vampire because once a week at sundown, Charla finishes cleaning the crypt, leaving right as Wally is heading to his chambers. He sees her leaving the crypt and suspects that's where she sleeps.

◆ **Carrying** 50gp; his weekly agenda; dried garlic; a wooden stake; a holy symbol; a half-full flask of what he believes to be holy water.

Princess Lystra Mistenvale

"That reminds me of something Gwendolyn would say..."

A young half-elven woman with shoulder-length blue hair studded with pearls, in a navy blue robe, which she clutches closely to her chest while twiddling a fountain pen in her ink-stained hand.

For the Insightful

Princess Lystra may believe everything she says, but she carries herself with an air of self-doubt.

A BEAMING half-elven woman with periwinkle blue hair and eyes to match, Princess Lystra Mistenvale has a habit of wringing her hands, which are almost always spotted with ink. She spends many hours of her day writing love letters to her paramour, a married human woman named Gwendolyn, who works on the palace grounds as a gardener. Or did, until two weeks ago, when she suddenly disappeared.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Princess Lystra wants to find Gwendolyn and know she is safe.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The other palace occupants all pity Princess Lystra, claiming this Gwendolyn person never existed and that Lystra is betrothed to Prince Letholdus Glorymongrel.

◆ **Carrying** 30sp, 50gp; a fountain pen, parchment paper and bottle of blue ink; a coral cameo brooch featuring a woman's silhouette; a bundle of love letters from Gwendolyn, whose writing looks eerily similar to Lystra's.

LADY KREE *"Say that again, only closer."*

A middle-aged female kenku noble with jet black feathers and a round build, wearing a large, intricately carved gold ring set with a single cabochon of Tsavorite.

For the Insightful

Lady Kree is shamelessly flirting as if her days are numbered.

A MIDDLE-AGED female kenku noble who has been ostracized by the townsfolk, the widowed Lady Kree spends much of her time alone at an upscale tavern, where she sips bloodwine and tips her barkeeps generously in the hopes of making new friends. There are persistent whispers she devised the mysterious deaths which befell each of her four husbands, Quill, Scratch, Thistle and Ben. She is rich beyond measure, and knows the day she will die. It's—well, it's not tomorrow, ha ha.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Lady Kree would appreciate it if people ignored the ludicrous rumors she is somehow responsible for the deaths of her four husbands and got to know her as an individual—maybe inviting her over for a game of Liar's Dice once in a while.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Lady Kree's engagement ring, a gift from her first husband which she has never once removed, is (unbeknownst to her) a legendary cursed ring known as the ***Spleen of the Dream Ender***.

◆ **Carrying** 70gp in coin from other provinces; a mix of walnuts and pomegranate seeds; honey lozenges; a Tsavorite ring that smells of sulfur and decay which, when held to one's ear, gives off the sound of almost imperceptible screams.

Spleen of the Dream Ender

legendary item (requires attunement)

This rich green Tsavorite ring grants its wearer the ability to claim life, at a terrible cost. The ring has four charges and regains 1d4 charges each time it is in the presence of a creature whose life has been snuffed out. As an action, the wearer can expend one charge to cast *finger of death*.

CURSED The first time the ring is used in this way, the wearer must roll 1d100. This is the number of days the wearer has left before death will come to claim them, at GM discretion.

SIR MEREK REDSTREAM *"Come again?"*

A young half-orc man with grayish skin whose face is dominated by wide-set dark eyes, a large jaw and prominent lower canines, he has a muscular build, sports leather armor and seems to expect respect.

For the Perceptive

Sir Merek hears slightly better in his left ear, please and thank you.

A YOUNG HALF-ORC knight with an air of unshakable confidence about him, Sir Merek Redstream has survived countless brushes with death, fought in more wars than he can count and wooed many a maiden with (true) tales of his military prowess. After losing most of his hearing following an explosion and going on military leave, Sir Merek visited a fortune teller, who told him he would meet his end at the hands of a village bard. As a result, he's on high alert any time there's music in the air, and would love to have musicians banned from this locality for good.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Sir Merek just wants people to speak up, dammit, and would like to stay far, far away from lutes and flutes and all who carry them.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Little does Merek know that what the fortune teller actually said was, "You will meet your end at the hands of a village guard."

◆ **Carrying** 40gp; a battle ax; a small wooden box filled with teeth from each of his 17 greatest nemeses; a four-leaf clover.

FOLLOWER OF GAROCHIIM

"The blessed shall ascend."

A broad-shouldered monk in long brown robes, his face is obscured in shadow and the cuffs of his robes conceal his hands, which he holds together across his chest while solemnly pacing in no particular direction.

For the Perceptive

You see no trace of this monk's skin, and cannot make out his race.

A SILENTLY-MOVING monk who watches over the shrine of Garochiim day and night, the one who calls himself Follower of Garochiim drifts endlessly around the hallowed grounds of this city. The Follower is somehow only a step away from any and all trespassers, although he intends no harm. No one knows from whence he came, although some monks claim he appeared one night after a thief stole a priceless relic, Xanith's File, from Darkpriest Xanith's crypt beneath the altar of Garochiim. Although the other priests find him unpleasant and are perturbed by his intense disposition, the Follower does not mind.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Follower of Garochiim wants all to ascend. To do so, one must be delivered. He does not explain what this entails.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Follower of Garochiim is the **ghost** of Xanith, the first follower of Garochiim, a long deceased monk whose relic was stolen from his sarcophagus. He cannot return to rest until the relic is returned and the one who stole it is destroyed.

◆ **Carrying** Brown robes; an unspeakable burden.

SIR LAMOTTA SUCCESS

"Sing it with me! LOUDER."

A stocky man with a face whose contours have been defined by hundreds of fights, wearing fancy clothes that don't seem to fit his body or his morose demeanor.

For the Charismatic

Sir Success is using his questionable skill at magic to charm the piano into playing on its own. A talented bard might wish to offer their services for the evening.

CASTLE-BORN and battle-hardened, rumor has it Sir Success changed his last name after taking one too many mace-blows to the head in combat and tournament. In any case, he gave up the manor lifestyle and moved to the big city, where he armed himself with a new name and a new career: lounge singer. His shows aren't the best, but he has been known to threaten the lives of any who walk out, so enter his domain with care.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A chance to sing at one of the noteworthy castles of the realm that might allow him to take back his rightful place as a member of the noble elite.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** He's terrible. And also terribly rude.

◆ **Carrying** 54sp; a bag of lozenges; a wand that can cast *animate objects* once per day.

THE KING OF THE CROSSROADS

"No one passes for free."

A hunched and unkempt man in the tattered clothes of an aging hedge knight, carrying a sword with more dents than straight steel.

For the Insightful

The King of the Crossroads, like most actual monarchs, is susceptible to flattery and gift-giving.

AN OLD NOBLE who has grown slightly mad, The King claims complete control over a domain encompassing the four corners of this big city crossroads. He can generally be found shuffling across the intersection to accost travelers for a toll and has been known to ask young and healthy warriors to help him collect in exchange for a cut of the profits.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The King hopes to become a de facto leader rather than one who merely claims power.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** He knows, deep down, he's only a hedge knight and has no claim to a kingship, even one this small.

◆ **Carrying** 18cp; several uncut precious stones with a potential worth of 28gp; a staff; a crown made of repurposed wood.

MAXIMILIAN "MAX" MARGASTER

with "Lemmy" the greatsword

A precocious boy no more than 8, with shaggy blond hair he keeps huffing out of his eyes, dragging an ornate, blood black greatsword that's nearly as long as he is.

For the Martially Trained

The sword this boy is carrying looks razor sharp and likely weighs more than he does. The fact he can even carry it is a bit of a shock.

The middle child in a family of seven, Maximilian Margaster's mother Alice died last solstice under somewhat mysterious circumstances, and his father, Duke Darville Margaster, receded into his private study. A precocious kid who never thought up a question he wouldn't immediately ask aloud regardless of circumstance, Max was still somehow overlooked, and found solace in the library of his family's estate.

While wandering the library alone (as usual), Max heard a voice calling to him through the stacks. Following it led him to a long-neglected corner of the library's cellar, where he discovered a cobweb-covered trunk. The voice compelled him to open it—and within Max found the source of the echo in his head: a gleaming-clean greatsword the color of dried blood, with a rich black hilt inset with runes he couldn't decipher. Naturally, Max picked it up.

The sword, introducing itself as Limbrender, is a forgotten death knight, cursed to stalk (well...be carried around) the realm as a sentient blade. Limbrender promised Max great power, the chance to change the world, to pit nation against nation in a cyclical battle for soul coins. Max doesn't know what soul coins are, or what Limbrender (whom he refers to as "Lemmy") wants with them, or why he's suddenly unstoppable in single combat and can shake the ground with his fists, but so far he and Lemmy have had a lot of fun. Just don't tell his dad?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Max would very much like to go on an adventure. Any adventure. Perhaps to one of the places he read about in the library? Maybe to the Cave of Desire? Oo ooo or the Underpit of Scorn? Or that alley downtown that leads to the sewers—did you know birds drop dead when they fly through there?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Max is 8, so going places requires parental approval or a late night climb out of his bedroom window. He has no idea that he and the sword he carries are now effectively a single undead creature—a death knight—but the fact that he mumbles to himself in Abyssal is overall not a good sign.

◆ **Carrying** 21sp, 15gp, 12pp; a short list of adventure locations he wants to explore; a rudimentary map of the realm and all its capital cities; a set of flash cards detailing deities and their known domains; a device he inhales through when he gets too excited.

Maximilian "Max" Margaster

Small human, chaotic neutral

The legendary death knight blade, known as Limbrender to its former patron, now responds to "Lemmy," the chosen moniker of this boy currently bonded with it.

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)
Hit Points 150 (blood pool)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +9, Cha +10
Skills Deception +10, Persuasion +10
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned,
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Abyssal, Common (telepathy 30 ft., sword only)
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

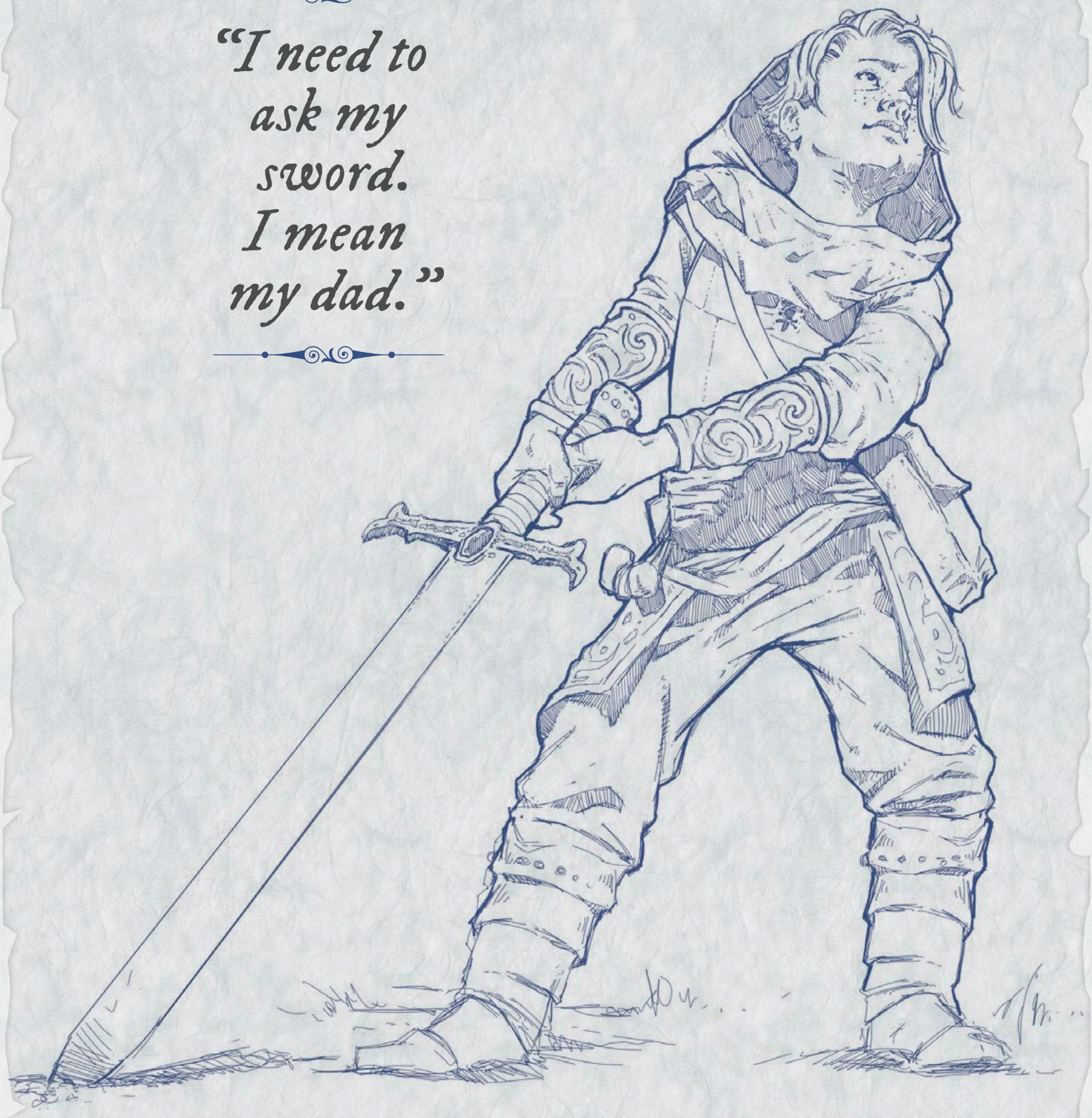
Magic Resistance. Limbrender and the creature to which it is attuned have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Marshal Undead. Unless Limbrender and the creature to which it is attuned are incapacitated, it and undead creatures of its choice within 60 ft. of it have advantage on saving throws against features that turn undead.
Blood Pool. A creature attuned to Limbrender gains access to the sword's blood pool, as well as fortified Constitution—20 (+5). The creature's HP maximum is increased to 150. This HP can only be restored by a long rest.

Spellcasting. Limbrender and the creature to which it is attuned are a 19th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). They have the following Paladin spells prepared:
1st level (4 slots): *command, compelled duel, searing smite*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, magic weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, elemental weapon*
4th level (3 slots): *banishment, staggering smite*
5th level (2 slots): *destructive wave (necrotic)*

Actions
Multiattack. Limbrender makes three greatsword attacks.
Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) slashing damage, plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.
Hellfire Orb (1/Long Rest). Limbrender expels a magical ball of fire that explodes at a point it can see within 120 ft. of it. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. The sphere spreads around corners. A creature takes 35 (10d6) fire damage and 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reactions
Parry. Limbrender adds 6 to the AC against one melee attack that would hit the creature to which it is attuned. The creature attuned to Limbrender must see the attacker and must be wielding Limbrender.

"I need to ask my sword. I mean my dad."



Lady Phillippa Anders, "Ser Phil Andershift"

"I know it's cliché!"

A knight of modest stature in battle-streaked, shining plate armor, face obscured by an ornate helmet, carrying a shield marked with a sigil: a great owl, swooping talons first.

For the Perceptive

This knight seems to be affecting their voice to sound more masculine, like a boy imitating his father.

For the Noble or Scholarly

You're not familiar with the sigil on this knight's shield—and you're familiar with them all.

LADY PHILLIPPA Anders spent her formative years being told her parents would have preferred a boy, an heir who could carry the family name. She scoffed at this notion then and thinks even less of it now, but when her parents were murdered by her horrible uncle Karl Anders, she was forced to use her considerable wits, wealth and access to some of the realm's finest smiths to create a false identity for herself and go into hiding. She seeks vengeance on her uncle, as well as an opportunity to grow back her hair once all this mess is ended. She just needs to rally a few more families to her cause, without revealing her true identity, before her 18th birthday.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Support in her quest to avenge her parents as well as proof of Karl's treachery. Surely there's something of use within her former estate.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Lady Phillippa's survival depends on discretion, so she can't do much of the work required to supplant Karl on her own. And she lacks trustworthy allies.

◆ **Carrying** 12sp, 29 gp, 44pp; a small emerald ring worth 750gp bearing the symbol of house Anders she keeps on a chain under her armor.

Lady Phillippa/Ser Phil

Medium human, lawful good
A woman masquerading as a masculine knight in order to keep herself safe.

Armor Class 17 (half plate and shield)
Hit Points 14 (3d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Deception +6, Insight +4, Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions
Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Percival Bloom, Esq.

"Work? No, I'll marry rich, thanks."

A long-haired man with a confident air but a decidedly bookish aspect, wearing brand new clothes and carrying a bouquet of flowers.

For the Perceptive

Even as he's planning his wedding, Percival seems to take keen interest in the way other women look at him.

THE CHARMING son of petty nobles, Percival is betrothed to the daughter of a local leader, Baron Grossly Harmengrad, ensuring his family's status will only grow as the generations pass. Making sure the wedding is a success is his top priority, and nothing less than a social calendar-defining event will be acceptable for him. After that, he only has to get his new bride pregnant, and all the pieces of his plan will have fallen into place. Speaking of plans, do you think that peach across the way has any?

◆ **Wants & Needs** To impress his new in-laws, the Harmengrads, and ingratiate himself with their colleagues and start a new branch of a noble family.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Percival simply cannot ignore female attention, and those loyal to his future in-laws have started to notice.

◆ **Carrying** 18cp, 9sp, 38gp; a perfume-soaked handkerchief with the initials of his betrothed; a second perfume-soaked handkerchief, with a different scent and the initials KT; a third distinct-smelling handkerchief with the initials OG.

KING BRACHUS VON MEER, "NUMBER 9"

"Speak up or don't bother."

An elegant man with a deep scar that stretches across his throat, in the trappings of royalty, with a crown made of woven gold and a heavy chain featuring a large black opal pendant.

For the Arcane

The necklace the king is wearing has a magic aura, and may be a particularly powerful artifact.

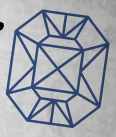
KING BRACHUS IX of House Von Meer, "Number 9" to those who remember his father and "that cheeky bastard" to those who tried and failed to kill him during the Servant's Revolt a few years back (assuming they have tongues to speak or breath to create sound), rules his kingdom not with an iron fist, but with a steady hand. Introspective and meticulous, he makes his decisions with the gaze of a man who has seemingly seen the future, or at least is prepared for every version of it. He does not fear death, as he's seen that too. He can sometimes be found roaming the city on his own, and is often out of the area for weeks or months at a time, seeking information regarding the attempts on his life.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Brachus would like to find the last of the usurpers who tried to have him killed. All he has as a lead is the scar on his neck, which pulses when he is closer to someone involved in the plot to kill him. If you know of anyone connected to the Servant's Revolt, he would certainly be interested in information.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Brachus's scar is only pulsing because of an artery partially blocked by scar tissue. The cleric who tried to explain this was put to death for sedition.

◆ **Carrying** A list of names he has yet to personally interrogate; a +1 rapier in an ornate hilt; ***The Diviner's Stone***.

The Diviner's Stone



magical artifact, very rare (requires attunement)

This oversized gemstone in a dark iron setting imbues its wearer with the ability to see the future and, in many cases, ward off death. When you finish a long rest, roll 1d20 and record the number rolled. You can replace any attack roll, saving throw or ability check made by you or a creature that you can see with this foretelling roll. You must choose to do so before the roll. Alternatively, you can expend the use of the foretelling roll to cast the ***divination*** spell. This stone also secures the lifeforce of the individual attuned to it, as in the ***death ward*** spell. The first time you would drop to 0 hit points as a result of taking damage, you instead drop to 1 hit point. This feature resets each dawn.

King Brachus von Meer

Medium human, lawful evil

A king with a connection to the future, Brachus seeks to put to the sword any responsible for his near-death experience.

Armor Class 15 (breastplate)
Hit Points 36 (8d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +3
Skills Insight +8, Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Death Ward (1/Long Rest). The first time Brachus would drop to 0 hit points as a result of taking damage, he instead drops to 1 hit point, and the spell ends.
Premonition (1/Long Rest). Brachus can choose to replace one attack roll, saving throw, or ability check of his choice (be it his own or an enemy that he can see) with a predetermined outcome (rolled before combat). If no such roll has been made, use 10.

Actions
Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Lady Corrila Larenhale

A slender, deathly pale, paper-thin skinned high elven woman in a dapper coat with a sharply pointed chin and dark eyes, whose arms are covered in intricate wristwatches, with receding blonde hair and an ornate hourglass in her right hand.

For the Insightful

Lady Corrila Larenhale speaks in steady, perfectly measured tones, as if she has a direct connection to the plane of order.

A once charming noble and clockmaker, Lady Corrila Larenhale's sole joy was gifting exquisite timepieces to any guest who visited her estate. But some weren't on time. Pity. A true shame. Perhaps unforgivable. Her obsession with their tardiness led her to explore ever more elaborate clockwork pieces, delving into time magic and searching for a way to ensure the entire realm would run in synchronous harmony, toward any aim she desired. She pursued this goal incessantly, descending into madness and working to ascend to lawful lichdom, eventually discovering the ability to warp time and keep her own body in a form of stasis. Looking far younger than her near millenia of life would suggest, Lady Corrilas's desire is to impose order in a world where she is no longer bound by mortality, or her self-made prison, surrounded by the octogenarian servants who fearfully do all she asks.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Lady Corrila Larenhale is attempting to ascend to full lichdom, she merely requires a number of rare arcane components to complete her phylactery. She will pay any cost necessary to achieve this aim, provided those supplying them are punctual.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Due to the nature of her time magic, Lady Corrila is fearful of leaving her estate-based lair, unsure of the impact it might have on her body. She seeks willing adventurers to locate the artifacts she needs. Those on the fence about aiding her will find they are quickly running out of time to say no.

◆ **Carrying** 100pp; an ivory comb; a stunning assortment of jeweled pocket watches and wristwatches worth 2,784gp; her pocket stopwatch; an hourglass she hopes to convert into a phylactery, and which can cast *time stop* once per day.

Lady Corrila Larenhale, would-be clockwork lich

Medium undead, lawful evil
This high elven clockmaker is biding her time, putting all the gears into place so she can ascend to full lichdom.

Armor Class 17 (studded leather +2)
Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +12, Wis +9
Skills Arcana +19, History +12, Insight +9, Perception +9
Damage Resistances cold, lightning, necrotic
Damage Immunities poison, bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Infernal
Challenge 22 (41,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Long Rest). If Lady Corrila fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.
Clockwork Rejuvenation. If Lady Corrila has her hourglass and is not at full health, she is healed for 13 (2d12) hit points at the start of her turn.

Spellcasting. Lady Corrila is an 18th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks), with the following Wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, magic missile, shield, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, invisibility, mirror image, scorching ray*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic, fireball, slow*
4th level (3 slots): *blight, dimension door*
5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill, scrying*
6th level (1 slot): *contingency, globe of invulnerability*
7th level (1 slot): *finger of death, plane shift*
8th level (1 slot): *dominate monster, maze*
9th level (1 slot): *foresight*

Actions
Pocket Stopwatch. Melee Spell Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) force damage. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be Paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Legendary Actions
Lady Corrila can take one of the 3 Legendary Actions below at the end of another creature's turn. Spent Legendary Actions are regained at the start of each turn.

Cantrip. Lady Corrila casts a cantrip.
Pocket Stopwatch (Costs 2 Actions). Lady Corrila casts Pocket Stopwatch.
Distort Age (Costs 3 Actions). Lady Corrila creates a localized shift in the passage of time. Each non-undead creature within 20 ft. of Lady Corrila must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one, as their bodies rapidly age 6d6 years. This transformation can only be reversed by the *wish* spell.

"Never be early... and don't even think about being late."

Lady Candice of House Poppenfeather, The Duchess of Sweets "Delightful"

A dazzling, youthful woman, wearing a gorgeous peach gown with an oversized bustle and layer after layer of lace and tulle; her makeup alone suggests an individual with money to spend and time to enjoy it.

For the Insightful

The Duchess spends an awful lot of time flattering others, suggesting she either revels in giving compliments or is hoping to gain (and exploit) trust.

LADY CANDICE Poppenfeather, or simply "Candy" to her closer confidantes, is the head of House Poppenfeather and the self-styled Duchess of Sweets. Her saccharine kindness is somewhat off-putting to her peers, but she carries much favor with the lower classes, sharing her considerable wealth (to say nothing of her signature toffees) with the populace in a way that suggests very little regard for money and/or a heightened sense of how important it is to be beloved. In addition to overseeing the vast Poppenfeather Toffee empire, the Duchess of Sweets also has an interest in the development of new and exciting candies using ingredients from all corners of the realm—and even has a means of transporting would-be sweetsmiths to other planes, provided they sign a contract offering exclusivity to any/all discovered delicacies and delights.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The Duchess of Sweets is interested in financing any adventurous types who might gain access to rare ingredients, particularly on planes beyond the prime material.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The devil to whom Lady Candy sold her soul years ago in exchange for the appearance of eternal youth and the ability to create portals would be terribly disappointed to learn she's also hoping to find a way out of their contract through her sponsored planar expeditions.

◆ **Carrying** 45pp; a large, foldable fan that can cast *gate* once per day; a satchel containing 8d8 toffees.

Lady Candice Poppenfeather, The Duchess of Sweets

Medium human, chaotic good

Armor Class 11 (14 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 28 (5d8+5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +6
Skills Arcana +4, Deception +6, Persuasion +6
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Dark One's Blessing. When Lady Candy reduces a hostile creature to 0 hit points, she gains 8 temporary hit points. Additionally, she can cast *mage armor* at will, without expending a spell slot.

Spellcasting. Lady Candy is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She regains her expended spell slots when she finishes a short or long rest. She knows the following Warlock spells:

Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, mage hand, minor illusion*
1st-3rd level (2 3rd-level slots): *blindness/deafness, hypnotic pattern, command, hold person, dispel magic, major image*

Snead van Veld "Power is the means; money is the end."

A skeletal human man whose spindly limbs seem to make up the bulk of his form, hidden beneath a suit of clothes so black it seems to have a void-like depth.

For the Roguish

Van Veld looks like an easy mark for anyone claiming to have a new product or technique to protect investments.

TALL, THIN and rookish, Snead van Veld was born into an exceptional amount of wealth. His primary goal since then has been to add to that already large sum by any means necessary. He's not interested in spending any of it, however, choosing instead to hoard it. After purchasing a grist mill, he turned it into a success with ruthless tactics, and is always on the lookout for a new way to balance the financial scale even further toward himself.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To create the most efficient business in the city by using this standard: What makes the most money?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** If anyone with a conscience and power enough to stop him should see the conditions at the mill, they would be forced to act.

◆ **Carrying** A large pouch full of 200gp in mixed currency; a keyring with a dozen skeleton keys.

GET GRAYGREEN, PRINCE OF THE PEOPLE

"What's good for you is good for me..."

A devilishly handsome man with wide, greenish grey eyes, in a well-worn navy topcoat, pressed white shirt and dark riding boots.

For the Perceptive or Shapeshifting

When Get blinks, which is rarely, he does so in a way that seems communicative.

A GLAD-HANDING neophyte noble with charm and ambition to spare as well as the savvy to help others make mutually beneficial deals, Get Graygreen is new money as far as most nobles are concerned, which suits him fine. After all, it's his touch with the common class that's the true source of his power. It doesn't hurt that he's also got a wild magic streak surging through his veins—veins that are part of a shapeshifting body. Using his ability to change forms, Get has built a vast empire and stellar reputation, assuming the identities of royals (Prince Marcos of Morovir; Lady Stallsborne of Castle Trench), merchants (mead magnate Angus Plank; gem appraiser Giddy Shellgame) and even favored adventurers in the area, all of whom have nothing but kind words to say about their old friend Get Graygreen.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Short term? A favor here, a good word there. He'd pay handsomely for access to the seals used by royals and other nobility. Long term? Full control of the city, if not the realm itself.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Get's true identity as a shapeshifter is known to a select few confidantes and others of his race. This information would be particularly valuable to his rivals.

◆ **Carrying** 45sp, 32gp, 10pp; a thick fountain pen carved from a **roc** feather; fine parchment; green wax; a stamp featuring two interlocking Gs, the seal of house Graygreen.

Get Graygreen

Medium shapeshifter, chaotic neutral
A mercurial sorcerer with a gift for persuading others, he's at home at court or while courting others.

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 59 (9d8+18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +6, Cha +7
Skills History +6, Deception +7, Persuasion +7
Condition Immunity polymorph
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Gnomish
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Wild Magic Surge. When Get uses a spell of 1st level or higher, roll a d20. If the result is 1, roll on a Wild Magic Surge table, at GM discretion.
Tides of Chaos. Get can use this ability to gain advantage on one attack roll, ability check or saving throw. However, when he does so, the next spell he casts (of 1st level or higher) causes a roll on a Wild Magic Surge Table, at GM discretion.
Meta Magic (3/Long Rest). Get can use this ability to modify a spell in one of the following ways:
Heightened Spell. When Get casts a spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw to resist its effects, he gives one target of the spell disadvantage on its first saving throw made against the spell.
Quickened Spell. Get may use a bonus action to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action.

Spellcasting. Get is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Sorcerer spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, fire bolt, friends, mage hand, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, mage armor, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, lightning bolt, fly*
4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*
5th level (1 slots): *animate objects*

Actions
Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Reactions
Bend Luck (3/Long Rest). Get can add or subtract 1d4 to another creature's attack roll, ability check, or saving throw. It must be after the roll, but before its effects are realized.

Prince Hamptony Leemax

with Sigmund the Ferret

A tall, fit man with slicked back black hair sporting a blue and gold cloak and a wolf fur scarf, he stands with his chest puffed out and his chiseled chin held high, a well-groomed white ferret in a turtleneck-style green wool sweater balanced on his shoulder.

For the Perceptive

Prince Hamptony keeps tapping his index finger and thumb together, either because he has a nervous tic or he's sending a signal.

A handsome, charismatic prince who also happens to be a master swordsman, Hamptony Leemax has quite a lot going for him. As far as royal figures go, however, he's polarizing at best. Some believe he's doing plenty for the city by just waving out of his window or fencing shirtless in the courtyard, while others feel he's a "do-nothing celebrity" who's more likely to step over a common man lying in the street than help him get back on his feet. His ferret, Sigmund ("Ziggy" to close company) is a constant companion. Recently, Prince Hamptony has been dealing with troubling night terrors, and his stepmother, Lady Portia Regata, has gone catatonic. This is troubling indeed, but not nearly as vexing as the choice of what to wear to the forthcoming Revel of Riches, an annual display of ostentatious opulence attended by any noble who's any noble.

◆ **Wants & Needs** He wants at least 16 more wolf pelts (and a merchant who can properly dye them) so he can have one to match every cloak he owns. He would also love to know why it feels like his shadow is plotting his murder.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Prince Hamptony does not know how to read. He's always had his servants do it for him.

◆ **Carrying** 15sp, 15gp; a +1 rapier with a golden blade and bejeweled handle worth 500gp; a pet ferret wearing a tiny wool sweater.

Prince Hamptony Leemax

Medium human, lawful good

Armor Class 18 (studded leather + suave defense)
Hit Points 32 (7d8)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +6, Insight +5, Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Lightfooted. Prince Hamptony can take the Dash or Disengage action as a bonus action on each of his turns.
Suave Defense. While Prince Hamptony is wearing light or no armor and wielding no shield, his AC includes his Charisma modifier.

Actions
Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Reactions
Parry. Prince Hamptony adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Sigmund the Ferret

Tiny beast, Unaligned

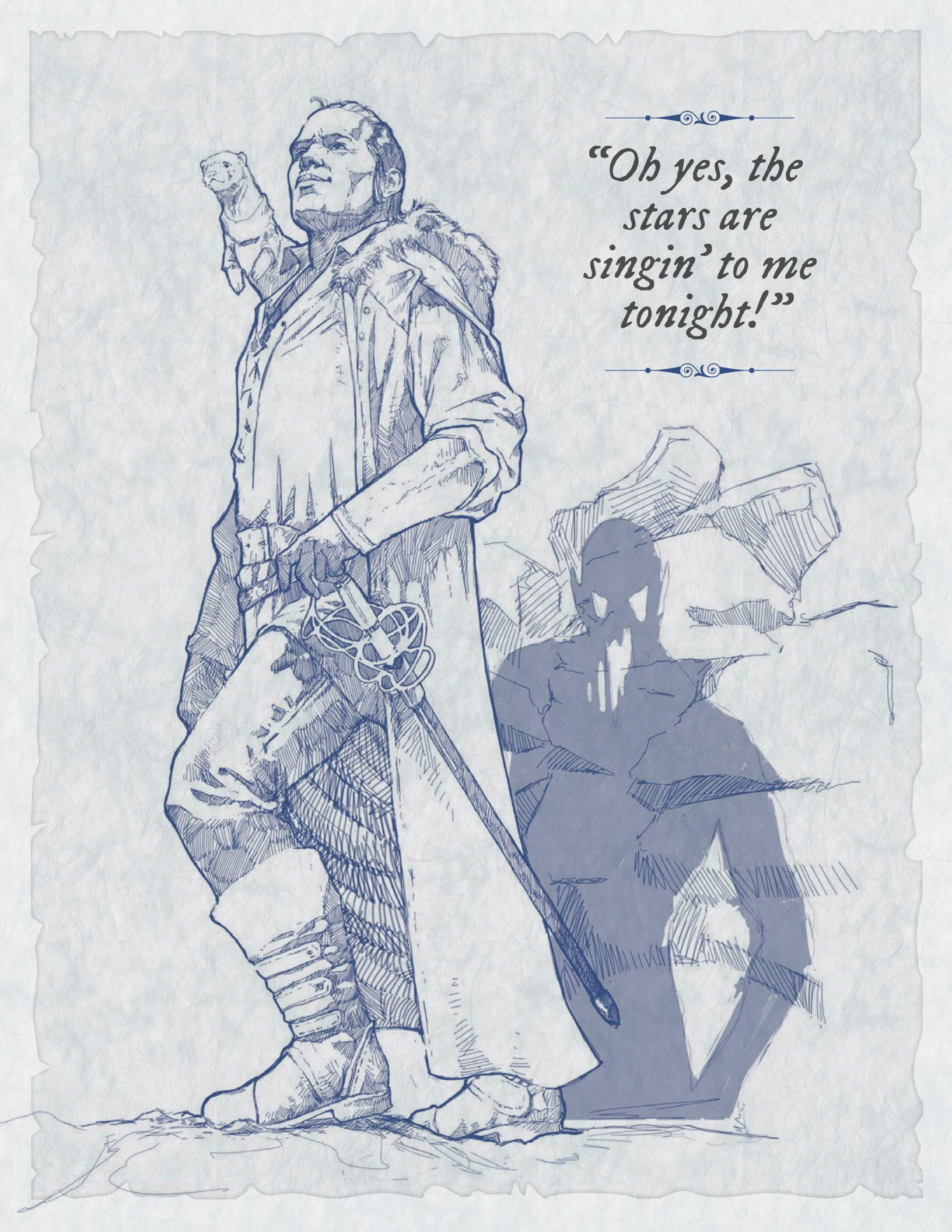
Armor Class 13
Hit Points 1 (1d4-1)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 13
Challenge ¼ (50 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. Sigmund has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.
Harry. Sigmund can distract or otherwise divert another creature as an action or bonus action, granting advantage to the first attack made against that creature or disadvantage on the first attack made by that creature.
Weasel Ancestry. Sigmund can Hide as a bonus action.

Actions
Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4) piercing damage.


"Oh yes, the stars are singin' to me tonight!"

KIBANA KUBERNETES

"That would please the Old One."

A burgundy tiefling with tight horns under a smart brunette bob, wearing a dark enameled piece of leather armor embellished with a sigil: a single tentacle stretching upward from the Abyss.

For the Insightful

Kibana pauses often, signaling she is either finding the right word to say, or listening to a conversation happening only in her mind. Whatever the reason, these pauses are...unsettling.

PROUD DAUGHTER of Oleo and Alash Kubernetes, legendary servants of the Old One (long may its unknowable chaos disrupt our day-to-day triviality), Kibana Kubernetes wishes to grow stronger in her faith while simultaneously bringing about the end of the status quo. She enjoys long walks on the beach, musings on the nature of the void between the stars and plotting in private to overthrow the city's leadership so that the servants of the Old One may rule, or watch anarchy descend...whatever pleases the Old One. Like many servants of the Old One, she possesses the ability to speak telepathically with others. She has no issue using this ability to place suggestions, machinations or even the "will of the gods" into the minds of unsuspecting do-gooders. Messing with people is fun.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Access to the Book of Windows, an ancient text detailing the particulars of summoning and planar travel, which was stolen from her family the night they were killed.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** For someone as meticulous as Kibana, serving the very foundation of chaos is a challenge. Luckily, she has a direct line.

◆ **Carrying** 31sp, 43gp, 12pp; a ***rod of tentacles***; a mask in a bag with a pitch black interior.

Kibana Kubernetes

Medium tiefling, chaotic evil
A young noble tiefling, and warlock of the Old One.

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +6, Cha +9
Skills Arcana +6, Intimidation +9
Damage Resistances psychic
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Abyssal, Common, telepathy 30 ft.
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spells of the Old One. Kibana's connection to an elder being allows her to cast the following spells:
At will: *detect magic, jump, levitate, mage armor (self only), speak with dead*
1/day each: *arcane gate, true seeing*
Whispering Aura. At the start of each of Kibana's turns, each creature of her choice within 5 ft. of her must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage, provided she isn't incapacitated.

Spellcasting. Kibana is a 14th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She regains her expended spell slots when she finishes a short or long rest. She knows the following Warlock spells:
Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, eldritch blast, guidance, mage hand, minor illusion, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*
1st-5th level (3 5th-level slots): *blight, crown of madness, clairvoyance, contact other plane, detect thoughts, dimension door, dissonant whispers, dominate beast, gaseous form, telekinesis, vampiric touch*

Rod of Tentacles

wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This rod is a magic weapon that ends in three rubbery tentacles. While attuning to the rod, you can use an action to direct each tentacle to attack a creature you can see within 15 ft. of you. Each tentacle makes a melee attack roll with a +7 bonus. On a hit, the tentacle deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage. If you hit a target with all three tentacles, it must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature's speed is halved, it has disadvantage on Dexterity saving throws, and it can't use reactions for 1 minute. Moreover, on each of its turns, it can take either an action or a bonus action, but not both. It can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn(s), ending the effect on itself on a success.

"THE DIVINE VOICE," QUEEN JALEEDA D'SOUN

"I'll ensure they remember you."

A half-elven woman in various shades of violet, with rich turquoise eyes and a knowing smile, teasing the strings of a weathered viol.

For the Bardic

Queen Jaleeda D'soun's viol, an incredible specimen, looks sturdy enough to handle a night of playing in the roughest tavern, yet exudes a delicate, haunting sound, indicating it might have magical properties.

WHEN JALEEDA D'Soun won the heart of King Hrothmane of the Hollow Keep, it was with a song that brought the battle-ready blond brute to his knees. When she won the hearts of the people, it was through action, singing a durge that knocked the **red dragon** that had devoured her husband out of the sky. Now, with the fate of the realm on her shoulders, she must do more than sing—she must lead. A talented bard whose thirst for knowledge nearly eclipses her thirst for ale, she is bored with palace intrigue, a blind spot that may prove costly if the rumors about a plot to usurp her are to be believed.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Someone to handle the day-to-day burden of ensuring she doesn't get killed by those in her inner circle. Perhaps for starters, keep an eye on her valet, Alicia Vickersby. She seems...off.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Jaleeda is so accustomed to being beloved she can't fathom someone would kill her for the crown. Her weakness for ale might give them an opening.

◆ **Carrying** 22sp, 43gp, 81pp; a bundle of parchment tied with a viol string, featuring several in-progress ballads; the Scoundrel's Purse, a magical instrument.

Queen Jaleeda D'Soun

Medium half-elf, chaotic good
A bard who is now a queen, still getting the hang of her job.

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Wis +3
Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +5, Performance +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Celestial, Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Song of Rest. Jaleeda can perform a song while taking a short rest. Any ally who hears the song regains an extra 1d6 hit points if it spends any Hit Dice to regain hit points at the end of that rest. She can confer this benefit on herself as well.
Taunt (2/Long Rest). Jaleeda can use a bonus action on her turn to target one creature within 30 ft. of her. If the target can hear her, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls and saving throws until the start of Jaleeda's next turn.
Scoundrel's Purse. Jaleeda can cast the *hold monster* spell once per long rest using her magical viol.

Spellcasting. Jaleeda is a 4th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Bard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, healing word, heroism, sleep, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter*

Actions
Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.
Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

HIS HOLINESS BARDLE SHANKSWORTH

"Only gold can grease the machinery of the heavens."

A man of average height and bald except for a tonsure of hair around the back of his head, with a better-than-you smile.

For the Perceptive

The army of ushers, altar tenders and others employed by Shanksworth seem to share a universal disdain for him.

WITH GLEAMING white teeth and a smile that never falters, His Holiness Bardle Shanksworth is the supreme spiritual authority for hundreds of this city's denizens and spent years building his flock among the area's rich and powerful. By offering the rich a chance to "pay their way" to divine favor by buying absolution from Shanksworth, he's become one of the realm's most powerful residents.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A relic of great value recently acquired by Shanksworth has gone missing. He needs it returned.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Shanksworth appears to inspire no loyalty in his staff, only in his congregants.

◆ **Carrying** 352cp, 12sp, 100gp; the poor-box key; several small candles.

Lawkeepers & Lawbreakers

In large urban areas, those who hold the line are always in a struggle against those who would leverage the city's size to step around it. Some who uphold the law are so militant in their devotion to it that they'll utilize power without discretion, while others understand the only way to change a corrupt system is to subvert the system's rules—and if you make a little coin doing so, well, all the better. Where your party falls on the spectrum between law and chaos, as well as right and wrong, will likely put them at odds with half the city.

Gourd Gazpacho

"Aw c'mon, I was gonna say that!"

A rotund man with a weathered face, who is bald except for a small patch of orange-blonde hair that sticks straight up from the center of his skull, carrying a contraption built of wood and broken glass.

For the Perceptive

This man seems like he's making mental notes of everyone in the party, as if he's collecting evidence for a crime that hasn't yet transpired.

DESPITE BEING a veteran detective with decades of experience, Gourd has yet to truly crack a case on his own. He certainly claims credit for solving plenty of past crimes, though, assuming his current colleagues won't bother looking into years-old cases from a different precinct. Gourd is chasing the glory of being a hero more so than the professional achievement of solving a crime. He works hard, he just doesn't work smart, and is susceptible to endless rabbit holes most other detectives know to avoid. His self-confidence is misplaced, yet oddly inspiring.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Gourd would love to retire so he can finally write his mystery novel, but he won't allow himself to step away until he solves a crime on his own. He's currently trying to determine who killed Horatio, the mayor's cat.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Gourd is one of those "so daft he thinks he's a genius"-types, and his steadfast belief in his own abilities as well as his pride are both roadblocks to his success.

◆ **Carrying** 16cp, 4sp, 1gp; four shards of glass of varying size tied to an X made of sticks that he uses as crude magnifying glasses as well as "a reference model for how glass usually shatters."

Kardina Mintleaf

"Smell that? That's a fresh-baked crime!"

A petite woman with wide green eyes and a big ball of curly gray hair, her crooked smile looks like a lightning bolt.

For the Insightful

This might be the most positive person any of you have ever met. It's a little unnerving.

BY FAR the most polite and bubbly city patrol person around, Kardina Mintleaf has such a joyful enthusiasm for her job you'd probably guess she catches butterflies for a living rather than criminals. Even when she shackles particularly aggressive types, Kardina maintains her sunny disposition as she uses her shocking strength and understanding of body leverage to muscle much larger men to the ground.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Kardina is pushing for legislation requiring all the city watch to smile and stay upbeat while on duty.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Each night, when she's all alone, Kardina plays her flute and drinks fermented licorice tea until she passes out, in an effort to forget the man who tormented her in another life.

◆ **Carrying** 8cp, 11sp, 11gp; a brass flute she uses as a billy club or to signal for backup.

"Lil Slippery" Elri Izacal

"Noooooo, I would never!"

A spry young elf with perfectly disheveled blond hair and puppy-dog brown eyes, he packs a lot of handsome into his tiny frame, which looks especially tiny thanks to his oversized cloak.

For the Insightful or Roguish

Elri's charming interest in your party may be genuine, but his honeyed words are laced with techniques used by ace-level con artists.

For the Perceptive

Elri never breaks eye contact, suggesting either a keen interest in conversation or a trained practitioner who knows how to hide a lie.

AN EFFORTLESSLY handsome and charismatic elf, it's easy to see how Elri has pulled off so many robberies, heists and cons throughout the city. Though his reputation precedes him, he still manages to make his bones as a criminal because try as they might, potential marks just can't seem to say no to the guy. Still, he knows he'll eventually run out of cons to pull in this part of the realm, which is why he's trying to pull one big job to fund his journey to fresh territory.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Elri needs a couple more accomplices to pull off his carefully plotted beef heist at the city's largest meatpacking operation.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Since he's quite the escape artist when it comes to fleeing a scene, Elri has never actually found himself in real danger from a job gone wrong. Chances are he wouldn't fare so well in a fight.

◆ **Carrying** 6cp, 8sp, 15gp; a dagger with a mysterious insignia he uses "for protection," which is, in fact, a fancy letter opener.

Roid "Heavy Hands" Turlak

"You deserve a pat on the back..."

A massive, muscular orc with rich green skin, humongous hands and a sinister smile that's missing one of its tusks, wearing a heavy gold chain.

For the Perceptive or Athletic

Roid's aggression and outsize strength are no joke, and it looks like his grip would be tough to wriggle out of.

AS ONE of the head guards of the city prison, Roid "Heavy Hands" Turlak is a miserable brute (and an uncommonly strong commoner, with 18 Strength). Tired of the tedium of guarding criminals he believes are physically incapable of real harm, Roid amuses himself at work by grappling and "snoozin'" the prisoners he finds most annoying, or offering seemingly affectionate gestures such as a clap on the back or a shoulder rub for those who whine about their predicament. Because his hands are so powerful, he's actually causing them great anguish and casually breaking their bones.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Roid does not understand why he hasn't been promoted to warden yet, and feels he could honestly develop a better disposition if given the chance.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Beyond tired of his tactics, the other tenured guards are plotting Roid's (very aggressive, very public) dismissal from the prison.

◆ **Carrying** 13cp, 7sp, 2gp; a long, splintering club adorned with a boar tusk on top; a large metal ring with 50 jagged keys; ***Roid's Gold Chain*** that appears magical.

Constable Grindlethorpe Thistlespine, "The Guppy"

A forest gnome barely taller than 3 feet, but whose confidence and impressive posture make him seem a little taller, in robes of vibrant yellow that contrast sharply with his shock of red hair, full sideburns, tasteful goatee and pale blue eyes, with two medallions conspicuously around his neck.

For the Perceptive

Constable Thistlespine seems almost top heavy between the numerous pouches on his belt and his two medallions (of which he seems particularly proud) draped around his neck.

For the Scholarly or Militarily-Trained

The medallions Constable Thistlespine is wearing are the same: the Mark of the Watchful, an award granted to those who serve in a post with merit and/or distinction for 100 years.

A MAGE of middling power but impeccable letters of recommendation, Constable Grindlethorpe Thistlespine adores the people of this city and sees them all as part of his extended family—a rarity in a city this size. Though he's spent most of his adult life (204 years to be exact) serving (with merit!) as a constable within the city walls, a recent string of disappearances and deaths have left the residents resentful of his inability to bring the perpetrators to justice—a reality that has caused him to question his own efficacy as well as the longevity of his career. The man once jokingly referred to as The Guppy feels like a fish out of water, and may bring in backup to bring the perpetrators to justice.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Constable Grindlethorpe's anxiety at the current situation, 12 missing in just the last four days, is palpable. He was hoping to retire soon, knowing he's getting older and has lost a step. He can't walk away until this job is complete.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The disappearance of citizens has disrupted trade and has made the merchants, the city's lifeblood, uneasy. He needs the situation dealt with so the city can return to business as usual—but he's simply at a loss for what to do next.

◆ **Carrying** 32sp, 18gp; a loop of several keys, one of which he knows unlocks the city treasury; a **wand of wonder.**

Constable Grindlethorpe Thistlespine, "The Guppy"

Small gnome, lawful good
A gnome who has dedicated his entire life to improving the lives of others in this city through his work as a constable, the Guppy is the man authorities call when they have big fish to catch.

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 59 (9d6+27)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

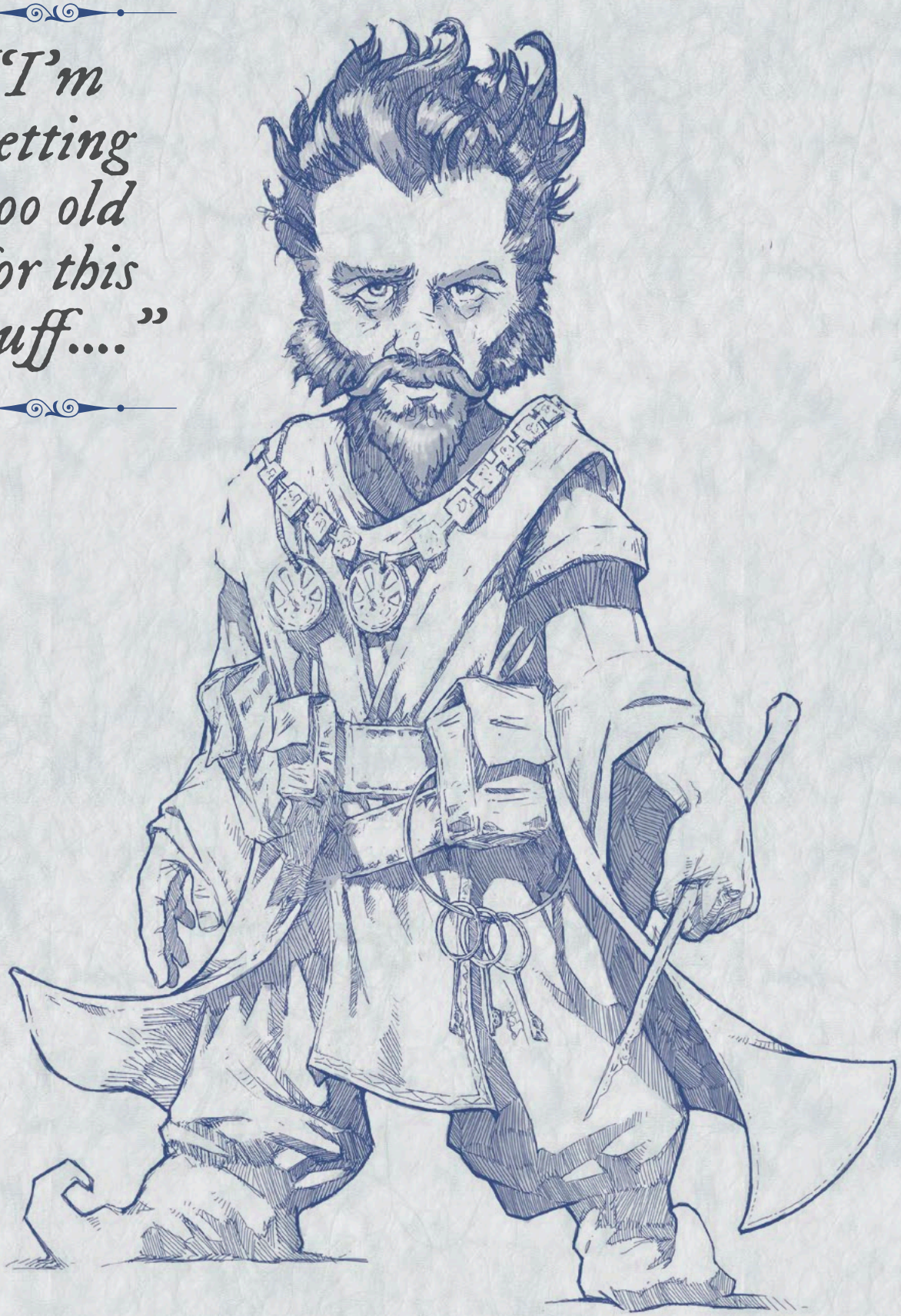
Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5
Skills History +7, Investigation +7
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Draconic, Gnomish, Undercommon
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Wand of Wonder. Constable Thistlespine carries a **wand of wonder**, and he's not afraid to use it.

Spellcasting. Constable Thistlespine is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*
4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, confusion*
5th level (1 slot): *geas*

Actions
Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

"I'm getting too old for this stuff...."



Captain Grey Mountaindark *"Hold the line."*

A dwarven man as wide as he is tall and missing one of his front teeth, his impressive black and white beard meets the middle of his chest. He's wearing finely crafted, battle-beaten armor that seems to shake the ground as he walks and is carrying a large hammer covered in runes.

For the Perceptive or Medically Trained

The knees of the armor Captain Mountaindark is wearing don't seem to bend, possibly to protect old joints and shredded ligaments, which might affect his movement speed.

THE HEAD of the city's Heavy Company, a glorified guard who both protect and police the citizenry here with an iron fist, Captain Grey Mountaindark has applied the dwarven principles of pride, hard work and unrelenting stubbornness even in the face of insurmountable odds to his role as a military leader—and those under his command adore him for it. He is missing one of his front teeth, and as a result whistles a bit when he says words that start with S. No one has laughed at this fact in nearly 30 years.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Though he'd never admit it, the Heavy Company has its hands full with a group of thieves operating out of the city's sewers, as well as a growing threat from a pack of gnolls that have been reported circling the city. His soldiers can't be everywhere at once.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Captain Mountaindark has an interest in keeping the city safe using outside contractors—he'll need all the men he can muster for the coup he's plotting.

◆ **Carrying** 21sp, 30gp, 43pp; a few bounties and contracts needing assignment; a rough map featuring updates on gnoll sightings; a ***dwarven curler***.

Captain Grey Mountaindark

Medium hill dwarf, lawful evil
A stalwart dwarven military man, this captain leads through force of will (and force in general).

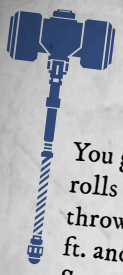
Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)
Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Damage Resistances poison
Languages Common, Dwarven
Challenge 5 (1,800xp)

Dwarven Resilience. Captain Mountaindark has advantage on Saving Throws against poison.
Martial Advantage. Once per turn, Captain Mountaindark can deal an extra 10 (3d6) damage to a creature he hits with a weapon attack if that creature is within 5 ft. of an ally of Captain Mountaindark that isn't incapacitated.
Leadership (1/Short or Long Rest). For one minue after invoking his Leadership as a bonus action, Captain Mountaindark utters a special command or warning whenever a non-hostile creature he can see within 30 ft. of him makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add 1d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand Captain Mountaindark. This effect ends if Captain Mountaindark is incapacitated.

Actions
Multiattack. Captain Mountaindark makes two dwarven curler attacks.
Dwarven Curler. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.
Dwarven Curler (Thrown). Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage. Two targets, *Hit:* 11 (1d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage to the first target and 4 (1d8) to a second target of equal or less AC within 10 ft. of the first target.



Dwarven Curler

weapon (warhammer), very rare (requires attunement by a dwarf)

You gain a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. It has the thrown property with a normal range of 20 ft. and a long range of 60 ft., which can use Strength or Dexterity for the attack roll. When you hit with a ranged attack using this weapon, it immediately flies back to your hand, dealing 1d8 bludgeoning damage to the same target. As a bonus action you can shift the trajectory of the curler's path back to your hand and choose a second target within 10 ft. of the first to receive this extra bludgeoning damage instead, provided the first roll to hit would have been high enough to hit the second target.

SER LEXINGTON BARKDIGGLY "SER LEX" HEARTWARMER III

"Did I do good?"

A humanoid canine, with shiny golden fur, big brown eyes, floppy ears and a suit of shining blue and silver armor, carrying a large wooden club and a shield with the sigil of a heart aflame.

For the Insightful

Ser Lex seems eager to please, as if his main goal in life is the pursuit of praise. And possibly food. And more bones. Bones are great.

A PROUD paladin of house Heartwarmer, like his father and grandfather before him, Ser Lexington Barkdiggly Heartwarmer III is as devoted to the idea of doing good as he is dedicated to the task of ensuring those around him have lives filled with joy. Wandering the streets of this city, Ser Lex greets all he encounters with a smile on his face and a humble request for food on his lips. He's been known to undertake any number of requested tasks in exchange for a simple crust of bread or cut of beef or scrap of salmon or the occasional whole turkey when temptation grows beyond his willpower. And bones, he does like bones. Ser Lex has a nose for trouble and an almost preternatural gift for unearthing buried secrets, and most mercenaries for hire know that if you're looking for a side gig, Ser Lex can fetch one for you, provided you don't mind doing your best. For example—did you know the city's crypts are currently writhing with the walking dead?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ser Lex wants to feel wanted, needs to feel needed and in order to pursue those feelings of admiration and affection has chosen to do good for the people of this city—a Heartwarmer family tradition.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The dead are walking among the living throughout the city, a fact Ser Lex knows more than he lets on about. Perhaps he doesn't want you to think it was his fault, or maybe he just wants to keep all of their bones to himself.

◆ **Carrying** 43cp, 30sp; a bright green orb about the size of your hand; a patterned red cloth he occasionally dons as a neckerchief.

Ser Lexington Barkdiggly Heartwarmer, III

Medium humanoid canine, chaotic good
An oath of devotion paladin who just wants to do good.

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5, Cha +9
Skills Athletics +6, Insight +3, Persuasion +9
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Celestial, Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Fetch Quest (1/Long Rest). No matter where he is in the city, Ser Lex knows of at least one individual within a 5-mile radius who needs something done, and knows payment for this service will include at least one (and possibly several) bits of food. Upon hearing the phrase "Fetch Quest," Ser Lex will head in the direction of the closest "side job for good" as he calls them, at GM discretion. Once this feature has been activated, it cannot be used again until Ser Lex has finished a well-deserved long rest.
Brave. Ser Lex has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
Divine Smite. Ser Lex can expend a spell slot to cause his melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 9 (2d8) radiant damage to a target on a hit. If Ser Lex expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d8 for each level above 1st. The damage increases by 1d8 if the target is an undead or a fiend.
Warding Bark. Each creature that can see hear Ser Lex's deafening display within 30 ft. of him must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute, and must use their reaction and subsequent turns to move as far away from Ser Lex as they can. Fiends and Undead make this save at disadvantage. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Ser Lex's Warding Bark for the next 24 hours.

Spellcasting. Ser Lex is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Paladin spells prepared:
1st level (4 slots): *bless*, cure wounds, detect evil and good, heroism*, protection from evil and good*
2nd level (2 slots): *aid, lesser restoration, magic weapon**
*Ser Lex casts these spells on himself before combat.

Actions
Multiattack. Ser Lex can use Warding Bark, then makes two melee attacks with his longstick.
Longstick. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage

Reactions
Parry. Ser Lex adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Ser Lex must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Gabriel "The Dent" Danton

Undead Underboss

A dapper gentleman with sallow skin whose wide-brimmed hat appears to be covering a portion of his caved-in skull. His rich blue eyes seem to be tracking everything in the room.

For the Roguish

Tales of the Dent are legendary, and seeing him in the flesh means either he needs something important or you've made a horrible mistake.

For the Devout

Though his shirt cuffs have been doused in a rich cologne, the Dent carries the unmistakable stench of the undead.

When he was just a common sneakthief, Gabriel "The Dent" Danton suffered a blow to the head from an overzealous guard that should have taken his life—or at least set him on a straighter path. Instead, the young pickpocket recovered, and vowed that if he was going to live on the wrong side of the law he'd do so by ensuring he never had to deal with guards again. He used his considerable talents to collect dirt on nearly every lawkeeper in the city, and has since operated with the shroud of immunity that only top notch blackmailers or those with a legacy of ruthlessness can enjoy. Luckily for The Dent, he is both.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The Dent pays better than most for intel regarding what those in power do after dark (and double for info related to illicit daytime activities) and seeks an angle on the leader of a community crime watch, Alderwoman Janet Pogue, who seems delicious.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Given The Dent is also a vampire, he has difficulty operating during the day, and can no longer sneak unbidden into others' homes (which is a real shame, as it was one of his more useful talents).

◆ **Carrying** 0sp, 38gp, 19pp; a few vials of blood; a pair of round, dark-lensed glasses; an oversized parasol.

GM Note

Gabriel "The Dent" Danton uses the statistics of a vampire (CR 13), with one additional feature: ***Cunning Action.*** The Dent can take the Dash, Disengage or Hide actions as a bonus action.

"Creepy" Sheena O'Pinery

"I just had the BEST dream about you!"

An exceptionally tall and slender woman with long, thinning dark hair and yellow teeth, she has a diagonal scar on her face that stretches from the corner of her squinty right eye to the bottom of her cracked lip.

For the Perceptive

Sheena rarely makes eye contact for long and often appears to be on the verge of tears (when she's not laughing maniacally).

KNOWN FOR her bizarre giggle fits and penchant for invading personal space, Sheena was recently released from a stint in prison after being caught stealing bones from mangled corpses across the city. As it turns out, she was using the skeletal pieces to create crude dolls resembling some of the citizens she's obsessed with—and she's not shy about letting them know how often she thinks and dreams about them. Prison did not do much to break her of this habit. If anything, doing time made her more bold.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Sheena would like to start making life-sized replicas of her favorite city dwellers. To do so, she'll need to unearth a few more parts.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Sheena has very thin skin, both figuratively and literally. Also, the city guard working the graveyard district knows her face (and smell).

◆ **Carrying** 17cp, 8sp, 5gp; a rusted bonesaw; a sharpened femur for protection.

"That's gonna leave a mark."

"Scrim" Gordenhurst

"Teargh, that's gonna cost extra."

A one-eyed, muscle-bound merc who barely fits inside his studded leather armor, he has a facial tattoo that incorporates his empty eye socket into a picture of a giantess hurling a boulder.

For the Insightful or Seafaring

Scrim has the look and feel of a steadfast seaman. There's something curious about the fact that he refuses to work on, or around, the waves.

For the Perceptive

Scrim will occasionally touch his chest just above his armor, as if ensuring something is still on his person.

A FORMER FELON of the high seas who has since taken up land-based mercenary work after an encounter with a **kraken** left him afeared of the water, Scrim will face down any would-be foe, provided it lacks tentacles.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Scrim wants money, plain and simple, and will do just about anything for it. He'd love a steady job in a town that's as far away from the sea as possible. And if anyone asks, his name is Magoo.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Scrim fears the reason a kraken attacked his ship a few months ago is because his crew raided an undersea temple and took a few artifacts—including the intricate shell necklace he continues to wear under his armor.

◆ **Carrying** 43cp, 18sp; a heavy cutlass; chain shirt; the ***Call of the Sea***, an intricate shell necklace that is most assuredly cursed.

"Scrim" Gordenhurst

Medium human, chaotic neutral
A landlocked sailor dealing with a bit of a curse.

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)
Hit Points 53 (5d12 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)

Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Reckless. At the start of his turn, Scrim can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

Actions
Multiattack. Scrim makes two attacks with his heavy cutlass.
Heavy Cutlass. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage.

Call of the Sea

wondrous artifact, rare (requires attunement)

A creature attuned to this puka shell necklace can breathe under water and gains a swim speed of 30 ft. as well as a desire to use the word "brah." The creature also gains the ability to cast *control water* three times a day. This property recharges after a long rest.

Cursed. Once attuned to the Call of the Sea, a creature cannot remove it (unless by *remove curse*). Additionally, a **kraken** knows the whereabouts of this item at all times and will do all in its power to get it back.

Character Variant Table (Optional)

Killer for Hire

This (or any) NPC has been tasked with taking out another NPC. Roll on the tables to find out the rate, the contract and the reason, then roll on the table on pg. 267 to determine which character is the target of this contract, or choose an established NPC at GM discretion.

1d6	This contract pays...
1	500gp
2	1,000gp
3	1,500gp
4	2,000gp
5	2,500gp
6	3,000gp

1d10	The contract stipulates the killing must...
1	...be slow and tantalizing.
2	...look like an accident.
3	...be incredibly public.
4	...take place far from town.
5	...involve poison.
6	...happen before the next full moon.
7	...take place at sea.
8	...involve a fall from a great height.
9	...include an animal accomplice.
10	...look like a suicide.

ANGELINA POPPERS

"This is gonna get us killed. I like it!"

A half-elf with an androgynous build, tight cropped sandy hair, an upturned nose and an array of crossbow bolts crisscrossing their chest.

For the Perceptive or Medically Trained

Angelina is either hyper focused or in a bit of a daze, and their wide mood swings suggest their attention is chemically or magically altered.

A STEADY HAND with a crossbow, Angelina Poppers is also quick with directions to the finest sources of illicit goods.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Angelina needs to continue working for their employer (a secretive individual they will only refer to as C.L.B.), and ***Gaze***. Angelina needs more Gaze.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Angelina is addicted to Gaze, an herbal supplement available on the black market in tincture form. Angelina will drop it in their eyes when they need to focus—typically before they know they're in for a fight.

◆ **Carrying** 23cp, 18sp, 2gp; crossbow and assorted ammunition; studded leather armor; four small vials of ***Gaze***.

Angelina Poppers

Medium half-elf, chaotic neutral
A crossbow expert with a bad habit (which can be good).

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+0)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)

Skills Stealth +7, Thieves' Tools +7
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of their turns, Angelina can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Angelina deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when they hit a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of Angelina's that isn't incapacitated and Angelina doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions
Multiattack. Angelina can make two attacks with their light crossbow.
Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.
Gaze Light Crossbow (if under the effect of Gaze). Ranged Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Gaze rare item

Derived from the motochakka plant, native to a continent far from here, Gaze is an herbal supplement that offers those who partake in it a broadened view of the world as well as a hyper focus on the specifics of it. When the tincture is applied to a creature's eyes they receive +5 to initiative and +5 to any ranged weapon attack roll for 1 hour.

After the Gaze wears off, the creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature enters what is known colloquially as a "Gaze haze," suffering 1 level of exhaustion, which can only be abated by applying more Gaze or having their withdrawal cured (as in *cure disease*).

1d8	The target has been marked because...
1	...they angered the wrong noble.
2	...they insulted the local leader.
3	...they are forming a rival religion.
4	...they are connected to a dangerous prophecy.
5	...spite?
6	...they refused to support a labor union.
7	…they are the child of the son of the daughter who wronged a powerful family.
8	…love makes you do crazy things.

Zelli "Z" Trainer, Urban Ranger

with Kiefer the Raccoon

A silent-stepping halfling woman with long dark hair shaved tight above her left ear, wearing leather armor and a dark brown cloak, and who would likely be fully inaudible were it not for the sound of her chewing gum. She is trailed by a giant raccoon nearly as big as she is.

For the Perceptive

The base of Zelli's cloak is stained and dripping wet, and carries the smell of the sewers.

While most rangers prefer to warden open country or boundless wilderness, Zelli "Z" Trainer is certainly not most rangers, and instead gets her thrills exploring the cavernous depths of natural tunnels and interconnected sewer pipes that snake through the city's foundations. A courageous, solitary sort, she has only one true companion: a massive raccoon she calls Kiefer or "Keef." Together, Z and Keef dispatch **goblins**, **hags** and other undercity monstrosities, but they've come to recognize there are creatures lurking in the shadows that may be too much for a girl and her raccoon to handle alone.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Backup, even if she doesn't want to admit it. The city's underbelly is teeming with dangerous beasts who are getting more aggressive, more cunning and worst of all, more numerous.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Given that she spends most of her time alone in the sewers, Z has a tough time articulating the challenges the city faces from below, and an even harder time getting those in power to listen on account of the smell.

◆ **Carrying** 31cp, 34sp; a few wads of a minty, gum-like substance; a small sack of dried goblin ears, which serve as a reward for her well-trained raccoon.

Zelli "Z" Trainer

Small halfling, chaotic good
A fearless urban ranger, Z always gets her goblin.

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 28 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +3, Perception +6, Stealth +9, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. Zelli has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.
Lucky. Zelli can reroll a 1 on any skill check, attack roll or saving throw, but must use the result of the new roll.
Naturally Stealthy. Zelli can attempt to hide even when she is obscured only by a creature that is at least one size larger than her.
Command Critter. Zelli can issue a command to Kiefer the raccoon, who acts independently on her turn per initiative.

Actions
Multiattack. Zelli makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.
Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.
Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Kiefer, "Keef" the Raccoon

Medium beast, unaligned
This cuddly, bandit-masked creature enjoys three things: collecting shiny bits, eating goblin ears and getting scritches from Zelli. The first almost always leads to the others.

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 23 (5d4 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +6, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Understands Common but cannot speak it
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. Keef has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.
Get the Shiny. As a bonus action, Keef can attempt to steal an object weighing no more than two pounds using a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Keef's Sleight of Hand bonus is doubled if the item is shiny (at GM discretion).

Actions
Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage. The creature must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes an additional 2d6 poison damage and is diseased with arcane rabies. Until cured, the creature takes 2d6 poison damage each time they wake from a long rest.

"Ladies first."

Archmage Reagan Dysart "My stars!"

A beautiful archmage in a flowing silver and white robe, her wild red hair teased high like a lion's mane, her freckled face warm and welcoming.

For the Insightful

Despite the daily challenges facing the city, Archmage Dysart seems to be in high spirits, suggesting she has an extremely long view of the realm.

WITH A casual manner and a voice that never exhibits tension or anger, Archmage Reagan Dysart has adopted this realm as her home and manages its defense against external threats from within the city's walls. Somewhat absent-minded, she has forgotten more spells than most will learn in a lifetime of study, and though she could shape or shift the realm with a flick of her wrist, she would much prefer to sit back and see how things shake out on their own. Still, she's been known to offer a nudge here or a *wish* there when times are particularly dire. She is fond of puzzles, poetry and piping hot bread—especially if it has a crumbly crust. Of late, she's felt her arcane abilities begin to slip alongside her memory, though she's not certain whether or not these facts are related. How delightfully intriguing!

◆ **Wants & Needs** Archmage Dysart isn't quite sure why, but it seems some of her power is starting to fade. Isn't that interesting? If she concentrates, she can feel it being pulled, like a thread on an unraveling shawl, toward a cavern north of the city.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Archmage Dysart is an ancient silver dragon who simply enjoys being human. She also can't remember where she left her treasure hoard. No bother. It'll turn up sometime!

◆ **Carrying** 4gp; five gems worth 1,000gp each; a +1 magnolia wand she uses as an arcane focus.

Archmage Reagan Dysart

Ancient silver dragon in human form, lawful good
This kind, caring human woman is an ancient silver dragon in disguise, and seeks to protect the realm so all can enjoy the simple pleasures of human existence.

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 487 (25d20 + 225)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +8, Wis +12, Cha +13
Skills Arcana +12, History +12, Insight +12, Perception +19
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 29
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elvish, Gnomish, Infernal
Challenge 26 (90,000xp)

Magic Resistance. Archmage Dysart has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Legendary Resistance (3/Long Rest). If Archmage Dysart fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Archmage Dysart is an 18th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 20, +13 to hit with spell attacks). She can cast *disguise self* and *invisibility* at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, identify, mage armor*, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, mirror image, misty step*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fly, lightning bolt*
4th level (3 slots): *banishment, fire shield*
5th level (3 slots): *cone of cold, scrying, wall of force*
6th level (1 slot): *true seeing*
7th level (1 slot): *teleport*
8th level (1 slot): *mind blank**
9th level (1 slot): *wish*
*Archmage Dysart casts these spells on herself before combat, assuming she wouldn't rather reveal her dragon form.

Actions
Dragonshift. Archmage Dysart drops her human form and reveals herself as an ancient silver dragon. At GM discretion, she loses access to her ability to cast spells for 1d100 days, as the transformation muddles her memory and scatters her arcane abilities.

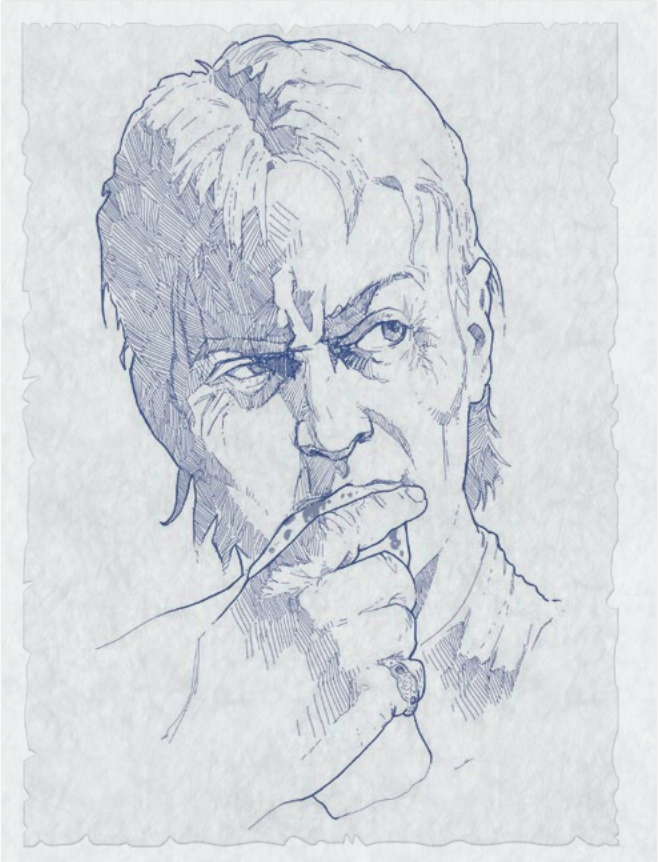
BRIAR "DIAMOND" McCLURE *"Keeps the head clear."*

An older human man with a clean-shaved face accentuated by a rather large mole on his chin, freshly nicked with a bit of blood he keeps dabbing with a pocket handkerchief wearing a faded black suit and a gold pinky ring with three empty settings clearly missing their diamonds.

For the Perceptive

Diamond's suit is of high quality but ill-tailored, suggesting it might be secondhand.

BRIAR McCLURE—known in his criminal heyday as "Diamond"—looks a decade younger than he is (73) thanks to a life without alcohol or drugs, which he is quick to bring up in any conversation (it "keeps the head clear"). A former jewelry thief, Briar has cultivated a bit of a rocky reputation with the city's business owners, having built his now-floundering restaurant The Open Hearth using the money he's collected from pawned goods stolen from some of the city's elite. And middle class. And poor. He was a busy guy back then but he's totally changed!



◆ **Wants & Needs** To keep his restaurant open the clean and honest way, and gain the respect of his fellow business owners. And maybe to know a little more about the heavily guarded vault he saw at the Calluga Caviar Co.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Some of the people Diamond stole from are the very people he's hoping will trust him as a restaurateur, but they've banded together to create a commission with the sole purpose of booting him out. He might have to put his contingency plan into place.

◆ **Carrying** 8 fake platinum pieces mixed in with 22cp; his top dentures; a stolen pocket watch with the inscription "Mine!"; three diamonds from his gold pinky ring (worth 20gp each).

Briar "Diamond" McClure

Medium human, chaotic neutral

A dashing thief in his heyday hoping to make things work now that he's chosen to go straight, it's hard to know which will catch up with Diamond first, time or his choices.

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 85 (13d8 + 26)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Int +3
Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +3, Perception +3, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +10, Deception +8
Languages Common, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Diamond can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.
Evasion. If Diamond is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Diamond deals an extra 25 (7d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally that isn't incapacitated and Diamond doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions
Multiattack. Diamond makes three attacks with his shortsword.
Shortsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.
Light Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 +4) piercing damage.

Reactions
Uncanny Dodge. Diamond halves the damage from an attack that hits him. He must be able to see the attacker.

Oddballs & Outsiders

No matter the size of a city or the inclusiveness of its population, there are always those who stand out, either by choice or circumstance. While "normal" is often a subjective notion, the following would likely seem out of place anywhere, but are definitely drawing attention to themselves in this urban environment. Whether attention is well-received or ill-fated is entirely up to GM discretion.

Craggle Umpteenth *"It is possible, and I'll prove it!"*

A cross-eyed, middle-aged man covered in soot wearing pieces of scrap metal tied to his arms and legs.

For the Inventive

Craggle's armor is certainly conductive—but has no way of transferring energy into a singular vessel. He also needs a means of ensuring he isn't roasted alive. Maybe you can help?

A HOPELESSLY optimistic dreamer, Craggle Umpteenth starts every day with the same goal in mind: to catch lightning in a bottle. Literally. Climbing the tallest buildings and highest hills in the city clad in crude armor he calls "bolt bait," he ignores the scoffs and eye rolls of his fellow citizens as he sets up his uncorked bottles and pleads with stormy skies.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Craggle is in love with a woman, Karolina Wedlock, who will only marry him if he can actually capture lightning in a bottle. He hopes to propose to her with the bottle of electric bolts in lieu of a ring.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Unbeknownst to Craggle, another inventor in town, Eddie Thomason, has been sabotaging Craggle's efforts at every turn.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 11sp, 7gp; a case of empty wine and liquor bottles; various pieces of scrap metal; a lightning rod.

Reducto the Omnipotent, *with Derp the Homunculus*

"I am Reducto. Quake and tremble."

A cloud of mist that seems to be following you, trailed by a waddling, winged **homunculus** about a foot tall.

For the Insightful

This mist is obviously sentient, perhaps even intelligent. And did it just roll its...mist at you?

For the Arcane

It's possible you're observing a mage under the influence of a version of the *gaseous form* spell.

ONE OF the most powerful wizards in the realm of his own mind, Reducto the Omnipotent was certain he'd discovered a way to augment the *gaseous form* spell to maximize its longevity and utility, allowing him to shift into this form at will for days at a time. But it's been about a week now, and...well. Perhaps he's still working out the kinks.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Reducto would very much like to no longer be mist, as he has work to complete—namely locating and sealing the Gate of Unhope, a legendary portal to a dangerous Abyssal realm—but he can't so much as pick up a quill to graph out arcane parabola.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Reducto has telepathically explained his predicament to his homunculus, Derp, but critical problem solving, to say nothing of communicating, is not Derp's strong suit.

◆ **Carrying** Nothing, on account of him being mist.

CHIRPANNY LILOX

"The wings of The One True will carry us forward!"

A wavy-haired elf with sparkling cerulean eyes wearing a long flowing dress made entirely of fresh flowers and the feathers of various birds.

For the Perceptive

Chirpanny picks petals from a flower on her dress and, if she thinks no one is looking, eats them.

A SPIRITED elf with a message to relay, Chirpanny Lilox is determined to spread the word about a bird she refers to as "The One True." According to the numerous scrolls she's written herself, a single feather from this mysterious bird can permanently cure existential dread, depression and indigestion so long as an individual carries it with them at all times. She has never encountered The One True herself, but she adorns herself in flowers and feathers she's convinced were at least grazed by the bird at some point.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Chirpanny needs to convince at least a dozen people of The One True in order to justify the land she's already purchased for her commune.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The land Chirpanny purchased abuts the roost of a **roc**, and, as an extremely territorial creature, it has followed her scent here.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 6sp, 1gp; scrolls; a necklace made of daisies; a small bag of birdseed.

ODAR POOLIMP

"A goat ear a day keeps me away!"

An elderly man with white hair wildly jutting out from his temples, he wears a monocle in each eye, a necklace featuring a half-eaten corn cob and shoes made from untreated...seal skin? Hard to say.

For the Perceptive

Odar appears to have a slight nosebleed. It's probably fine.

THOUGH SOME refer to Odar Poolimp as a "witch doctor," others call him a "ditch doctor"—as in, all of his patients end up dead in a ditch. Operating out of a poorly constructed tent adorned with animal parts on the outskirts of the city, Odar pushes his natural remedies on passersby who are lured out of curiosity, necessity or desperation. Some of his go-to recommendations for maintaining good health include snorting a bushel of blackbear hair (annually), drinking ground elk antlers, and using the hardened heart of a **gnoll** as an exfoliating body scrubber.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Odar is searching for an albino **blue dragon**, as he believes the animal's kidneys can cure blindness.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** An animal rights group is planning to burn down Odar's tent if he ever leaves it for more than an hour at a time.

◆ **Carrying** 11cp, 4sp, 2gp; a severed octopus tentacle; a vile of baboon blood; 22 tarantula legs; several sacks of dried beast parts at GM discretion.

LURMIS LOOMID

"Here's lookin' at you, squid!"

A frail man with scraggly silver hair and one large rotting tooth in his mouth, which is wide open.

For the Devout

Despite your better judgment, something about your connection with your deity is telling you to converse with this man.

A STREET performer who entertains absolutely no one but himself, Lurmis Loomid can usually be seen juggling a glass eye and a baby squid outside various taverns across the city. He attempts to flirt with anyone who watches his act via poor whistling and odd attempts at catcalling and keeps a hollowed out watermelon at his feet in case anyone feels sorry enough to toss a few coins in.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A place to live. Lurmis has been homeless for quite a while now.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Lurmis is not comfortable with living under a roof, otherwise the **deva** that occasionally speaks through him won't have a way of tapping into his brain matter, get it?

◆ **Carrying** 8cp; a glass eye; a live baby squid; a hollowed out watermelon.

SISSY ONTARIO

Wearing roughspun clothes covered in scavenged and upcycled armor and city-street stains, her dark hair in two thick braids that hang on either side of her chest, carrying a leg that looks like it was ripped off a *mannequin*.

For the Perceptive

Sissy is being trailed at a modest distance by a brown mouse and an orange cat, which appears to have a cockroach on its head. She seems content with their general concern and curiosity.

WHILE THOSE who leverage their connection with the natural world to marshall druidic power typically dwell in the wild, there is a whole kingdom of beasts who call this city home, and Sissy Ontario is their voice. Communing with the cats, rats and cockroaches who weave in and out of the alleys here, Sissy knows this city's every nook and cranny, and uses her considerable arcane abilities to ensure that what little protections the city's beastial creatures are afforded are kept firmly in place. As eccentric as you might expect a woman who speaks with vermin to be, Sissy is kind of heart and slow to judge.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Sissy has heard there's a plan to exterminate an entire nest of roaches beneath the city. The roach nest is part of an elaborate ecosystem, and removing it could doom the whole city. Plus they're so cute!

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Sissy can't seem to convince anyone a nest of roaches is worth saving. In part because they are roaches, but also because she is a bit disconnected from the other things that make a city this large function, and has a reputation for being "difficult." All of this is a real shame, as the roaches are ensuring the Enduring Shadow is otherwise occupied. Do you want to release the Enduring Shadow? Well? Do you?

◆ **Carrying** 18cp; a hunk of bread and small honeycomb; a salvaged wooden leg; a few choice cuts of fancy cheese; her arcane focus, a piece of scrap metal bent into the shape of a cat.

Sissy Ontario, Urban Druid

Medium human, neutral good
A powerful druid with a devotion to the unique ecosystem created by this urban environment, she really wants to save the vermin.

Armor Class 16 (studded leather, shield)
Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	11 (0)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +9
Skills Medicine +9, Nature +5, Perception +9
Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Change Shape (2/Long Rest). As an action, Sissy magically *polymorphs* into a beast or elemental with a challenge rating of 6 or less, and can remain in this form for up to 9 hours. Sissy can choose whether her equipment falls to the ground, melds with her new form, or is worn by the new form. Sissy reverts to her true form if the form dies or falls unconscious. Sissy can also choose to revert to her true form using a bonus action on her turn.
City Stride. Sissy can move through nonmagical difficult terrain at full speed and can also pass through nonmagical plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines or a similar hazard. (GM Note: Sissy is also immune to damage from piles of garbage.)

Spellcasting. Sissy is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Druid spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, mending, produce flame, shillelagh*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, entangle, faerie fire, speak with animals*
2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, beast sense, heat metal*
3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals, meld into stone, water breathing*
4th level (3 slots): *dominate beast, locate creature, stoneskin, wall of fire*
5th level (2 slots): *commune with nature, tree stride**
*GM Note: This spell works on this city's piles of trash as well.

Actions
Wooden Leg. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.
Wooden Shillel-leg (if using* shillelagh*). Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 5).

"Think of the roaches! Please!"

"King" Indigo Serpiente

"No, thhomething'th jutht in my eye."

A mass of muscle in heavy plate, with shoulder-length black hair that obscures his glacier blue eyes, carrying a longsword and a shield emblazoned with a sigil: a snake eating its own tail.

For the Insightful

This individual seems to be avoiding words with the letter S in them, perhaps to hide a somewhat serpentine lisp.

For the Perceptive

Though hidden behind a curtain of overlong bangs, King's eyes look reptilian.

BORN FAR beneath the surface in a civilization built on cold-blooded calculation and the struggle for power, Indigo Serpiente did not gel well with his serpentblood siblings on account of his emotional outbursts and bipedal form. When his mother agreed it would be best if he sacrificed himself so they could bring on the reign of the World Eater, Indigo ate his family instead. After conquering his entire nest and bathing in their blood, Indigo christened himself "King," and ascended to the surface. Royalty in his own mind, he has but one aim: to destroy all serpentbloods, by any means necessary. He has traveled to nearly every continent that's been charted on a map, and his genocidal quest has brought him here, where he's certain a nest of serpentbloods are planning to displace the city's most powerful leaders.

◆ **Wants & Needs** King is motivated by a singular desire to destroy the serpentblood race—and he's learned of a nest taking root in this city. He needs allies.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** King does his best to hide the fact that he's a serpentblood, with limited success. Given the rumors about his race, he has a difficult time gaining others' trust. Raised to believe all emotions are vile and useless, King still hides his as best he can, but they—like the serpentbloods—have a way of rising to the surface at the worst possible time.

◆ **Carrying** 50sp, 18gp; **a bag of holding**; +1 full plate armor; a longsword; a cape and boots crafted from his mother's blue-black snakeskin; a book of poetry with several missing pages.

"King" Indigo Serpiente

Medium serpentblood, neutral evil
Born and raised as a serpentblood before rebelling against his own family and race, "King" Indigo Serpiente is looking for others like him so he can stomp them under his boot.

Armor Class 21 (+1 plate, shield)
Hit Points 143 (22d8 + 44)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +6
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +7, Perception +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Magic Resistance. King has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Indomitable (2/Short or Long Rest). King rerolls a failed saving throw.
Second Wind (1/Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, King can regain 20 hit points.
Hearty Blows. While he still has more than half his hit points, King delivers an extra 7 (2d6) slashing damage when he attacks with his longsword.

Innate Spellcasting. King's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *animal friendship (snakes only)*
3/Long Rest each: *poison spray, suggestion*

Actions
Multiattack. King makes three attacks with his longsword
Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage, plus 7 (2d6) slashing damage if he has more than half of his total hit points remaining.
Rattling Armor (1 /Short or Long Rest). King stands firm and shakes in his heavy armor, creating an intimidating rattle effect. Each creature within 30 ft. of King that can hear this sound must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A frightened creature may attempt the save again at the end of its turns, ending the effect on a success. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

JULIAN "JUDE" HALIFAX

"I do not know what you mean. Help?"

A waifish individual of indiscernible gender, with glistening blue-green skin and algae-slick hair, wearing armor crafted from leather and barnacle-covered shells.

For the Perceptive

It looks like this creature has a set of gills hidden just behind their ears.

"THE CITY of Gliss is under attack from dark forces that have creeped out of the depths. Will you come to her aid?" This is the overwhelming request of Julian "Jude" Halifax. Unfortunately, Jude cannot communicate this notion, as the language of Gliss is a long-forgotten one and back home, Common is anything but. Jude needs to rally a powerful army to save Gliss—or at least bring back a few allies, and possibly a mate.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The city of Gliss is in dire need of aid in its ongoing battle against something called "The Strife." As a backup plan, if Jude is unable to secure support, the unfertilized eggs that have been secreted on Jude's person will serve as the foundation for a new civilization—provided Jude can find a mate that's willing to generate the saliva necessary for conception.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Jude could communicate all the details and particulars if only someone spoke Glissian. Failing that, Jude may do something rash.

◆ **Carrying** Roughly 700gp in pearls of various size; an ornate spear crafted from seaglass and whale bone; a discreetly hidden water pouch containing 100,000 unfertilized eggs.

Julian "Jude" Halifax

Medium amphibioid, neutral good

A denizen of the deep, Jude is seeking an audience with someone who can assist in the ongoing war back home, and perhaps fertilize some eggs.

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

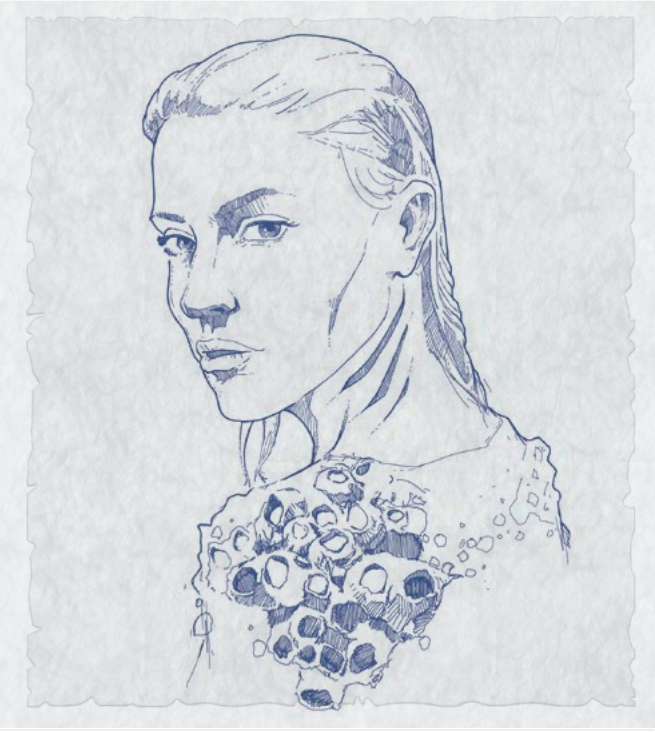
STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Glissian
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Limited Amphibiousness. Jude can breathe air and water, but needs to be submerged at least once every 4 hours to avoid suffocating.

Innate Spellcasting. Jude's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12), and Jude can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
3/day each: *fog cloud, goodberry (as pearl-sized eggs)*
1/day: *control water*

Actions
Multiattack. Jude makes two melee attacks with either their claws or spear.
Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.
Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee Attack.



Tarek Harborlan

A tall human man with swarthy skin and short brown hair, sprinkled liberally with grey. The scowl on his face implies he'd rather be somewhere else and the knife he carries speaks loudly about his willingness to protect what little he has.

For the Perceptive or Insightful

Tarek's eyes constantly dart from side to side, as if he is looking for a place to flee, a habit he may have picked up during his time living on the city's streets as a boy.

When the city's fishing industry gave way to robust trade, Tarek Harborlan had nothing and was worth even less—until he heard the whispers of Yargathal. Today, he is its loyal servant, and has led the local chapter of the Cult of Yargathal to the precipice of a great summoning. He will see Yargathal's reign in the prime material. He and his **wererat cultist** brethren will bathe in the filth of the masses in order to be washed clean. He just needs a few more bodies, a few more souls, a few more moonless nights.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To seize power over the city and bring forth the avatar of his god to wreak havoc on the Master Merchants who sullied it, before moving outward to the lands beyond. Yargathal's rise is coming, and soon.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The ritual that will bring on the rising of Yargathal requires a not insignificant amount of fresh meat—he's been collecting bodies for weeks now. He's so close to his goal, but knows the authorities are on to him. He'll have to lure more powerful blood into his summoning chamber in order to speed things along.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp, 5sp, 1gp; a +**1 vicious dagger**, a useless sharpening stone.

Tarek Harborlan

Medium human, lawful evil

A beady-eyed dock worker by day, horrifying cult leader by night, this man brings new meaning to the word vermin.

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 40 (8d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +3, Wis +4
Skills Deception +5, Persuasion +5, Religion +3
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Abyssal, Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Wererat. Tarek is a wererat cultist, as detailed below.
Dark Devotion. Tarek has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Spellcasting. Tarek is an 8th-level Spellcaster. His spell casting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *spirit guardians, vampiric touch*

Actions
Multiattack. Tarek makes two vicious dagger attacks.
Vicious Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage. If Tarek rolls a 20 on his attack roll to hit with this dagger the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) piercing damage in addition to the critical damage.

Wererat Cultist

Medium humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +3, Wis +4
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Abyssal, Common (can't speak in rat form)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. The wererat cultist can use its action to *polymorph* into a tiny rat, a rat-humanoid hybrid or into a giant rat, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.
Keen Smell. The wererat cultist has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions
Multiattack (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). The wererat makes two attacks, only one of which can be a bite.
Bite (Rat or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with wererat lycanthropy.
Shortsword (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d6) necrotic damage.
Hand Crossbow (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d6) necrotic damage.

"That's life, innit?"

CLEM DUSTERBOOT *"I ain't from around here."*

A bow-legged red tiefling with an extremely long tail, wearing dark leather chaps, a black buckskin vest and a telescope gambler-style hat cocked toward the front of his head to accommodate undercurled horns.

For the Insightful

Clem talks tough but does seem unnerved by the size, shape and sound of the city.

AFTER A flood washed out his family's farming operation on the open range north of the realm, all Clem Dusterboot could do was watch his inheritance drown or float away, leaving him nothing but the iron on his hip and a jug belonging to his grandfather. When he learned the cause of the flooding was a dam break ordered by a bunch of big city bankers angling to repurpose his family's land as a lakeside resort, well, that's enough to make any man with nothing to lose find out what he might have to gain by taking action. Clem's since uncovered a vast conspiracy among the city's elite to further disadvantage those who make their homes where you can still see the stars, and he's determined to find a way to put a stop to it. Who knows—maybe he'll uncork his grandfather's old jug, and see what chaos Ol' Pap's stopper has kept at bay all these years. He might get a little hot when he's angry, but he's sorry for yelling. That ain't right.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Clem knows the names of a few of the investors involved in destroying his family's farm—he just doesn't know what he'll do when he finds them.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Clem is both overwhelmed by the size of the city and skeptical of its technological advancements—even the most basic. The jug he carries is home to an **efreeti**.

◆ **Carrying** 29cp; a handcrafted pistol and hunting rifle and plenty of ammunition; a list of names for an investment group he's labeled "The City Slickers"; a jug hosting a trapped efreeti.

Clem Dusterboot, Frontier Gunslinger

Medium tiefling, chaotic good
A bow-legged bumpkin from far beyond the city limits, Clem has come to seek vengeance on the investment group that destroyed his family's farm.

Armor Class 14 (hide armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +6
Skills Acrobatics +7, Stealth +7
Damage Resistances fire
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Lasso Tail. Clem's incredibly long tail functions as a **rope of entanglement**. As a bonus action on his turn, Clem's tail darts forward to entangle a creature he can see within 20 ft. of him. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained. He can release the target as a free action.

A creature restrained by the tail can use an action to make a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check (creature's choice). On a success, the creature is no longer restrained by the tail. The tail has an AC of 15. If the tail specifically suffers 20 hit points or more of damage, it immediately releases any creature it has grappled.

Crack Shot (3/Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, Clem can add 1d10 to his next attack or damage roll with a pistol, revolver or rifle.

Actions

Multiattack. Clem makes two attacks with his revolvers or one attack with his hunting rifle.

Revolver. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 40/120, one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Hunting Rifle. Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 120/240, one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d10 + 3) piercing damage.

MASTER CADE UNDERFOOT, *with Practice the Battle Dummy*

"Practice is not perfect."

A barefoot halfling man with a dense white beard and wearing a navy gi, his hair is frazzled as if exasperated with an ongoing circumstance, and he is accompanied by a large steel construct that buzzes, whirs and clicks as it stumbles behind him.

For the Inventive

This construct seems like it could operate on its own free will if properly tinkered with, but perhaps that's a switch better left unflicked.

MASTER CADE Underfoot hasn't had a pupil in nearly 40 years, a decision made after his prize student used Cade's training to menace the realm with impunity. Seeking a sparring partner that wouldn't be corrupted by the power of the Tiny Fist technique, Master Cade turned to a local inventor, Wabash Filigree, who built Practice the battle dummy. Practice endeavors to do all Master Cade has taught him, and for the most part succeeds. But occasionally when they spar, Practice's protocols get knocked haywire and Master Cade must chase his only student throughout the city in order to subdue him.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Cade is concerned the devices that manage Practice's operational protocols have been damaged, which might explain why the battle dummy keeps wandering off and wreaking havoc.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Practice is just a few more blows away from being knocked into sentience. From there comes the ability to make its own decisions and use what it's learned from Master Cade to its own aims, at GM discretion.

◆ **Carrying** 12sp; a small pipe and dried leaves for packing; a dogeared instruction manual for Practice the battle dummy.

Master Cade Underfoot

Small halfling, lawful neutral

A devoted martial arts master whose personal style is one of patience is finding his will tested due to his new student.

Armor Class 20 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 70 (14d8 + 14)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (0)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	11 (0)	20 (+5)	10 (0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +10
Skills Acrobatics +10, Insight +10, Stealth +10
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Unarmored Defense. While Master Cade is wearing no armor and wielding no shield, his AC includes his Dexterity and Wisdom modifiers.

Touch of the Tiny Fist (3/Short or Long Rest). After a successful melee attack, Master Cade can force the target to make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target's mind seizes and they are paralyzed for 1 hour, or until they take damage. While the target is paralyzed, as an action Master Cade can sacrifice 40 hit points to deal 80 (20d8) psychic damage to the target, as his astral form projects inside their consciousness and pummels their brain.

Actions

Multiattack. Master Cade makes five unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, Master Cade can choose one of the following additional effects:

- The target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or drop one item it is holding (Cade's choice).
- The target must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of Cade's next turn.

Reactions

Deflect Missile. In response to being hit by a ranged weapon attack, Master Cade deflects the missile. The damage he takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10 + 5. If the damage is reduced to 0, Master Cade catches the missile if it's small enough to hold in one hand and he has a hand free. As part of this reaction Master Cade can throw the missile back at its target (20/60).

GM Note

Practice the Battle Dummy has the statistics of a **shield guardian**, but possesses none of its other features. Instead, it can deliver two fist attacks as a single action, and can force the same Unarmed Strike effects as Master Cade on its fist attacks (with a DC of 13). Practice is also learning Master Cade's Touch of the Tiny Fist (1/Short or Long Rest), but cannot utilize the astral projection feature as Practice currently has no consciousness to project.

Random NPC Generator

The wider realm could contain billions of characters—this list is a start. Roll 1d20 on any of the following three tables, or roll 6d20 (one for each column) for a less predictable persona. Combine columns from all three tables for more chaos.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Toady	Gelhorn	...with red hair, ruddy cheeks and an eager gaze...	...who knows the end is near...	...and is extremely contagious.	12cp, 18sp; a ream of fliers about the dangers of "the **goblin** plague."
2	Rand	Toupee	...with an oblivious stare, a runny nose and a bad hip...	...who has a terrible stomach ache...	...and has an aversion to all forms of medicine.	21cp, 9sp, 2gp; a small notebook detailing various favors owed.
3	Gale	Archer	...with ageless, graceful green eyes and dark, sonnet-worthy curls...	...who needs a place to spread a box of ashes...	...and suffers from agoraphobia.	3cp, 31sp; a well worn set of prayer beads; a lace hankie.
4	Hork	Boynado	...with hairy arms and knuckles and a half-dead tooth...	...who has a can't-miss investment opportunity...	...and has 24 hours to pay off a 3,000gp gambling debt.	11cp, 4sp, 122gp; a list of **bugbear** gladiators and their strengths/weaknesses; a map to an underground fighting pit.
5	Whitaker	Trent	...in a cloud of perfume wearing a well-loved overcoat...	...who needs an escort to the bad part of town...	...and is the city's foremost purveyor of illegal **owlbear** cubs.	42cp, 14gp; a small milk bottle; a sack holding 5 newborn **owlbears**.
6	Collie	Googlesby	...with a face like a meat pie and a body formed from enjoying them...	...who can't seem to open this bottle of wine...	...and will drop dead if they utter more than 30 words.	23cp, 5sp, 1gp; some chalk and flat piece of slate; a note explaining their cursed condition.
7	Shepherd	Hardborne	...who is lean all over, with thinning hair and thinner lips...	...who wants to find their missing bird...	...and is an informant for the local guards.	19cp, 9sp, 31gp; a bag of bird seed; a bird call.
8	Thrust	McClatchy	...with braided brown hair sporting makeshift armor and a fresh black eye...	...who seeks an airtight alibi...	...and recently stole several religious artifacts.	7cp, 4sp, 9gp; an aged book with ancient script; a set of thieves' tools; a goblet with inlayed gems worth 1,000gp.
9	Big Flip	Borgnine	...with an athletic, imposing frame, shorter hair and a chin built for taking a punch...	...who needs help arranging an elaborate marriage proposal...	...and is unknowingly harboring chaotic magical powers.	8cp, 2gp; an emerald engagement ring worth 14gp.
10	Cardigan	Shawl	...a caring demeanor, with graying hair and gleaming blue eyes...	...who thinks the rent is too darn high...	...and is the Main Street Mangler, a killer thought long dead.	22cp, 8sp; a dehydrated ear; a journal featuring clippings covering "The Main Street Mangler."

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Omega	Inarritu	...short and stocky, with wide-gapped teeth and a cheerful disposition...	...who is utterly, hopelessly lost...	...and is on the run from royals in a nearby province.	62sp, 15gp; a disguise kit; a bottle of regenerative hair tonic.
12	Yearner	Potstill	...with greasy black hair and overlong fingernails, wearing clothes that look too big...	...who needs a place to lie low...	...and needs to mock the powerful in order to keep a curse at bay.	14cp, 28sp, 3gp; a list of nearby safehouses, all crossed out; a book of insults in Abyssal.
13	Pep	Royalshine	...with an altogether polished look, well-groomed and glistening...	...who has a stranger's severed hand in their bag...	...and who has no idea what to do next.	36sp, 3gp; a strip of burlap; a dull knife; some smelling salts.
14	Volnag	Wanderbrow	...barefoot, with a wild topknot and deep dimples...	...who wants to start an urban walking tour company...	...and is also a **rakshasa**.	63gp; an ornate walking stick; a list of local haunted houses; a list of the area's best pubs; an empty tip jar.
15	Sh'la	Ignon	...wearing a headscarf that hides a scarred face...	...who is desperate for a bite to eat...	...and is planning to assassinate the prince.	42sp; an assassination contract worth 5,000gp for a local leader who is still alive; a vile of **purple worm poison**.
16	Loon	Dupree	...with patchy hair, a steady smirk and sticky fingers...	...who needs a few strong-types to keep an eye on some crates...	...and is smuggling a pack of 3d6 **goblins** into the city.	33cp, 14gp; a fresh baguette; a package of soft cheese; a small pot of honey.
17	Ridge	Fostermaker	...with a scowl that cuts through the pretense and jowls you could use to keep warm...	...who is prepared to drink every drop of booze in town...	...and doesn't want to be alone.	21cp, 13sp; a flagon of whiskey; a flask of vodka; a jug of cider; a bottle of lager; a tub-shaped bowl used as a drum.
18	Aven	Lurkenfaben	...with stylish blond(e) hair, leather pants and a pristine top...	...who needs 18 more signatures for a petition...	...and is trying to overthrow the local government.	7cp, 8sp, 2gp; literature detailing how aberrant creatures replaced area leadership; a hat made of thin metal.
19	Fatusi	T'choko	...with dark hair, several tattoos and even more piercings...	...who is making eyes at the party's oldest member...	...and is incredibly nervous around strangers.	21cp; a dozen roses parceled off into singles for sale; a dull switchblade.
20	Shylar	Poutine	...with a missing left eye and drooping bottom lip...	...who wants someone to massage their throbbing skull...	...and impulsively headbutts everyone they meet.	6cp, 7sp, 1gp; a bag of rabbit teeth; a half-empty bottle of strong spirits.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Deebo	Fyriss	...with oily, scaly skin but a gorgeous head of hair...	...who is trying to sell their grandfather's antique claymore...	...and is terrified of anyone under 5 feet tall.	17cp, 2sp; an antique claymore; a branch with lines carved for measuring.
2	Thinneas	LeFort	...slender and friendly with long, curling fingernails and a tattoo of a smiling bear on their left palm...	....who needs city approval to open their mashed mutton food stand at the public market...	...and was exiled from their former city of residence due to accusations of cannibalism.	10cp, 2sp; meat cleaver.
3	Jovey	Marone	...with a wide and wrinkly nose, pierced eyebrows and preferring to hop rather than walk...	...who wants voice lessons in order to pursue a career as a professional musical theatre performer...	...and who routinely volunteers as entertainment for cult rituals.	13cp, 8sp; a large conch shell attached to a wooden spoon.
4	Tykava	Petri	...bald except for a long braid of thick hair jutting out the right side of their skull...	...who wants to be allowed inside the tavern again...	...and can become intoxicated from the mere smell of alcohol.	10cp, 9sp, 1gp; an empty gold chalice; a bag of clothespins.
5	Croda	Bundi	...with wide-set eyes and hips, waddling and grunting incessantly...	...who desperately needs a bath...	...and possesses an incredible hidden talent for whittling.	7cp, 2sp; small whittling knife.
6	Luca	Fangmouth	...hirsute, with sharp teeth displayed by a massive overbite...	...who is the most frequent customer at all of the meat markets...	...and is made very anxious by any mention of the moon.	16cp, 4sp, 1gp; an empty mason jar; rusted scissors.
7	Aberis	Lololo	...with a left ear significantly larger than the right and buck teeth, wearing a thick rope necklace...	...who needs to find their long-lost sister, Gibby...	...and falls asleep upon hearing the word "kumquat."	10cp, 8sp, 6gp; a stick with a carrot dangling from it.
8	Blyris	Blubberson	...with a round, frowning face and droopy, yellowing eyes...	...who is having a bad allergic reaction to something and needs to know what...	...and only speaks an ancient language thought to be forgotten.	15cp, 5sp; a half-eaten turkey leg; a skinned swordfish.
9	Jeevy	Mushoo	...with flowing black hair that reaches the ground, with seven fingers (and nine toes)...	...who wants someone to help them protect their turtle farm...	...and is able to whistle at a frequency only wolves can hear.	18cp, 7sp, 4gp; fistful of live worms; a pitchfork.
10	Basil	Blatherington	...with a shiny bald head, wooly eyebrows and a pointed nose that quivers at the tip whenever they speak...	...who needs to warn the town about an imminent attack by **goblins**...	...and can only speak in euphemisms.	17gp, 40sp; a monocle; a cracked pocket watch; a spearmint-flavored cough drop.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Iggy	Dogsbody	...with a voice like a gasping croak…	...who could really use a stiff drink…	...and becomes violently ill when in the presence of the devout.	10cp, 2gp; a piece of green seaglass; an obsidian dagger.
12	Mox	Vandergone	...with a limping gait and hands that shake…	...who would like to see the solar eclipse...	...and refuses to leave their house while the sun is up.	15sp, 3gp; a small suede bag of animal bones.
13	Hallam	Seegobin	...with bloodshot eyes and a habit of losing their train of thought…	...who needs to get far, far away from here…	...and can only crawl.	10sp, 2gp; an impossibly tiny golden harp.
14	Cadsworth	Kerry	...with thin lips and darting eyes…	...who is campaigning for a position in local leadership...	...and will only look at people who flatter them.	22gp, 13sp; a topaz and gold circlet.
15	Crowley	Barbarite	...with a low, confident tone and a steely glare…	...who would like to forget how they killed and ate their friend at sea...	...and cannot stop thinking about their next meal.	13sp, 5gp; a silver ring set with what appears to be a tooth.
16	Digby	Barrow	...with long, limp hair, narrow eyes and a nose too small for their face…	...who would like to be promoted to sous chef...	...and cannot stop pocketing fruit.	20cp, 7sp; a vial of elderberry syrup; a mix of passionfruit, gooseberries, saskatoon berries and one bit of watermelon rind.
17	Lissa	Oussani	...with a lilting, mellifluous voice, a heart-shaped face and nimble fingers…	...who would like to learn to sign their name…	...and is planning to sign a demonic contract.	2cp; a pencil; a scroll; a small amber amulet.
18	Eula	Popinoff	...with strawberry blonde hair tied up in a severe bun, watery blue eyes, a massive forehead and noticeable crows' feet...	...who would like to look into self-trepanation...	...and keeps hearing the voice of their dead mother.	9gp; a handful of red-colored sand; a mourning ring set with a thin braid of human hair.
19	Levana	Ramskov	...straight-as-an-arrow black hair, with a shifty smirk under a hooded cape...	...who has a habit of stealing, but only from those who deserve it...	...and plans to retaliate against their thieving boss.	19cp; a piece of parchment covered in illegible scrawl.
20	Marigold	Quimby	...a mess of auburn curls, with widely gesturing hands...	...who would like to never cross another body of water again...	...and who blames themselves for their sibling's drowning.	20sp; an assortment of mismatched buttons; cat hair; a sachet of loose tea.

Big City Denizens

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Shay	Tuin	...with an angular, oblong face, towering frame and small hands...	...who has just been commissioned to paint a sea-themed mural...	...and cannot see the color blue.	32gp, 18cp; a paintbrush; a smock; shears.
2	Cleves	Jourdain	...clearly wearing a mismatched toupée and pungent cologne...	...who enjoys bragging about being a sommelier...	...and has recently lost their sense of smell.	200cp; moldy brie; a glass cup; a silver spoon.
3	Yolanda	Bane	...wearing a gold, heavily worn breastplate, a longsword, and an eyepatch...	...who somehow interprets everything spoken as fighting words...	...and always forgets... something.	40sp, 25cp; a scroll of names; a wheel of cheese; mutton.
4	Wolesley	Laud	...with a stiff posture that accents their clerical garb...	...who is determined that everyone who passes know about an entity called Zu'rg...	...and isn't afraid to get in peoples' faces.	23cp; a very sharp pencil; two apples; note cards.
5	Elroy	Falls	...with possibly fake diamonds on their fingers and in their ears and teeth...	...who claims to be a big game hunter...	...and spends most of their time touting for a tavern called The Auroch's Head.	1sp, 4gp; flask; dried meat; folding knife.
6	Howley	Arkon	...wearing worn-out work clothes covered in food stains…	...who takes no less than 12 breaks a day to smoke a pipe…	...and doesn't care whom they keep waiting, or for how long.	32sp; pipe and tobacco pouch; steak knives in a leather roll.
7	Fronzst	Rankinz	...face hidden under the long, floppy brim of a worn traveling hat…	...whose particularly long fingers seem to always be playing an unseen musical instrument…	...and can't quite remember where they are, or why.	20sp; an assassination contract featuring the party's names.
8	Fauna	Gilroi	...in glittering plate armor but no helmet, with hair loose and wild…	...who always seems to have one hand on a sword belt…	...and has never refused a challenge, dare or call to action.	10sp; a vellum envelope wrapped in a single ribbon; a small vial of viscous liquid.
9	Swaddle	Quintski	…so rotund in aspect that their head and torso appear to be two spheres joined like sections of a snowman…	...who has never been able to find armor that fits…	...and will pay a handsome price to anyone that can help them.	50gp; a jeweled dagger; a quart of grease.
10	Narah	M'pasi	...tall and wearing lavish robes that, along with their bearing, imply modest authority…	...who pulls coins and candies from the ample folds of their sleeves to share with begging children…	...and is constantly looking over their shoulder to ensure a bodyguard is close.	20sp, 50gp; an official parchment bearing an exotic royal seal.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Fahan	Inisgunn	...ruddy-faced; dressed in a full bearskin, but still complaining about the cold…	...who has occupied the same tavern booth every evening since they were 15…	...and loves to tell stories to a captive audience.	25cp; the Horn of Gelato.
12	Gord	Sneeler	...wearing an extremely hairy sweater and roughspun pants…	...who carries a long, slender club everywhere they go, smacking rounded rocks all over town from a peg they call a "T"…	...and who is determined to introduce people to a new game of their own invention.	2sp, 1gp; several rocks the size of quail eggs, rounded by hand.
13	Felix	Weatherday	...long-limbed and prone to gesticulation, the comic affect of which is heightened by the tall hat they favor…	...who claims to be able to predict your future if you tell them your earliest memory…	...and has only been right about two people in their life.	20sp; dried salted fish.
14	Trust	Stepwell	...with a hearty laugh and sturdy thighs...	...who can't find their dog Roscoe anywhere...	...and has been looking for what they seek for nearly four years.	23cp, 46sp; a leash and collar for a small dog.
15	Yagrah	Urg'tok	...with a battle-hardened stare and a face that makes you wince...	...who wants to know who touched their backside...	...and could go off the rails at any moment.	8cp; two hand axes; a bottle of incredibly strong mead.
16	Moody	Shivers	...eating an apple and gazing at the sky...	...who claims the weather is about to shift in horrific ways...	...and is also a **deva**.	6 apples.
17	Yes	Peters	...with an almost translucent complexion and shock white hair...	...who is simply trying to find someone who will sell them a **unicorn**...	...and is a **devil** in a bad disguise.	32cp, 30sp, 60pp; a book featuring numerous handy Abyssal phrases translated into Common.
18	Scrat	Goldmumps	...hunched over and grumbling, wearing a knit sack...	...who wants to find the thugs who dumped them in the sewers...	...and who knows the location of the Lost Dungeon of Blacknife.	an oar; a map that leads to a dangerous and fabled location, home to a legendary item.
19	Turg	Xeno	...in prison-issue clothes and a set of busted chains...	...who is planning to rob the nearest tavern...	...and plans to set the party up as patsies.	22cp, 9sp; a handmade mask and hat combo.
20	Taco	Allegheny	...with golden hair wearing a brilliant white toga...	...who claims to be a prophet in need of financial aid...	...and is counting on the kindness of strangers.	31cp; an emerald worth 65gp; a chart detailing the return of a comet; several non-disclosure agreements.

SMALL TOWN TENANTS

Beyond the borders of the realm's larger urban locales are pockets of civilization where life tends to move at a less frantic pace. The order of the day is not which warring kingdom to cut a treaty with or how to fend off a wide scale invasion but more often "Do we hold the annual bake-off in light of the recent pustule outbreak?" or "What should we do about Gregor's dog?" That's not to say exurban areas lack danger or that their problems aren't complex. Their proximity to the wilderness often brings its own challenges—including beasts and bandits—who wouldn't be able to thrive in a city center where garrisons of guards can fend off larger threats. In fact, it is because small town problems are typically considered small that they often grow into much more difficult situations. These are the people forced to face them.

What sort of town is this?

Roll 1d10 to determine the overall circumstances in the region in which these citizens dwell.

1d10	This town is...
1	...a shadow of its former self.
2	...truly thriving.
3	...quaint and tourist-heavy.
4	...the last supply station on a trade route.
5	...recovering from a recent takeover.
6	...dealing with a drought.
7	...near a river that floods.
8	...under the thumb of a feudal lord.
9	...cursed.
10	...a defiant backwater.

Common Folk

Whether they're descended from the founders or are newcomers trying to make a name for themselves, small towns feature plenty of hardscrabble commoners who are striving to get by (or get out).

Bosan Higby (*formerly Torek of the Trident*) *"That don't add up."*

A rigid half-orc with a flat-topped crew cut and flatter nose, wearing a poncho-style coat and worker's slacks with a piece of straw at his lips.

For the Insightful

As half-orcs go, this one seems particularly intelligent, even if his brains are masked by a veneer of brawn and bumpkinism.

WISE BEYOND his years and quickly outpacing his tribal elders and military strategists at a young age, Torek of the Trident knew he was destined for more than raiding villages and enjoying the spoils before claiming another village and repeating the cycle. He left his tribe at age 9, worked as an astute advisor to a guild of thieves and made a modest fortune by the age of 15. He took his mentor's name upon the man's death and bought a plot far from the city to retire in peace.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Bosan secretly wishes there was someone in the area with whom he could discuss mathematics or philosophy.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Bosan's nearly 3,000gp in gold and gemstones buried around his property has lured two hungry **xorn** to this layer of the surface.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 4sp; a pocket ledger; a red handkerchief; a small flask of mead he fermented himself.

Foke "Barnie" Barnswaggle *"Oh boy, is this a pickle."*

A chicken-necked man who moves as if under attack, wearing a tuck-brimmed straw hat and worker's clothes, his robust beard caked with a bit of dried mud.

For the Perceptive

There's a slimy film mixed in with the mud in this man's beard.

FOKE "BARNIE" Barnswaggle would be considered a hot-tempered sort under normal circumstances. Now that he's noticed the lake on his property has a somewhat oily sheen and that all his crops are failing he's grown closer to apoplectic—a word he would not understand. The well water on his property is making him vomit, to say nothing of the smell, and he's thinking of wading out into the lake to get some answers: There's a voice in his head that keeps calling for him to do so, and he's ready to give it what for.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Barnie is hoping to find answers by confronting the voice—whatever it is.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** An **aboleth** has made its lair in a cavern accessible through a narrow gap about 500 ft. beneath the surface of Barnie's lake.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp, 6sp; a rock; a crust of stale bread; a sample of his well water, which is corrupted.

Nora Gremble *"That dog just ain't gonna hunt."*

A stout red-haired woman who is covered in blood but seems unbothered by it.

For the Perceptive

The woman isn't wounded, which suggests this blood isn't hers.

A RESPECTABLE stable owner and innkeep, Nora is worried about her horse Clarence, who was recently attacked in the woods. Clarence likes to roam around when the moon is out. She knows if Clarence doesn't make it, whatever did this to him won't either.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Justice!

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Clarence is a were-horse and picked a fight with the wrong **owlbear** after shifting. He'll go for bipedal prey next time.

◆ **Carrying** 8cp, 9sp; 50 ft. of rope.

YARIS DARLING *"Heh heh heh heh heh heh, hmmmm heheh"*

A fidgety half-elven woman with bluish black hair and a singular brow, her angular face overcome with anxiety, wearing a bright blue jumper and thong sandals.

For the Elvish

Every now and again, Yaris mutters a calming elven phrase to herself. It doesn't appear to be working.

THE DARLING FAMILY is well-known, if only due to their eccentricity, but rumors persist something inconceivable is going on at their compound at the edge of town. At first it seemed as if they'd plowed over their crops to start a fresh season of planting, but then they just kept digging. Now they're creating a tower and no one knows why. Except for Yaris. They are building a beacon. Soon the spawn of the stars will arrive and take them home.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Yaris is always on the lookout for able bodies who won't ask too many questions.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Should Yaris and her family complete their beacon, they will bring unimaginable chaos not only to their town, but to the entire realm.

◆ **Carrying** 3cp, 1 gp; a wooden flute; a few scraps of parchment scribbled with an inscrutable runic language.

GUNDAR THE GOBLIN TAMER *"You just have to believe!"*

A short man with a stubbled chin, overgrown eyebrows and malformed ears, wearing a simple tunic drenched in sweat.

For the Perceptive

It looks like Gundar's arms and legs have been shaved recently, and even though he seems happy, he has yet to smile.

"WHAT IF, instead of trying to kill every goblin you encounter in the wild, you seek to train them to be civilized instead?" That's the big idea that drives the work of Gundar, self-proclaimed Goblin Tamer extraordinaire. He has humbled a horde of goblins, or so he claims, and the evidence speaks for itself—the town is crawling with goblins who don't seem interested in anything other than enjoying the village green. Though most townsfolk were skeptical at first, the goblins seem docile and Gundar is so charming—what could it hurt to let him tame a few more?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Gundar needs to keep his ruse going a few more days, when more goblins will arrive, completing his master plan.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Gundar is himself a goblin, a fact he hides by shaving every day and smiling in a way that masks his pointed teeth. In a day's time, he'll lead a surprise assault on the town from within.

◆ **Carrying** 13cp; a gemstone worth 50gp; a straight razor; a lightly used bar of soap.

GINGER "POOCH" YEARDOWN *"To the future."*

A weak-legged woman with a ruddy complexion and flat hair, in a dirty blue beret and a faded country dress, the smell of alcohol hanging around her like a fog.

For the Insightful

Some drink to remember, others to forget. Ginger appears to drink to forget she remembered.

EVERYONE HAS a story about Ginger Yeardown. She was all set to marry a local lord, but "she pooched it," by casually admitting to the attendant priest that remarks about her chastity had been greatly exaggerated. She brazenly opened her own flower shop despite a lack of experience, but "pooched it" as well, selling beautiful but mostly poisonous blooms she gathered by the riverside, killing two of her customers and three of their cats. "Pooch," as she's come to be called, started a habit of toasting to her future, but pooched that as well, and now only drinks to escape her past. She still has dreams. If she gets around to them.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To sober up, and shake what she's certain is a curse. How else to explain all her misery?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** There are two curses plaguing Pooch: "The Flick," a hex placed upon her family, and her acerbic tongue, which she uses at the worst time. It's hard to know which of these curses is more problematic.

◆ **Carrying** 1cp, 1sp, 1gp; a dark blue marble; a list of taverns from which she's been banned. (GM Note: It's every bar in town.)

LACEY DUNNERDOWN *"Boy oh boy."*

A young gnomish girl in a purple country dress, holding a large metal crook, trailed by three terrified sheep.

For the Inventive

The crook Lacey holds appears to have a mechanism that emits force energy—to her flock's chagrin.

A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY gal with very few cares and only a few fears with an affinity for goading her flock, Lacey promised a few of her sheep to Mercy Ridgemother on the other side of the valley. She's late and is worried about traveling through the valley alone. **Trolls** stalk the valley at night, and they like the taste of sheep almost as much as they do human flesh.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Lacey needs to get her sheep to the other side of the valley before nightfall.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Lacey is actually afraid of the dark. And the trolls. And, if she's honest, Mercy Ridgemother, who is looking more and more like a **hag** every day.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp; a small bag of snacks; a custom ***force crook***.

Force Crook

wondrous item, rare

This device, crafted by inventor Doogle Dunnerdown, is equal parts carrot and stick (though the carrot is really just a promise not to receive the stick, but sheep are dumb). It can lead errant creatures back on the right path, or jolt them with a bit of force energy if they choose not to follow it. It can prod, poke or deal up to 1d10 bludgeoning and 1d6 force damage on a hit, with a reach of 10 ft.

BRYSON SALISBURY *"I'm not a god, I'm a doctor."*

A modestly dressed middle-aged man with a face full of freckles and very thin hair.

For the Perceptive

Bryson occasionally removes whisps of hair when he touches his head.

NEVER ONE for religion, Bryson Salisbury is an outcast in this relatively devout town, and has spent much of his solitary life studying medicine and learning to heal himself. After discovering the curative properties of oil of iris, a ritual herb used in the local temple, Bryson snuck in to get a little more. Now he's been barred for life. The people in this town could really use that medicine—but only the holy can get it. That just doesn't sit well with him. And that's not got anything to do with why he's losing his hair, thank you very much.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Bryson needs more oil of iris, but is forbidden from entering the temple.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** While he claims he needs oil of iris for the ailing townspeople, he is also hopeful it will reverse his sudden onset hair loss.

◆ **Carrying** 23cp, 14sp, 2gp; a medical journal in his own hand; a healer's kit; half a vial of oil of iris.

MILES "THE GUY" GROOP *"I can do that."*

A hearty tradesman with a rich field of chest hair, a chiseled jaw and a single, kind blue eye.

For the Athletic

Miles seems like he could handle himself in a fight, were anyone dumb enough to start one with him.

AS ONE of the area's most accomplished joiners, weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters and seafarers, Miles Groop is the man for the job regardless of what the job might entail. His work is rarely done the fastest or with the highest level of skill, but he's a well-known handyman and most locals just refer to him as "the Guy," as in "the Guy that built my fence," or "the Guy that butchered my hogs" or "the Guy I'd like to marry."

◆ **Wants & Needs** Miles could use a hand eradicating a group of **blights** not far from Pauline Portag's rose garden, and with raising a barn—a four-person job.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The blights by Pauline's have grown, as Miles didn't deal with them last week, and the barn is being raised on a site believed to be haunted by a pair of **ghosts**.

◆ **Carrying** 23 cp; a leather bag containing cobbler's, mason's, navigator's, smith's, thieves', tinker's, weaver's and woodcarver's tools.

"Oily Greg" Poorslow *"If you say so!"*

A greasy-looking man of average height and weight, wearing a vest that clings to his skin, his hairy chest on full display, his pants a mix of beige fabric and various stains.

For the Insightful

Oily Greg seems genuinely excited which also seems like a rarity.

EVERY MACHINIST in the realm knows if you're looking for a reliable source of rare natural lubricants, you make a trip to see Oily Greg. With a curious mind and a strong stomach, Oily Greg has a knack for rendering unctuous materials from just about anything, including plants, beasts and (as of a few days ago) beasts that look like plants. Oily Greg recently discovered the **shambling mounds** that stalk the dells along the outskirts of town can be milked for several pints of prime lubricant. He just needs help keeping those mounds from shambling or biting his arm off. After all, it takes two arms to milk a shambling mound.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Oily Greg needs help milking shambling mound saliva, which he claims could be worth 100gp per pint to the right buyer.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** A shambling mound needs to be alive when it's milked of its saliva. Additionally, Oily Greg knows the saliva would be worth at least four times what he tells the party.

◆ **Carrying** 18cp, 3sp; a collection of ointments, salves, oozes, oils and other lubricants in small jars, cans and tins.

Clarissa Caldwell *"Why you staring?"*

A dark haired woman with a rich complexion and dour expression, wearing a simple red dress, turquoise bracelet and a rope tied around her ankle.

For the Perceptive

The rope tied around Clarissa's ankle seems to move every now and then, implying it might be tied to something alive (if out of view).

CLARISSA CALDWELL is a hardworking woman with little time to waste, and the free time she can spare is often utilized to care for a lamb ("Guildylocks"), whose wool is the color of the rarest gold, and whose leg is attached to hers by a 50-foot rope. During her shifts at one of her three jobs, Clarissa is hounded by investors offering to buy Guildylocks outright, or at least have rights on the wool from what they believe will be the first sheering. When she sleeps, Clarissa dreams of selling all the lambswool she's collected to a big city couturier, hoping Guildylocks's wool—which grows back just as soft and luminous overnight—might fetch her a ticket to a much better life.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Just another few weeks to gather more lambswool—and from there, safe passage to the nearest big city.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Clarissa has been hiding large bundles of golden wool throughout the city, as she sheers Guildylocks each night. And someone in town has seen her.

◆ **Carrying** 15cp, 9sp; a bit of golden fleece worth 200gp to the right buyer; a small crust of bread; a rope attached to a gold-wooled lamb named Guildylocks.

Honey O'Dell *"That's sweet."*

A long-limbed, half-elven woman with long pigtails wearing a pair of slacks and a coat with the sleeves pushed up. A chipmunk with a little top hat sits on her shoulder.

For the Charismatic

Honey seems nice enough, but that critter could be a star.

RAISED BY HER human father after being told she wasn't pretty enough to truly fit into elven society by her peers, Honey O'Dell was pretty miserable for the first few decades of her existence. But then she met Shrimp. A chittering little scamp who can tap dance and two-step (assuming you're offering mashed almonds), Shrimp the chipmunk is one of the area's most beloved entertainers.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Honey would love to get to one of the bigger cities so she can get a little more money off of Shrimp's performances.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Shrimp is actually Bits O'Toole, a renowned but presumed dead bard, who was *true polymorphed* into his current form when his affair with the queen was uncovered by the court's archmage.

◆ **Carrying** 4cp; a bag of almonds.

REKA REARGUARD *"You won't regret it."*

A wizened woman of an indeterminable age, with a cheerful smile and rosy cheeks, wearing an apron over a simple dark frock.

For the Insightful

Reka may be the kindest, most genuine person you've ever encountered.

REKA REARGUARD would like nothing more than to enjoy the breeze on her face as the noodle soup she's known to sell through the window of her home simmers on her cooktop. Unfortunately, she's been told by local authorities she can no longer sell her soup from her house, and owes quite a bit in back taxes, including an exorbitant rezoning fee. She doesn't know how she'll raise the money, but does know her husband buried a ring of great value in the swamps beyond the river before he died. Maybe you could help her retrieve it? You want a soup for the road?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Reka hopes someone will seek out the ring her husband buried in the swamp so she can trade it for the debt owed against her property.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The swamp is dangerous and plagued by a legendary **banshee**, "The Saucy Flirt." Unbeknownst to Reka, the item buried in the swamp is a cursed **ring of djinni summoning**. The djinn trapped within the ring can grant 1d4 wishes for the creature attuned to the ring. Due to the ring's cursed nature, however, the wishes nearly always have some surprising negative consequence.

◆ **Carrying** 21cp; a large wooden ladle; a pouch of fragrant, dry seasoning; a crude map detailing the whereabouts of the buried ring.

GUS SANDERBLUM *"Why wait?"*

A young, scrappy-looking man with dirty hair and a busted lip, and the wide-eyed charisma of a born revolutionary, with a few large placards under his arm.

For the Insightful

Gus seems to believe every word he's saying, even the stuff that sounds like utter nonsense.

RAISED BY his grandparents, who filled his young ears with stories of this town's unique promise, Gus Sanderblum has seen too many spirited, hopeful citizens run down by those who wield the power here. A recent dustup with some of the goons hired by the Martello shipping concern is all the catalyst Gus needs to start an all out revolt! Does it matter that Gus threw the first punch? Not today it doesn't!

◆ **Wants & Needs** Gus wants to help liberate the working class!

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Gus's muse for his planned uprising, a woman named Delta Rittenhouse, works for the Lacroix merchant corp,—and is stoking revolution in order to weaken a competitor.

◆ **Carrying** 18cp; a few handmade flyers and placards; a short club.

PATRICE MURKDAGGER *"I don't want no trouble."*

A waifish young man in a dark cloak and well worn leather armor, a thin beard covering a set of scars on either side of his face.

For the Perceptive

Patrice's leather armor doesn't look like it fits the way custom armor should, implying it might be stolen or second hand.

BORN TO A mother who never wanted him and a father who has disavowed his existence, Patrice Murkdagger has spent much of his young life avoiding the scrutiny that comes with being the son of Abel Murkdagger, one of the area's most notorious cutthroats. Patrice doesn't know where his father is. His mother died long ago—painfully, if the gods believe in justice. He has no interest in adventuring or thievery or skimming or even going to Gilda's, the gambling den under the shop on the corner. But if Patrice's life has proved anything, it's that we can't always get what we want.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Patrice wants to avoid scrutiny, and questions about his father's potential whereabouts, from those on both sides of the law.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Patrice does know where his father will be in two days' time: Gilda's Gambling Parlor. And he's been thinking about their meeting for years.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 39sp; a relatively dull dagger; a key to a storage shed where Patrice has been building an incendiary device.

Calloway Dawes *"They got the wrong guy!"*

A well-built man locked in a pillory, covered in smashed tomato and cabbage .

For the Insightful

Calloway seems believable, if not entirely innocent.

A HARD-HEADED man who is always in the wrong place at the wrong time, Calloway Dawes can be found either at a tavern or in another man's bed when he's not locked in the town pillory (which is often). It didn't help that Calloway's current amorous focus was the wife of the judge at his trial. Can't a guy get a break?

- **Wants & Needs** Room to roam and a dance with your sweetie.
- **Secret or Obstacle** Calloway swears he saw men in ornate masks enter the nearby temple's cellar.
- **Carrying** The rope that keeps his pants up, assuming it hasn't been stolen by a group of cruel children.

Dottie Dabbler *"I don't want to think about it."*

An auburn-haired woman wearing a black shawl with a small twig tied around her neck.

For the Druidic

Wearing wood is common practice for those who have made a dire request of the tree **sprites**.

THE PROUD mother of four boys and one curious little girl, Dottie Dabbler was the envy of many in town. Then Maisie Dabbler ran into the forest chasing her dog Tuck. When she didn't return, her brothers did what big brothers do and went to find her. That was three weeks ago. Now all Dottie can do is hope the sprites heard her prayer.

- **Wants & Needs** Dottie would love to see her children again.
- **Secret or Obstacle** Whispers persist a group of **trolls** are working with a **trio of hag covens** to capture children in woods.
- **Carrying** 8cp, 21sp; a pair of knitting needles and yarn.

Dutch Ottenbrau *"Drinks on you."*

A hearty man with two tusks peeking up from his bottom lip, in red overalls and a faded gold tunic, wearing a wooden crown that says "Boozer King."

For the Orcish

This man looks like he's got a bit of orc blood in him.

A QUARTER-ORC with a full-blooded love of ale, Dutch Ottenbrau prides himself on being the most steady-handed hoochhound in town, and is willing to challenge anyone tho thinks they can beat the "Boozer King." He loves a good ale but now drinks mostly to quiet his headaches, which started while he was doing a masonry job at the town well.

- **Wants & Needs** A challenger! And for his headaches to go away. And to eat your face—a steak. To eat a steak. Who said face?
- **Secret or Obstacle** A **demon** lurking in the town well has poisoned the water. Dutch is its first victim, and won't be the last.
- **Carrying** A tiefling drinking horn.

Bailey Fanteaser *"We'll never find it."*

A man in a vest and bandana and sturdy navy pants, with his eyes scanning the ground.

For the Perceptive

Bailey is searching for something.

ONE COULD build a hoard for a newborn **drake** with the items Bailey Fanteaser has misplaced over the course of his life. Today he's hunting the sack of gems he was meant to use to pay off his debt to the Hush brothers. It was a lot of gems. They couldn't have gone far?

- **Wants & Needs** Help finding his stuff. He's not sure where to start!
- **Secret or Obstacle** Bailey is a somnambulist and sleepwalks into others' homes to find his lost stuff.
- **Carrying** Oh, fiddle. Nothing?

BERTRAND "OLD BERT" SHOEMAKER

"Ha! I'd rather die again."

A balding elderly man with a nose that takes up most of his face and a grimace that could spoil milk, wearing shoes that outclass his otherwise humdrum shirt and breeches.

For the Devout

This man has the glow, if not the disposition, of one who has communed with the gods.

A WELL-KNOWN cobbler in this region, young Bertrand Shoemaker was run through by the blade of an unseen assailant. Fortunately, a fashion-forward druid was able to cast *reincarnation* on his favorite cobbler, but the body into which Bertrand's soul was deposited was an elderly man's. Feeling aches in his hands and knees, Bertrand ("Old Bert" to those who find his predicament hilarious) gave up on his craft in an effort to save what little life he has left. He takes odd jobs here and there, but mostly just dodders around town complaining about the life he could have lived, while maintaining a bitter graciousness for the one he can still experience.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A new body, if you have one to spare. And perhaps revenge on Mikhail Finefellow, a cobbler he's certain paid to have him killed.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Old Bert doesn't have proof Finefellow was involved in his untimely death. Only a hunch and a grudge worthy of one who looks as old as he does.

◆ **Carrying** 21cp, 18sp; cobbler's tools; a journal of designs for elaborate footwear; a navy eyepatch wrapped in a handkerchief—the only lead in his murder.

MARGOT MILLERDOWN

"Keep your head down. And your chin up."

A gnomish woman with a wide stance, in a vibrant maroon dress and white apron, and whose pointed, woven gold hat is, on closer inspection, a series of wrapped hair braids that form a modest tower on her head.

For the Perceptive

This woman's fingernails are gnawed to the quick, suggesting she's under a bit of stress.

THINGS HAVEN'T been the same for Margot Millerdown since the **goblins** arrived. Just over the ridge is an encampment, and they've started planting crops—a clear sign they intend to stay. It's only a matter of time before they're riding **wargs** and throwing spears and terrorizing the entire village. Think of the children! Maybe she can convince a band of adventurers to strike first? At night, while they're sleeping? It'll be safer that way.

◆ **Wants & Needs** All Margot wants is for the group of dangerous, filthy goblins gathering on the other side of the river to be dealt with. She's certain she's not alone.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The "goblins across the river" are a group of halflings hoping to settle in and establish a new community.

◆ **Carrying** 6cp, 9sp, 1gp; a **brooch of shielding**; a stack of cards outlining "The Goblin Menace."

LINDA DUCKETT

"I'd sooner pay for dirt."

A spry halfling woman in dark coveralls and a large straw hat covering messy red hair, carrying oversized produce in a sack.

For the Druidic

Linda either has an incredibly green thumb or has found a way to influence her crops arcanely.

FARMING'S ALWAYS come naturally to Linda Duckett, and her kin are all proud purveyors of veggies of various sizes. That said, her skillset has gained a bit of a boost from the stillwater spring on her property, as it's currently functioning as a planar breech into the fey wild. As the breech grows larger, so too do Linda's crops. In fact, she's got a pumpkin on her property she's considering turning into a four-story farmhouse.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Linda wants a fair price for her crops, which is getting tougher given their size.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The spring isn't just releasing crop-enlarging nutrients—a few **sprites** and **satyrs** have made a home in the spring, and will make their way to the surface once the moon is full.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp, 21sp; a sack of massive gourds, turnips and taters.

CLARA CONCORD *"As the Mother wills it."*

A dimple-cheeked woman with gray hair she clearly cuts herself in a shapeless tunic and red string necklace.

For the the Devout

Wearing red string, a symbol of The Mother, has been outlawed for nearly a century.

THE TROUBLE all started when Baron Axelbrau punished Samwell Burlington by hanging him from the Aldar Oak. Now the livestock give birth only to death, a fact that will starve this town before long. Clara Concord is certain she can reverse the curse that plagues this land, if only she could access the Aldar Oak and appeal to The Mother.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Clara wants to perform a cleansing ritual on the Aldar Oak before her litter of piglets is due.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The baron has banned townsfolk from coming within 500 yards of the Aldar Oak.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp; a fresh goose egg, a bundle of straw and a sheep's placenta to celebrate The Mother.

GROVER BLACKSBURG *"Everything's coming up Grover."*

A lanky man with bushy sideburns and ashy blond hair, wearing a brown shirt, blue pants and the most ostentatious belt buckle you've ever laid eyes on.

For the Arcane

The buckle Grover wears glistens with magical energy and seems to be telling you not to steal it.

GROVER WAS feeling pretty low when he heard his long lost uncle Grindle died. But then a belt buckle belonging to his uncle arrived by courier, with a letter explaining all he had to do was carry himself with a little confidence and the buckle would do the rest. He's won 18 straight local dart contests since and the only thing he feels bad about is the fact that folks keep dying in his vicinity from horrific accidents. Probably just one of those coinkidinks.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To win the area dart competition. And learn why people around him keep dying in horrific accidents. After darts.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Grover's belt buckle was enchanted to bring the wearer good fortune, a magic that manifests in deadly accidents befalling any would-be thief.

◆ **Carrying** 5cp, 20sp; a dart set; a letter from his deceased uncle; ***Grindle's Lucky Buckle***.

Grindle's Lucky Buckle

legendary item

This belt buckle grants its wearer a boon of good fortune, and upon donning it the world seems to align to their benefit (at GM discretion). Because the belt is of great value, any who attempt to steal it will be stopped by the buckle, which shifts fate just enough—a few rotten floorboards giving way here, a paint bucket falling to crush a skull there—to cause them irreparable harm.

HERC HAVERSCHMIDT *"Huh?"*

An imposing but generally gentle-looking young goliath, whose skin is covered in tribal tattoos and whose simple clothing could use a wash. He has a docile goat under his arm.

For the Insightful

Though he looks like he could flip an oxcart, Herc seems like he's barely aware of his own strength.

AS PART of a nomadic goliath tribe, Herc Haverschmidt wandered a bit too far from the herd as a boy and never really made his way back. He traveled alone for weeks, ultimately stumbling into this small town. Rictor and Helga Haverschmidt, humble farmers here, took Herc in and raised him as a son. Now a beloved member of the community, Herc seems to grow a few inches each day. No one knows enough about his history to explain why.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Herc doesn't remember much about his time in the herd, but does wonder why he has so many tattoos and is so much bigger than his papa Rictor.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The herd of goliaths still wanders these lands and Herc's parents have never stopped searching for the beloved boy they tattooed with their family marks.

◆ **Carrying** A goat.

Nobles & Leaders

The size of a town is not necessarily a good indicator of the complex power dynamics which may come into play there. Though they may not wield as much influence as their big city counterparts, those who can impact the population of a small town often possess more power per capita—meaning the stakes are a bit higher than they might be in a more urban locale.

Madeline Miller *"Giddyup."*

A striking woman with long dark purple hair and an air of confidence; in a green checkered coat, navy riding pants and tan riding boots.

For Handlers of Animals

Madeline exhibits an energy that suggests she would be adept at training horses.

AFTER THE recent death of her father, Orton Miller, a man whose humble grain operation is now among the most important in the realm, Madeline Miller assumed control of the family business. With a steady hand and an eye for opportunity, Madeline has grand plans to expand her father's nascent empire. Recently, she's dealt with four separate kidnapping attempts, each thankfully foiled by her quick thinking and faster horse, Fez. These silly plots, which she assumes are for ransom money or better working conditions or a forced marriage will certainly cease, hopefully once the townsfolk come to accept her as the new leader of Miller Grain Works. If they continue, it will undoubtedly slow her plans for expansion. After all, it's hard to make deals when you're being held hostage, non?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Madeline wants to further her father's empire but unfortunately she has been dealing with the fallout of multiple abduction attempts, which she finds rather boring.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The abduction attempts are all the machinations of her brother Gerald, who is hoping to scare her off working at the mill so he can assume her position.

◆ **Carrying** 15sp, 18gp, 2pp; a letter written in dried seal's blood; a riding crop; a brooch that converts to a 1d6 dagger.

Garret Campbell, Duke of the Bilge *"Have some perspective."*

A rail thin, hunched-over man of indiscernible age wearing a dingy brown doublet and a dark leather skull cap.

For the Perceptive

The duke's boots look as though they were recently cleaned, but there appears to be traces of bilge mud—suggesting he may have visited the swamps recently.

THE BILGE, a nigh useless tract of swampland connecting the smaller river towns to the region's larger urban centers and ports, is currently the property of Duke Garret Campbell—a royal third cousin (twice removed), who serves as its warden. Recently, a series of **froghemoth** attacks on merchants and other travelers on the Bilge Straight, a bit of dry land in an otherwise marshy wetland, has ground the realm's supply chain to a halt. The Duke of the Bilge seeks willing adventurers to journey into the bogs and eradicate the problem, and will pay them handsomely—particularly if they tell any nobles they meet that destroying the froghemoths was the duke's idea.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The duke wants able-bodied adventurers to clear out the froghemoth infestation that has been plaguing merchants who travel through the Bilge on their way to and from the realm's major port cities.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The Duke of the Bilge has purposefully allowed the froghemoth problem to grow out of hand, going so far as to tempt more of the creatures closer to the road with the bodies of freshly killed criminals—so that he can receive a better title (and the lands that come with it) as a reward for resolving the issue.

◆ **Carrying** 80gp, 15pp; 330gp in dark onyx gemstones; a signet ring worth 130gp; a walking cane topped with a silver bilge toad.

Lord Theron "The Dragon" Sylvanranth

A tall, pale high elf with short silver hair, sharp cheekbones and a thin mouth that barely moves when he speaks. He wears finely tailored robes of a green so dark they appear black. A glossy black leather glove adorns his left hand.

For the Martially Trained

Sylvanranth rules the region with a combination of fear and ruthlessness, and while his is certainly an intimidating presence, most townsfolk are more concerned with the army of mercenaries at his beck and call.

A powerful local ruler who looks down upon any he lays his cold, hard eyes upon, Lord Theron Sylvanranth only speaks when he has a need to make his desires known—a rarity given his exacting standards and ruthless reputation. Lord Sylvanranth takes what he wants and hordes it in his sprawling (and extremely well-fortified) manor house. As a result, the townsfolk refer to him as "The Dragon" with hushed tones and frightened eyes. A collector of rare and powerful magical artifacts, Lord Sylvanranth will do almost anything to get his hands on items that pique his interest. He has a reputation as a cruel master of the town and surrounding farmlands, and any serf who cannot pay their duties is at best forced off his lands—and most receive much worse.

His family is not without tragedy, however. With his only daughter dead and his granddaughter in a sickly state (said to be cursed by his greed), Sylvanranth will stop at nothing to protect his legacy. He may be forced to choose between his family and his hoard.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Lord Sylvanranth is searching for a cure to his granddaughter's wasting sickness—each day she seems a little less alive. He is also obsessed with rare and powerful magic items and will pay a handsome sum for them. Should any items catch his eye, those who possess them would be wise to take his first offer—or prepare to sleep with one eye open.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Lord Sylvanranth is cursed to build a doomed legacy, a byproduct of his onetime ownership of the Staff of Causality, and nothing but a *wish* spell will break the tainted magic that clings to his bloodline. Nothing is ever enough for Sylvanranth, but he's not about to change his way of life because of some curse. He knows he must gain access to a *wish* spell, or recover the Staff of Causality, or he'll lose everything.

◆ **Carrying** 12sp, 98gp, 58pp; **elven chain**; a pair of +2 poisoned daggers; a notebook detailing every single item in his possession, as well as a short list of powerful magic items he is seeking; a diamond brooch in the shape of a snake that once belonged to his daughter; the ***hand of greed***.

Lord Theron Sylvanranth

Medium high elf, neutral evil
An imposing and cruel noble who commands fear and a small army, Lord Sylvanranth will stop at nothing to protect his legacy.

Armor Class 16 (elven chain)
Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +9
Skills Arcana +9, History +9, Poisoner's Kit +9
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Fiendish
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

A Small Army. Lord Sylvanranth commands a small army of **guards**, **knights**, **veterans** and even a **mage** or two, all paid a hefty sum to keep his estate safe. Their number and presence are at GM discretion.
Click of the Fingers (3/Long Rest). Sylvanranth's glove is a magical artifact of incredible power. He can use his action to snap his fingers and cast *arcane hand*.

Actions
Mutiattack. Sylvanranth can attack twice with his poison daggers.
Daggers. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or ranged 20/60 ft. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or take 36 (8d8) poison damage and become Poisoned for 1 minute.

Hand of Greed

wondrous item, very rare

This glove is said to have belonged to a powerful mage long ago. It has three charges. Using an action to snap your fingers and spend a charge, you can cast *arcane hand*. This item regains 1d4 charges after a long rest.

"And what do we have here?"

Audric de Larouche *"complete profound silence"*

An elderly tiefling with maroon skin, a broken right horn and wispy white hair who doesn't make a sound when they move—not a footstep nor the rustle of their robes can be heard—and appears to communicate via sign language

For the Perceptive or Arcane

Audric does not seem to have a *silence* spell cast upon them in the traditional sense, rather it appears as if it is limited to their body alone. The faded remnants of scars and strange tattoos are also barely visible on their hands.

A DRIVEN healer and stalwart voice in the community despite an inability to speak, Audric de Larouche silently watches over the community they settled in a few years ago. Still regarded as an outsider by some, Audric has worked hard to become a beloved caretaker of the town's only library, where they spend the little free time they have attempting to learn more about the silence that has followed them since birth.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Audric does what they can to keep their town safe and healthy—and recently learned of an unsettling fact: the silence that follows them has started to transfer itself via touch to others.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Audric was cursed as an infant as part of a dark ritual endeavor led by their parents, Jakmas and Evangeline de Larouche, a powerful warlock duo still at large in the region. Audric is on the cusp of discovering that as long as their parents live, the curse they wrought will keep their child silent.

◆ **Carrying** 3cp; a holy symbol of solid iron, depicting a single star and crown made of flowers, worth 22gp; an old, carefully preserved letter from an "Adelise de Larouche."

Audric de Larouche

Medium tiefling, lawful good
A silent healer who does what they can to keep the common people safe and healthy.

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 43 (7d8+7)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Cha +7, Wis +4
Damage Resistances fire, radiant
Skills Arcana +6, Medicine +4, Religion +6
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Celestial, Common, Fiendish
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Healing Light. Audric has a pool of 7d6 per long rest. As a bonus action, Audric can target a creature they can see within 60 ft., expending dice from the pool and healing them up to 4d6 per use.

Spellcasting. Audric is a 7th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). Audric regains expended spell slots when they finish a short or long rest and knows the following Warlock spells:
Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast, friends, light, sacred flame*
1st-4th level (2 4th-level slots): *counterspell, cure wounds, dimension door, dispel magic, mirror image*

Actions
Eldritch Blast. Audric fires 2 beams of eldritch energy at their foes. Ranged spell attack, +7 to hit. Range 120 ft., one target per beam. *Hit*: 10 (1d10 +4) force damage per beam.

Reverend Macon Brushrambler *"Well, don't that beat all?"*

Exceedingly tall and slender, with red cheeks and wrinkles that crowd out his eyes, stooped over a well-carved cane and wearing simple but pristine religious vestments and a tarnished brass medallion.

For the Devout

The medallion bears the mark of a well-known deity, though one that's more readily associated with a land far from this one (both god and location at GM discretion).

REVEREND MACON Brushrambler wandered into town nearly 60 years ago as a hopeful, bright-eyed acolyte of his faith. Nearing 90 years of age, he still maintains the small church he established on the edge of town. His efforts at prosthelytizing have garnered mostly ridicule, and despite his cheerful demeanor, there's clearly a bit of pain that comes with having devoted much of your life to a town that thinks you're a fool. He spends a great deal of time hiking in the forests outside town, even at his advanced age.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A devoted follower of his god for so long, Rev. Brushrambler isn't sure where his will ends and his deity's begins. He would love more respect, and to escort Elsa Farmerdell, a widow who attends his services, on a hike.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The reverend's prayers for vengeance, uttered only in his sleep, have finally reached the ears of his god.

◆ **Carrying** 17sp, 1gp; a brass holy symbol; an old wooden cane; a small whittling knife.

LOTANNA SHAMMAS *President of the Community Watch*

"Now, now—there, there."

A towering blue dragonborn woman with a baby in a sling over her chest and three toddling dragonborn children following behind on a daisy chain attached to her belt, in a blush-hued robe, carrying an ornate staff.

For the Druidic

Though Lotanna doesn't seem like a druid, it appears there is a bit of overlap in your shared areas of expertise.

AN EX-ADVENTURER who settled in this small town to enjoy the possibly even more chaotic journey of motherhood, Lotanna Shammas has six children, her youngest still an infant. She is a proud animal rescuer and trainer, her abilities somewhat aided by the fact she can talk to them. As president of the town's Community Watch, Lotanna is always looking out for her local community and would do all in her power to protect it and her new way of life.

◆ **Wants & Needs** She loves her children, she really does, but would pay someone dearly for a couple of hours of peace and a date night with her partner. She'd also be interested in someone looking into why, on the eve of the annual "Village of the Year" review, the entire town seems to be sinking into the earth.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Nearly a dozen **bullettes** have descended on the area as part of their spawning season, which occurs once a century.

◆ **Carrying** 13cp, 18sp, 86gp; a staff carved from a lightning-struck tree.

Lotanna Shammas

Medium dragonborn, lawful good
President of the Community Watch and proud mother of six, Lotanna is an upstanding member of the local community.

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 59 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +9
Damage Resistances lightning
Skills Perception +9, Animal Handling +9, Survival +9
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Draconic, Undercommon
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Draconic Breath Weapon (1/Long Rest). Lotanna can breathe out a 5 ft. by 30 ft. line of lightning causing 11 (3d6) lightning damage (DC 14 Dex save for half damage) to all in the area.

Spellcasting Lotanna is a 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Druid spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *guidance, mending, shillelagh*
1st level (4 slots): *animal friendship, cure wounds, speak with animals*
2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, beast sense, lesser restoration*
3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, conjure animals, dispel magic*
4th level (3 slots): *grasping vine, stoneskin*
5th level (1 slots): *awaken*

Actions
Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.
Unleash Kids. As an action, Lotanna allows her children to run around unsupervised, distracting 1d4 targets of her choosing and granting advantage on all attacks against them until the end of her next turn. The children have an AC of 25.

LIDA DEWTHISTLE

"Help, help! I'm in distress!"

A young, bubbly woman with long blonde hair, wearing an attention-demanding ruby dress and so much jewelry she appears to shimmer.

For the Perceptive

The gaudy jewelry Lida wears, while of excellent craftsmanship, is most likely fake. Perhaps she's not as well off as she looks.

LIDA DEWTHISTLE wishes her life in this town were a little closer to those of the characters from the adventurous tales she's held dear her whole life. She once staged her own kidnapping only to discover her parents weren't interested in paying the ransom. Now she spends most of her time attempting to convince new arrivals to town that she is in some form of danger, the only way she can get the attention and adventure she craves.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Lida intends to fake her way to happily ever after. If she plays her cards right, she'll be saved from the top of the town tower before the fire gets bad.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The mason who built the town tower insulated the walls with straw and goose down. It's exceedingly flammable.

◆ **Carrying** 8 sp, 13 gp; roughly 4sp in costume jewelry; flint and steel; seven balls of parchment paper.

Stella Fortnight

An ancient looking woman with darker skin, a petite build and an owl's visage, wearing simple dark steel armor and a cloak whose exterior features a feather-like pattern with an inner lining that looks like a field of stars.

For the Academic

If Stella begins sharing information about her current predicament, you would know the dark elves who dwell beneath the realm have long sought a means to bring permanent night to the surface.

A SHAMAN of the evening shade, Stella Fortnight has long served as the caretaker for the town's Twilight Temple, home of the legendary ***Dusk Blade***—that is, until last week. Following an inexplicable covert incursion into the temple, a permanent darkness has settled over the entire region, a fact she is certain is tied to The Dusk Blade's power and disappearance. Her calming tone and steady hands are a welcome presence in times of strife, but the sun hasn't risen here in nearly 10 days and even the stalwart Stella is starting to fret.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Stella hopes to find the thieves who absconded with The Dusk Blade in order to restore the balance of night and day in the realm.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** This town is not equipped to organize a meaningful pursuit of the thieves, whomever they are, and thus far requests for aid have gone unanswered—another troubling detail.

◆ **Carrying** 3cp, 2gp, 1 diamond worth 500gp; a star chart; a retractable telescope; a satchel filled with moon dust of *sleep*.

The Dusk Blade

legendary artifact (requires attunement)

This powerful greatsword is rumored to have been used to split the sky into night and day. It is said that those who truly know how to wield it can block out the sun for miles.

When you attack an object with The Dusk Blade and hit, maximize your weapon damage dice against the target.

As an action, you can speak the sword's command word to cause the blade to shed magical darkness in a 10-foot radius, extinguishing all forms of non-magical light for one minute. Speaking the command word again or sheathing the sword removes this effect.

Attuning to this weapon grants 120 ft. of darkvision and allows you to see through magical darkness.

Stella Fortnight

Medium human, lawful good

A well-respected cleric of twilight, Stella Fortnight is the keeper of The Dusk Blade, a legendary artifact. Well—she was until 10 days ago.

Armor Class 15 (half plate)
Hit Points 122 (17d8 + 34)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +11
Skills Insight +11, Perception +11, Religion +8
Senses unlimited darkvision, passive Perception 21
Languages Celestial, Common, Elvish
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Midnight Gaze (5/Long Rest). Stella's eyes are blessed, allowing her to see through the deepest darkness. She has darkvision with no maximum range; she can see in dim light as if it were bright light and in darkness as if it were dim light. She can use an action to grant this ability to any creatures of her choice within 10 ft. of her for 10 minutes five times per day.
Watchful Eye. As an action, Stella can give one creature she touches (including herself) advantage on the next initiative roll the creature makes. This benefit ends immediately after the roll or if she uses this feature again.
Evening Stroller. Stella draws strength from her connection to twilight and is at home within its dark embrace. She has advantage on saving throws against being frightened. Additionally, if she is in dim light or darkness, Stella can use a bonus action to magically give herself a flying speed equal to her walking speed until the end of her next turn.

Spellcasting. Stella is a 17th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips *(at will): guidance, light, sacred flame, spare the dying, thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bane, cure wounds, inflict wounds, ray of sickness, sanctuary*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, silence, spiritual weapon*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, bestow curse, dispel magic, mass healing word, protection from energy, spirit guardians*
- 4th level (3 slots): *blight, death ward, freedom of movement*
- 5th level (2 slots): *hallow, raise dead*
- 6th level (1 slot): *true seeing*
- 7th level (1 slot): *plane shift*
- 8th level (1 slot): *holy aura*
- 9th level (1 slot): *mass heal*

Actions
Telescoping Strike. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) radiant damage.

"Don't be so dim."

Tajumola "Taj" Tayo

"She'll be right, mate."

A scruffy dwarven woman with a braided moustache, billowing hunting cloak and three hunting knives of various size strapped to her thighs. A longbow is slung over her shoulder accompanied by a quiver of nasty arrows. Four freshly killed rabbits can be seen hanging from her belt.

For the Martially Trained

Taj looks like she'd be adept with any ranged weapon, and the arrows in the quiver on her back look self-made and particularly dangerous.

THE TOWN'S resident wilderness expert, hunter and trapper, Taj knows the bush like the back of her own hand. She mostly hunts game but has been known to take monster contracts in the past and she is a very good shot. Volunteering as the local hunting scout leader and serving as the town's chief of coin, Taj is well-loved by everyone, and known to get rowdy at the tavern after a successful hunt.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Taj has recently found the haunt of a **young green dragon**, who could threaten the town if allowed to get any bigger, but she needs help clearing it out.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Taj is hoping a few sacks of coin from the dragon's hoard might make up for a recently discovered, and potentially ruinous, accounting error—a product of her working the books after spending time in the taverns.

◆ **Carrying** 14cp, 12sp, 53gp; a rare jewel worth 700gp; hunting traps and snares; three hunting knives; a +1 longbow and accompanying arrows.

Tajumola "Taj" Tayo

Medium hill dwarf, neutral good
A brilliant hunter and tracker, Tajumola spends most of her time in the wilderness but is also known to hunt for the right kind of trouble at the local alehouse.

Armor Class 17 (studded leather armor)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +9
Damage Resistances Poison
Skills Animal Handling +7, Perception +11, Stealth +9
Senses darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 21
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Goblin, Orc, Primordial
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Actions
Multiattack. Tajumola makes two attacks with her longbow, and can choose to use the special arrows below.
Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, range 150/600 ft. One target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage.
Explosive Arrows (3). This arrow explodes upon a successful hit, dealing an additional 14 (4d6) fire damage to any creature within a 5 ft. radius of the target that fails a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw.
Poison Arrows (5). On a successful hit, the target of this arrow must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, suffering 17 (3d10) poison damage on a failed save. The target is also poisoned until the end of their next long rest.

"Mayor Nandi" Hillsplitter

"You got rocks in yer ears?"

A stout, bearded dwarven man, whose graying facial hair completely hides his mouth, gnawing on an unlit pipe and occasionally tugging at his lone pierced ear.

For the Perceptive or Martially Trained

Nandi looks like he could handle himself in a scrape, and probably was in a few, back in his younger days—and his subtle but steady gaze suggests a man who knows how to size up another in an instant.

NANDI HILLSPLITTER, "Mayor Nandi" to most who dwell in town, knows just about everyone around here, as well as their business. While "Mayor" is an honorary title, it's one he wears with pride, and he's a confidante to any who need to spill their secrets or talk through their troubles with a tight-lipped third party. He's friendly but cautious toward strangers, but does seem to bow up around anyone of orcish descent, an old habit from his former life—a life he hopes he can continue to shield from public scrutiny.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Nandi has built a respectable business through honest and fair trade, and wants to keep it that way.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Nandi retired to this town many years ago after spending his formative dwarven years as a member of the Pickaxe Posse, a group of mercenaries who hunted orcish kind for sport.

◆ **Carrying** 4cp, 31sp, 2gp; a dragon-shaped pipe carved of orc bone; a small flask of what he calls "the good stuff."

GRAK OF THE GRICK *"Tut tut, m'lady/m'lord."*

A goblin whose expression seems to be permanently stuck in a wide, toothy smile in a mostly clean, white, ruffled topshirt with somewhat stained frilled sleeves, finished with a once-fine double-breasted coat that's long enough to conceal the fact that he's not wearing pants.

For the Noble

This goblin is not, nor could he ever be, true nobility. *Scoff*

AS THE only survivor of his clan after a devastating **gnoll** attack on the Grick (a goblin village deep in the woods nearby), Grak was taken in by the town and raised as an upstanding member of the community. Trying to make his way up the ladder of society, Grak does all in his power to ingratiate himself, particularly to the noble class. After an elderly heiress, the late Duchess Magatha DeLonay, willed him a temporary title, Grak has found his fortunes continuing to improve. He serves the town that saved him as a go between, and works tirelessly to impress the remaining nobles who might be willing to ensure his temporary title becomes permanent.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Grak would do just about anything for a noble title.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Grak recently had a torrid affair with a minor noble in the area that almost ended a marriage, and gave him some excellent political blackmail material. He also learned Lord McGillicutty of Heath Harbor keeps a lot of odd masks in his closet.

◆ **Carrying** 42cp, 5sp, 89gp; various rings and precious gems worth 80gp; a love letter to Grak signed by a minor noble in the area; smelling salts.

Grak of the Grick

Small goblin, chaotic good
A little goblin with big dreams, Grak does everything he can to ingratiate himself into noble society.

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 52 (8d8+16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +7
Skills Performance +10, Deception +10, Persuasion +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Goblin, Halfling
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Incessant Flattery (2/Short or Long Rest). As an action on his turn, Grak of the Grick can heap effusive praise on those in his general vicinity, overwhelming their defenses with his cunning charm and boisterous brown-nosing. Until the end of his next turn, Grak's allies gain advantage on attack rolls against enemies within 10 ft. of him that can hear him.

Spellcasting. Grak is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Bard spells prepared:
Cantrips: *friends, vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, cure wounds*
2nd level (3 slots): *enhance ability, hold person*
3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, fear*
4th level (2 slots): *charm monster, confusion*

Actions
Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Baron Delacroix Carp, "The Blowfish"

with Darius the Boarhound

A man so large you feel as if he has a gravitational pull, wearing hunting attire just a cinch too small, his black beard flecked with a bit of lunch, his massive hands clutch a crossbow and the lead of his slobbering but steady-gazing boarhound.

For the Noble or Academic

Baron Delacroix Carp's reputation as a misogynistic carouser and gambler who is nonetheless beloved enough by a certain type of townsperson to keep him protected from the consequences of his actions is well documented.

A MEMBER of the landed gentry by marriage to a much older woman, Baron Delacroix Carp has presided over his considerable acreage and the town built on and around it with equal parts ineptitude and nonchalance ever since his wife Bea's passing. He is an insatiable taker, bullying or bulldozing his way through rental negotiations or land acquisitions using sheer force of will or the occasional show of his forces; but nearly everything he takes interest in falls into disrepair when his attentions shift. He has lost much of his fiscal strength at least twice through bad deals and worse management, but most of the common folk rate power through outward displays of an older brand of masculinity and fortitude—among the only things at which "The Blowfish" excels. Whether it's the weekly parades in his honor, the quarterly "Great Hunts" he sponsors or the women he insists hang around him at all times, The Blowfish appeals to simpler minds who believe looking powerful is as good as being so. Unfortunately for this town, it's littered with them. Rumor has it The Blowfish can summon the spectral forms of his most ardent followers with a bellow on his iron horn. His mostly loyal boarhound Darius ensures he doesn't need to blow the horn all that often.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The Blowfish is seeking hunters to bag a few **giant boar** or, if they dare, a **wyvern**, and pass the kills off as his work as part of The Great Hunt next week. He also plans to buy a parcel of land out from under the acolytes at a forest temple abutting his land.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The acolytes in the temple have known for months that The Blowfish intends to convert their hallowed ground into a lodge for debauchery, and are planning a revolt during his next parade. They've convinced a local **druid** to join their efforts.

◆ **Carrying** 40sp, 34gp, 88pp; +2 crossbow and bolts, **iron horn of Valhalla**, a scrap of paper listing "Losers with Pretty Wives."

Baron Delacroix Carp, "The Blowfish"

Medium human, neutral evil

An aggressively average, puffed-up landowner.

Armor Class 16 (+2 studded leather)
Hit Points 83 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +7
Skills Athletics +9, Perception +5, Persuasion +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Undercommon
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Heavy Hitter. The Blowfish automatically adds an extra damage die to any melee attack (included in the damage)
Puffed Chest (1/Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, The Blowfish can utter an inspiring bit of bloviation to command or warn. Whenever any allies he can see within 30 ft. make an attack roll or a saving throw, 1d4 is added to its roll provided they can hear and see him. Any enemy that can see and hear The Blowfish must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw, or is Frightened of The Blowfish for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, ending the condition on a success.

Actions
Multiattack. The Blowfish makes three melee attacks or two ranged attacks.
Club. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.
Hand Crossbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Darius

Medium boarhound, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Understands Common but can't speak it
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. Darius has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Actions
Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.
Pounce (Recharge 4-6). Darius leaps on top of one target within 10 ft. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, Darius can make a Bite attack.

"That's rich."

MAJA GLENAMARE

"Bless you. Bless me. Bless we."

A young half-elven woman dressed in a light green robe, beneath which is a loose-fitting chain shirt, with a heavy mace hanging from her belt.

For the Insightful

Though she is friendly and proficient at her duties, Maja seems somewhat unaccustomed to her role, sometimes hesitant and at other times overly mannered.

MAJA GLENMARE was raised in this village, the home of her mother, the only parent she's ever known. Trained as a youngster to become a priestess at the local temple, Maja was making good progress in her studies of magical and martial disciplines but then her mentor, Onda Burknash—keeper of the temple and legendary destroyer of the Corruptor—died in her sleep. The townsfolk looked to Maja to deliver them the words of grace they were used to in order to keep the Corruptor at bay, but Maja feels rudderless without her mentor's guidance, and she took up the job out of guilt as much as devotion. First order of business: Find some armor that fits. Second order of business: Ensure the Corruptor doesn't return.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Maja wants to see more of the world but knows if she leaves the town the Corruptor may return. She knows enough to know this would be bad.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The Corruptor, an ancient dybbuk, will undoubtedly make its way back to this town, whether Maja is ready for it or not.

◆ **Carrying** 29sp, 10gp; a healer's kit; chain shirt, shield and mace; a *sanctuary* spell scroll.

Maja Glenamare

Medium half-elf, neutral good

A charismatic young woman who's wise enough to recognize her life is bigger than a simple village and that she's likely not the right person to be running a temple. At least not yet.

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt, shield)
Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)

Proficiencies: History +2, Insight +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Celestial, Common, Elvish, Gnomish, Halfling
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Preserve Life (1/Short or Long Rest). As an action, Maja can restore up to 10 hit points divided among any creatures within 30 ft., up to half the creature's maximum hit points.
Turn Undead (1/Short or Long Rest). As an action, when Maja presents her holy symbol and prays, each undead that can see or hear her must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 12). If the creature fails, it is turned for one minute.

Spellcasting. Maja is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *bless, cure wounds, guiding bolt*
2nd level (2 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

Actions
Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

"AMBASSADOR" SHAY WINTERBORNE

"So pleased to meet you...[squints] who are you?"

A lovely elven woman with pale, translucent blue skin and long black hair, dressed in a tightly fitted gown of blue silk, adorned with amber highlights.

For the Insightful

Though Winterborne appears completely poised and calm, the occasional tic or fidget cracks the veneer of composure.

SHAY WINTERBORNE arrived in town not long ago, introducing herself as the ambassador of a distant and reclusive high elf civilization. She purports to be here for the purpose of exchanging ideas with the outside world and conveying news back to her people. The townsfolk, for their part, were entranced by her high bearing and apparent wealth and power, and installed Shay in their finest residence. They feel quite proud to have such an important person weighing in on matters of worldly importance with the mayor and town council, and have never really questioned why a highborn elf might want to seek "news and notes" on the individuals who live here rather than, say, in a much bigger city where interesting things actually occur.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Shay was able to trade her gems (see Secret or Obstacle below) for enough gold to buy food and clothes in the town for some time. However, her money is running out and soon she'll have to find real work to keep herself afloat. Shay also suffers from significant post-traumatic stress. If she is threatened with violence or attacked, roll 1d6:

1-2: Shay will suffer a severe anxiety attack, collapsing on the ground for 1d6 x 10 minutes.
3-5: Shay will attempt to run away and hide until the danger has passed.
6: Shay will defend herself with spells as best she can.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Shay is not an ambassador but rather an exile. A modestly talented sorcerer, she demanded more from her arcane studies professor—Tendril Whitherwear—in the hopes of acquiring power more quickly. This act resulted in the accidental death of Tendril, who was beloved by many in the realm. Shay was labeled a deceiver and a murderer, and she fled with the best of her possessions in an effort to avoid elven judgement. Her money, and likely time away from the elven high council, are running out.

◆ **Carrying** 12sp, 7gp; a small bag for components, a dagger in a sheath tied around her right calf beneath the billows of her silk dress; an unfinished letter to the elven council.

"Ambassador" Shay Winterborne,

Medium high elf, neutral good
This lovely yet terribly troubled sorceress has convinced the town she's someone she's not. Exposure of that secret may lead her to another form of ruin.

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 21 (5d6 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +4, Cha +7
Skills Arcana +7, Perception +3, Persuasion +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 13
Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Elvish
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Wilder Magic Surge. When Shay uses a spell of 1st level or higher, she must roll on 1d20. If the result is 5 or lower, a wild magic surge occurs, at GM discretion.
Meta Magic *(Recharge 4-6).* Shay can use this ability to modify a spell in one of the following ways:
Heightened Spell. When Shay casts a spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw to resist its effects, she can give one target of the spell disadvantage on its first saving throw made against the spell.
Quickened Spell. Shay may use a bonus action to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action.

Spellcasting. Shay Winterborne is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Sorcerer spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, friends, mage hand, prestidigitation, thunderwave*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, suggestion*
3rd level (2 slots): *fireball*

Actions
Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Lawkeepers & Lawbreakers

Though they may be big fish in a small pond, those who live their lives defending or subverting the law in smaller towns tend to have personalities as large as their urban counterparts'.

Gertrude Biggums *"Can't get that for a silver."*

A small-for-a-halfling halfling in a child's leather armor, with wide blue eyes and puckish features, as well as a voice you could hear before you laid eyes on her.

For the Devout

There's a faint hint of undeath around this woman.

A WEE halfling and Captain of the Guard, Gertrude Biggums doesn't need to do much in order to get her way—a pact she made with a celestial in another life has seen to that. Thankfully, her "way" seems to be aligned with the direct needs of the townsfolk. Gertrude possesses the ability to cast *charm person* at 6th level five times per long rest, a skill she's been utilizing to her advantage since she drowned. Well, "drowned" is a scary word. She fell off a boat and into the depths and couldn't breathe for 30 minutes. And that's where she found Illohura. But enough about that. What about you? What brings you here?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Gertrude wants to make a positive impact on this town and knows her time is short. She can convince a whole room to do what she suggests, but her charms have been unhelpful against the **oni** that's rumored to be wandering the nearby forest.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Though she doesn't like to talk about it, Gertrude's pact with the celestial Illohura will fade over the course of the next few seasons. Once the leaves change again, she'll die a second time.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp, 9sp, 150gp; a short list of available bounties; a tiny carved wooden celestial figurine.

Seamus "Cutty" McGillicutty *"I'd have to kick that downstairs."*

A dwarven man with a rich black beard and slicked back shoulder-length hair, wearing a comfortable-looking set of velvet pajamas, with buttons made from fine-cut gems that look like hammers, or maybe upside down skulls—or both.

For the Roguish or Dwarvish

The stonework buttons on this dwarf's attire are the unofficial sigil of the Thudd Clan, a notorious group of dwarven criminals.

THE THUDD Clan operates far beneath the surface of their keep within the Garrenglen mine but, like any major criminal enterprise, they have eyes everywhere. Seamus "Cutty" McGillicutty is one such set of eyes (and ears, and sometimes fists), and he takes his work very seriously. Though he acts on a daily basis with a fair amount of autonomy to set up protection services or call in favors from the locals in this region, he won't act on larger opportunities without the OK from those at the top of his organization (and in this case, those at the top dwell at the bottom). He is known to be protected, and therefore acts with a bit of impunity in these parts, lest any who cross him face the full, ruthless might of the Thudd Clan's "Night Shift" of moonlight assassins.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Cutty knows there are a few shops in town who are behind on their protection payments. He also knows that sometimes restraint is more intimidating than a show of force.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** There are some within the Thudd Clan who feel Cutty has gone soft, and are working within the organization to send him a message.

◆ **Carrying** 38sp, 41gp; a box of tiny cakes; a rock in a sock; a **sending** stone.

VALDIN HAMMING *"Yes, Ma'am (Sir)."*

A tall, well-built lad with long, dirty blond locks framing the distant look on his face and the prominent mole above his upper lip. He wears simple, drab clothing typical of a farming family, as well as a crest representing his ties to local law enforcement.

For the Perceptive

This handsome man seems embarrassed by the attention that comes from being one of the most desirable bachelors in town—and also appears to have some scratch marks under his collar.

NEED YOUR bags carried into the Inn? "Hey Valdin!" Your cart loaded? "Valdin, over here!" Local shopkeep passed out at the bar again? "Valdin, carry Sam home!" Anyone who needs a strong back for a job knows to call Valdin Hamming, and he's resigned himself to being summoned. He will not argue or refuse anyone's request for help, but gets a little awkward when his efforts lead to stares, flirting or both. Employed by the local constabulary, Valdin primarily acts as nothing more than muscle-on-call. He is often charged with guarding the small jail cell inside the constabulary's office, but is just as likely be called upon to break up petty squabbles or chaperone wealthy merchants traveling from this town to the next. His intimidating size does most of the work when it comes to keeping people in line, as he lacks any formal training as a fighter. Lately Valdin's mind has been wandering, and he hears a voice in his head telling him to eschew all his duties and pursue life to the fullest: "Drink some ale, Valdin—indulge yourself, Valdin. Take a warm bath in the blood of your fellow townsfolk, Valdin. You deserve a break."

◆ **Wants & Needs** Valdin would very much like to move into a house of his own, but for now he's still resigned to his mother's basement—a fact she doesn't let him forget. At GM discretion, he may also begin pursuing some of the darker requests of the charming voice in his mind.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Valdin keeps dreaming of a woman he's never met, her voice like an angel's, her lips red as fresh cherries, her kiss as tender as it is exhausting, her dark wings spread wide like a demon's, enveloping them both.

◆ **Carrying** 9cp; an old hunting knife with a bone handle; a heavy, rune-colored stone he can't recall picking up.

NICKY SACKHAMMER *"What's up, Buttercup?"*

A slight gnome entering her second century, with a surprisingly large belly that can be seen in the gap where her shirt is missing a button, wearing mismatched leather boots and a dark blue cap from under which her spikey, straw-colored hair juts out at comical angles.

For the Perceptive

You're not certain why, but it seems like only one of Nicky's boots makes a sound when making contact with the ground/floor. And the other, seemingly silent boot, looks exquisitely crafted.

A CHARMING gnome with a great love of life and an immense aversion to performing an honest days' work, Nicky is motivated by one thing: What's good for Nicky? Though she's not a pickpocket, second-story gal or trained thief of any stripe, she is very much a scavenger, picking up what she can whenever an opportunity presents itself. Someone leave their children's wet clothes hanging on the line to dry? Nicky could use a new shirt. Is that a fresh-baked pie cooling in the window? Time for lunch! Nicky's open, easy smile belies a crafty intelligence working the angles on every opportunity that presents itself. Smart enough to know the risks associated with every scheme, she never pilfers anything valuable enough to cause a fuss. Except for maybe one of her boots, which she nicked from the hearth of an inn nearby a few days ago. Who's gonna miss one boot?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Nicky wants to take just a little more than she spends each day. It's basic economics!

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Her fancier-looking footwear is one half of a set of **boots of elvenkind**, and its proper owner is likely still looking for it. If she's in a real pickle, Nicky can lean on her most valued possession, a **hat of disguise**, to get her out of a jam.

◆ **Carrying** 7cp, 18sp, 9gp; a **hat of disguise**; a handful of toasted corn in a fabric bag, a large piece of spongy bread wrapped in wax paper; a single **boot of elvenkind**.

Cyndil Trueshot

A tall, striking woman with a smirking grin and long, ash blonde hair tucked under a large brimmed hat, which sits at a rakish angle, exposing an elven ear. Her leather armor is dyed in various places with accents of blue, red and yellow—which offer aesthetic, if not strategic value to her ensemble.

For the Martially-Trained

While Cyndil handles herself with fey grace and extreme confidence, she occasionally makes rookie mistakes in her mechanics while handling a bow.

Everyone talks about the glory of the elven race—their skill with a bow or blade the foundation of legend, their expertise in the arcane arts unsurpassed by any race. Few speak of the unremarkable elves, the ones who work the field or tend the shop or just sort of lounge around trancing their way through life. Though she loves her parents (June and Duncan Trueshot), they are this second sort of elf: resigned to a simple life, disinterested in adventure or derring do. Cyndil longs to be different, to be lauded as a hero like the elves she's long admired—especially her Great-Great Uncle Bartleby Trueshot, "The Bow Weaver," an archer so legendary it was said he could fire an arrow and strike a target that wouldn't arrive in view for an afternoon. She knows all there is to know about the heroes of her heritage, and when she's not reading about their exploits she's trying her best to live up to the Trueshot name in a way her parents clearly feel isn't necessary. She's gathered a small band of loyal and like-minded adventurers ("The Low Elves," as they jokingly call themselves), and they know they'll soon have a glowing reputation as protectors of the realm. Like her Great-Great Uncle Trueshot, Cyndil's plan is to pick her target and strike, even if she can't see where her shot will land. She'd much rather take aim than do nothing.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Cyndil wants to restore the Trueshot name, inspire others through her actions and live her life like the legendary elves of yore. She also wants to ensure her fledgling adventuring group, The Low Elves, earns a stellar reputation—something she knows can only be done through hard work and acts of bravery. Too bad there's not a shortcut. She wants people to love her and The Low Elves now, not in 500 years.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** To Cyndil's extreme frustration, she is not particularly spectacular with a bow. She isn't poor or unproficient, but with a name like Trueshot, expectations tend to be high. She'd do just about anything to gain an edge and live up to her full potential.

◆ **Carrying** 16cp, 11sp, 1gp; a fine elven long bow with matching quiver; a score of arrows she crafted herself; a tin case containing wrapping papers, ground up **Heroes' Wort** (pg. 147) and three already rolled cigarettes.

Cyndil Trueshot

Medium elf, chaotic neutral

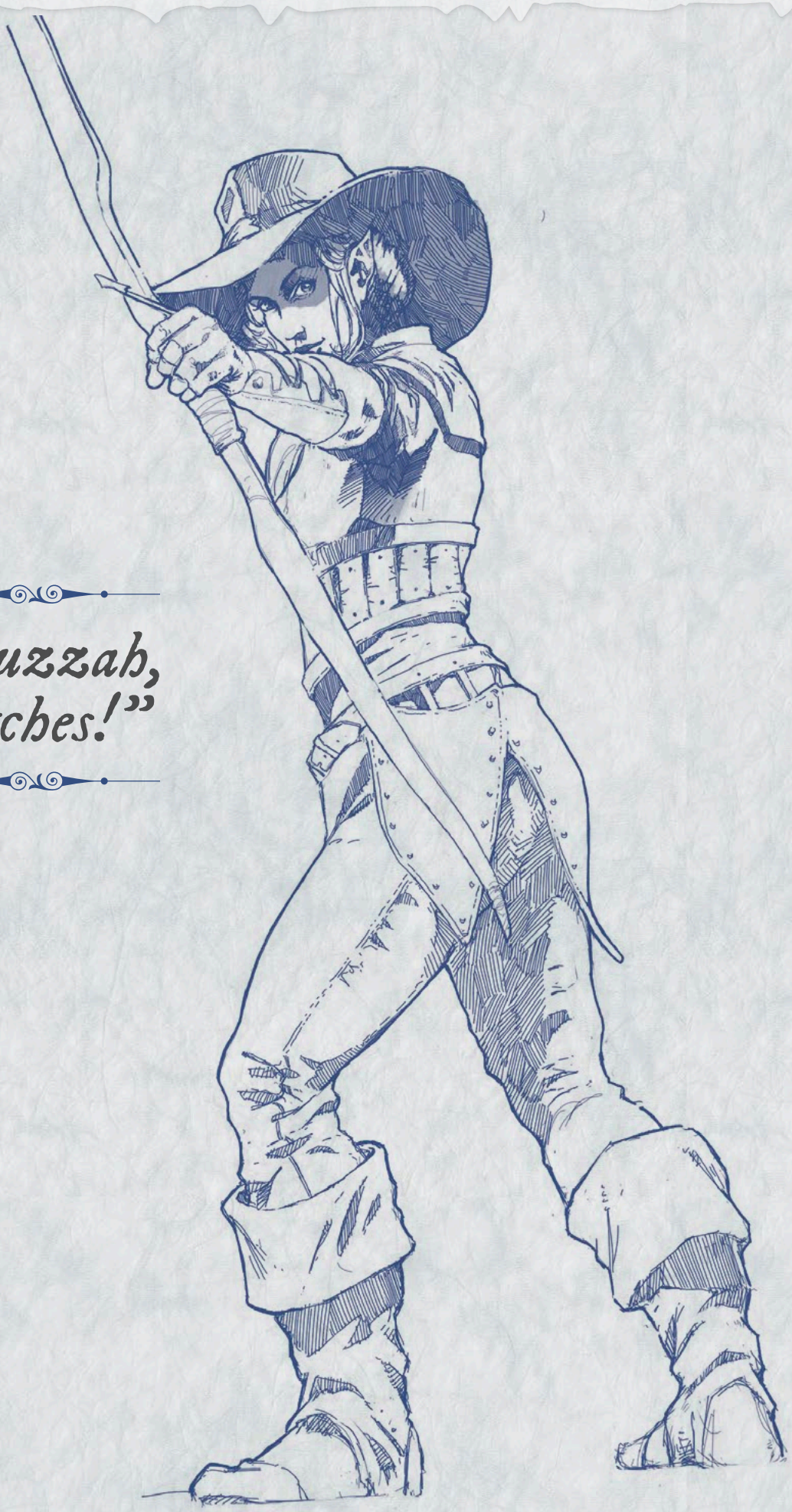
Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 43 (5d10 + 15)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Perception +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Trueshot's Foresight (3/Long Rest). As a bonus action, Cyndil can add 1d10 to her next attack or damage roll with a longbow.
Fey Ancestry. Cyndil has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Actions
Multiattack. Cyndil makes two attacks with her longbow.
Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.



"Huzzah, bitches!"

WALTER "THE WHIP" CANTERBURY, *with Chipper the falcon*

"That's not the way we do things 'round here."

A barrel-chested man with a smoke-stained beard chewing a lit cigar, in a dark leather duster-style coat that just barely trails the ground his feet seem to be trying to demolish with every step. At his hip is a large bullwhip and on his left hand is the heavy glove of a falconer.

For the Perceptive or Nature-minded

It appears that Walter and Chipper are bonded in a way that allows for direct, wordless communication.

WALTER CANTERBURY has lived in this town his entire life. Strong as an ox but with the temperament of a housecat, it wasn't until the region was overrun with bandits and rustlers that he started spending his spare time working his bull whip and getting eyes in the sky, via his trusty falcon Chipper. Though not an officially recognized member of the realm's defensive divisions, the one they call "The Whip" is a highly respected elder in the region, and very little happens in the surrounding area without him knowing. He has a habit of taking the law into his own, whip-cracking hands, and numerous suspected criminals in the area wear a telling talon scar from Chipper—marking them for questioning should they be bold enough to come into town.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Walt received a bit of intel following a recon sweep by Chipper and is certain a group of ne'er-do-wells are holed up in a cave system just over the ridge from town.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Walter has been known to send Chipper to bear on newcomers to town in an effort to keep outsiders from undermining his power in the region.

◆ **Carrying** 10cp, 18sp; an uncut cigar; a bit of flint; an overlong bullwhip; a small satchel with a bit of dirt and some grubs inside.

Walter "the Whip" Canterbury

Medium human, lawful good

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 38 (5d10 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +3, Perception +4, Stealth +5, Survival +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Falconer's Call. As a bonus action, Walter can command his falcon, Chipper, to make a flyby attack, or command Chipper to get into range for such an attack.

Actions
Multiattack. Walter makes two melee attacks with his bullwhip.
Bullwhip. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 10 ft. toward Walter.

Chipper the Falcon

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 3 (1d6 - 1)
Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +6
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Understands Common but cannot speak.
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Flyby. Chipper doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when he flies out of an enemy's reach.
Keen Sight. Chipper's proficiency bonus is doubled and he has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
Dashing Dive. Chipper uses an action to soar into the clouds. On his next turn per initiative, he dives from above, using his diving speed to deal an additional 7 (2d6) slashing damage on a successful attack that turn.

Actions
Talons. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage (with an additional 7 (2d6) slashing damage if using Dashing Dive).

KANE "THE GHOST" EK'AS *"I CAN'T STOP!"*

A tall, musclebound half-orc with extraordinarily pale skin, ice-blue eyes, a matted white beard and a long braid of dirty white hair running down his back. He wears tattered leather skins and wields a greataxe with an ebony blade and ivory haft, with a skull totem around his neck.

For the Perceptive

Kane's eyes carry a touch of madness and you get the sense that when he swings his weapon it's not always of his own volition.

A BARBARIAN from beyond the mountain range that cordons off this town, Kane Ek'as is a wanderer and a renegade. Tainted with a touch of berserker madness, his problems are exacerbated by the cursed greataxe he carries with him at all times—he cannot release his grip from its haft. He moves from town to town looking for work but the only sort for which he is suitable is the violent variety (he tried to make ends meet as a lumberjack but his heart wasn't in it), and because most towns don't have a list of creatures they need exterminated, Kane is often forced to beg for food. This inevitably leads to conflict, particularly when the axe that's fused to his hands swings wide on its own, leading to death, misery and another town in which he has to cover his tracks. His memorable appearance and unforgettable destruction have led to whispered rumors that he's a warrior spirit back for revenge. Dubbed "The Ghost" by locals prone to exaggeration in the interest of good storytelling, Kane is very much alive—but those who cross him likely won't be able to say the same for long.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Kane regrets the day he ever picked up this greataxe and has considered using it to lop off his own arms more than once. If someone could help him remove the curse that binds him to it, they'll have made a loyal companion for life.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The greataxe Kane carries is the ***Abyssal Cleaver***, an ancient artifact of unimaginable evil. Its sole purpose is to wreak destruction and havoc in the name of a malevolent demon lord. Any who seek to destroy it or remove its curse will find their path to be a treacherous one.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp; a vial of acid; a modified bedroll; the skull of a bearcub hanging from a leather thong about his neck; the ***Abyssal Cleaver***.

Kane "The Ghost" Ek'as

Medium half-orc, chaotic neutral
This dangerous half-orc literally can't help himself. His own propensity for violence, fueled and amplified by a cursed greataxe, makes him a dangerous opponent under any circumstances.

Armor Class 15 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 63 (6d12 + 24)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Orc
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Rage (3/Long Rest). Kane can enter a rage as a Bonus Action, gaining advantage on Strength checks and Strength Saving Throws, resistance to all damage types (except psychic), and +2 to attacks and damage rolls. This rage lasts for one minute, ending early if he is knocked unconscious or does not attack a creature or take damage on his turn. He can end this rage as a bonus action.
Reckless. At the start of his turn, Kane can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against him have advantage until the start of his next turn.

Actions
Abyssal Cleaver. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (2d12 + 6) slashing damage.
Abyssal Cleaver (Raging). Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 20 (2d12 + 8) slashing damage.

The Abyssal Cleaver

legendary artifact, +3 greataxe

This cursed blade imbues its wielder with a heightened bloodlust, turning them into a walking implement of destruction. It deals 2d12 slashing damage and on a hit the target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the Greataxe and its wielder for 1 minute.

Cursed: Once attuned to this demonic blade, the wielder cannot remove their hands from the great axe's haft, and must slake the blade with innocent blood at least once per day or suffer 39 (6d12) psychic damage.

Warden Theas Ignafera Sicarias

A towering blue dragonborn woman, wearing gleaming chainmail and an intricate helm with a no-nonsense visage that clearly brooks no foolishness. She walks with a military bearing, and carries a broad-bladed greatsword across her back and a thick quarterstaff shod at both ends with heavy iron in her right hand.

For the Perceptive

Warden Sicarias has a stalwart, sturdy presence, but she also very subtly favors her left leg, which suggests a limp she's trying to hide.

Warden Sicarias is a survivor of the great Hill Giant Incursion, which took place to the north two decades ago. During the attack, she was grievously wounded, nearly losing her left leg during the fight. Her clan was scattered and she fled, half-dead, on horseback. The steed, mad with fear, eventually made its way into the town where the locals, perhaps unexpectedly, nursed Sicarias back to health. After recovering, Sicarias named herself "Warden" and took up the people of the town as her new clan. Over the years, she became warden of the town in actual fact as well as in name and she will protect any of the townsfolk with her life. She is highly intelligent, battle-hardened and as ruthless as required to keep her charges safe. To reduce bloodshed, however, she will fight with her quarterstaff until she fully takes her opponent's measure and will switch to her greatsword if needed.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Warden Sicarias has always held out hope that some of her old clan survived. So far, however, her efforts to find them have failed and she fears she is, indeed, the only Sicarias left. Though she's committed to her new clan for life, she knows she'll always stand apart and therefore always be unbearably lonely.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Warden Sicarias's left leg is horribly mangled and causes her a great deal of unrelenting pain. Through pure willpower, she moves about without showing how much pain she's actually in. Her brother, Oden Sicaria, is still alive—and has been in captivity among the giants for 20 years.

◆ **Carrying** 16gp; +2 chain mail, shield and +2 greatsword; quarterstaff; a full waterskin; a small pouch of pickled wild onions; a **ring of free action**.

Theas Ignafera Sicarias

TOWN WARDEN

Medium dragonborn, lawful good

An imposing dragonborn paladin, dedicated to the town that adopted her as their own.

Armor Class 20 (+2 chain mail, shield)
Hit Points 96 (12d10 + 36)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +9
Skills Intimidation +8, Survival +5
Damage Resistances lightning
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Protection. Warden Sicarias can use her reaction to impose disadvantage on an attack roll against another creature within 5 ft. of her she can see provided she is wielding her shield.
Breath Weapon (1/Short or Long Rest). Warden Sicarias can use an action to exhale a 5 ft. by 30 ft. line of lightning, causing 11 (3d6) lightning damage (DC 15 Dex save for half damage) to all in the area.
Improved Divine Smite. Warden Sicarias adds 5 (1d8) radiant damage to any successful melee attack. Additionally, when she hits with a melee weapon attack, she can expend a spell slot to deal additional radiant damage to the target. The extra damage is 9 (2d8) for a 1st-level spell slot, plus 5 (1d8) for each spell level higher than 1st, to a maximum of 14 (3d8). The damage increases by 5 (1d8) if the target is undead or a fiend.
Holy Aura. Warden Sicarias is immune to disease, and cannot be charmed or frightened. She has a +4 bonus to any saving throw she makes, as do any creatures within 10 ft. of her (who are also immune to the frightened condition) unless she is unconscious or slain.

Spellcasting. She is a 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16). She has the following Paladin spells prepared:
1st level (4 slots): *bane, divine favor, protection from evil and good, sanctuary, shield of faith*
2nd level (3 slots): *aid, lesser restoration, hold person, silence*
3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, dispel magic, protection from energy*

Actions
Multiattack. Warden Sicarias makes two attacks with either her great quarterstaff or her greatsword.
Great Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage + 5 (1d8) radiant damage.
Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 5 ft. one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage + 5 (1d8) radiant damage.

"I'd reconsider that if I were you."

THE THREE CHUPACABRAS

Almost exclusively referring to themselves by their self-designated call signs, the members of the Three Chupacabras—Hyunh Le and her half-siblings Santiago and Valera—are the most intimidating teenagers in town. Or so they would have you believe.

"RAID LEADER" HYUNH LE *"Family always comes first."*

A scrappy halfling teenager in a loose-fitting wool top and knit pants, her long black hair tied loosely back, chewing on a piece of wheat, whose body language radiates "don't mess with me."

HYUNH LE, "Raid Leader" as she prefers to be called, is the brains of the Three Chupacabras. She plans their attacks, schemes and escapes. And boy, is she good.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Hyunh Le wants her family back together again. But with her mother off to war and a sickly father at home, it's fallen to her to make sure her brothers don't go hungry.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Hyunh Le is seriously considering turning to banditry herself and is planning a raid on a minor noble's carriage—due to arrive in town shortly.

◆ **Carrying** 10cp, 1sp; a small gold ring worth 12gp on a chain around her neck; surprisingly detailed plans for an attack on Ser Pinckney Doomblossom's carriage.

Hyunh Le (Raid Leader)

Small halfling, chaotic neutral
A scrappy teenager who just wants to keep her family alive, Hyunh Le will do whatever it takes.

Armor Class 14 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +2, Dex +5
Skills Acrobatics +5, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 1 (100 XP)

Actions
Multiattack. Hyunh Le makes two unarmed attacks with her fists.
Fists. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 15 ft.

"COYOTE 2.5" SANTIAGO LE *"Who's next?"*

A brutish half-goliath, half-halfling on the cusp of his 20th birthday, whose beady black eyes stare out from under a pair of the bushiest eyebrows in existence. He is carrying a makeshift wooden shield and club over his shoulder.

SANTIAGO LE, or "Coyote 2.5" as he is called by his siblings, is the brawn of the Three Chupacabras. And the muscle. And the might. And the guy who carries stuff. Never far from his sister's side, he would never let anyone lay a hand on her or his brother as long as he's still breathing. Which, as Hyunh's schemes become more and more dangerous, might not be for long.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Santiago Le needs to keep his siblings safe. And he'd love a sandwich.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Santiago is having second thoughts about following Hyunh Le's more elaborate and less law-abiding plans. But family always comes first.

◆ **Carrying** 7 cp; a crumpled letter from his mother mentioning a battle in the kingdom to the east; an egg sandwich for later.

Santiago Le (Coyote 2.5)

Medium half-halfing, half-goliath, chaotic neutral
The oldest of the Three Chupacabras, Santiago Le will make sure anyone who tries to harm his family knows that ears are hard to replace when they're bitten off and swallowed.

Armor Class 14 (chain shirt)
Hit Points 43 (5d10 + 15)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +5
Skills Acrobatics +3, Intimidation (Str) +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions
Multiattack. Santiago Le makes two attacks with his club.
Club. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit. Reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

"COYOTE 1.5" VALERA LE *heavy breathing*

A teenaged half-goliath, half-halfling, whose wide eyes and even wider, toothy smile carry more than a hint of madness. Shirtless and carrying a huge wood-axe slung casually over his shoulder.

VALERA LE or "Coyote 1.5" as he calls himself, seems content to let his siblings lead the way most of the time. But if you start a fight with them, may the gods help you when he joins the fray.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Hyunh Le and Santiago Le are always there for Valera, so he will always be there for them. The only thing that ever distracts him are butterflies. If his siblings were safe, he'd go watch butterflies all day.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Valera Le can only be calmed from his rage by one of his siblings.

◆ **Carrying** 1cp, 1sp; a whetstone; a butterfly net tucked in his back pocket.

Valera Le (Coyote 1.5)

Medium half-halfing, half-goliath, chaotic neutral
If you even lay a finger on Valera Le's siblings, you best be ready to face his axe.

Armor Class 14 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 38 (4d12 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +5
Skills Athletics +6, Sleight of Hand +3
Senses darkvision 60ft, passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Rage (3/Long Rest). Valera Le can use his bonus action to enter a rage. While raging, Valera Le has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. His melee weapon attacks gain a +2 bonus to the damage roll and he has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage. His rage lasts for 1 minute and ends early if his turn ends and he has not attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then.

Actions
Multiattack. Valera Le makes two attacks with his wood axe.
Wood Axe. Two-handed Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage.
Wood Axe (Rage). Two-handed Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (1d12 + 6) slashing damage.

SHERIFF JAIYESIMI MAVERICK *"This town ain't big enough for the both of us."*

A rugged and fit middle-aged half-elf with bluish skin in a red poncho and faded black trousers—each footfall punctuated by the sound of his spurs.

For the Perceptive

The Sheriff doesn't look like he wants trouble, but he sure could cause some if he did.

JAIYESIMI MAVERICK is a man of few words, preferring to stare down danger and let the tension that comes from imagined violence do the talking.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The Sheriff knows there are some things you can't walk away from—like blood oaths you swore to avenge your wife's death at the hands of Big T.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The Sheriff is currently taking a correspondence course in philosophy. It's confusing him.

◆ **Carrying** 4cp, 18sp, 42gp; a textbook titled *An Eye for an Eye Makes Us All Blind: Radical Thoughts on Grace.*

Sheriff Jaiyesimi Maverick

Medium half-elf, lawful good
A quiet man with a strong sense of justice and a steady hand capable of dispensing it.

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)
Hit Points 111 (13d10 + 39)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +7
Skills Acrobatics +9, Animal Handling +5, Tinker's Tools +9
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Elvish, Infernal
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Second Wind (1/Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, the Sheriff can regain 1d10 + 13 hit points.

Actions
Multiattack. The Sheriff makes four attacks with his pistol.
Six Shot Pistol (6 / Reload). Ranged Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 60/120 ft. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.
Reload. After shooting 6 times, the Sheriff must sacrifice 2 attacks to reload the Six Shot Pistol.

Argon Dak, aka Argon Meathurler, aka "Argon the Audacious"

A bolderous, nearly 30-foot-tall fire giant in heavy plate covered in the bound bodies of terrified townsfolk, his hair and beard ablaze, his eyes filled with the confidence of the ruthless.

For the Martially-Trained

Dealing damage to Argon without injuring the townsfolk he's armored himself with will take incredible precision.

A celebrated military tactician among giantkin, Argon Dak was cast out of his leadership role for pushing the limits of the rules of engagement, which is to say removing them altogether. He made a home among the **hill giants** in this part of the realm and has been actively training them in the art of waging war without scruples, ethics or fear of retribution, adopting the surname Meathurler as a moniker of menace as well as descriptor of his favorite form of violence. The hill giants have taken to his teachings with relish, and are steadily steamrolling their way through the region—kidnapping villagers for food and protection and leaving a path of devastation in their wake.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Argon desires to build a small empire to showcase to his fellow giantkin how limiting things like ethics or defining war crimes can be.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Though you'd never know it from looking at his unkempt armor and gore-splattered weaponry, Argon's weakness is vanity.

◆ **Carrying** 23sp, 80gp, 90pp; 850gp in uncut precious stones; a set of keys to the locks that bind his prisoners.

Argon Dak, aka Argon Meathurler, "Argon the Audacious"

Huge giant, chaotic evil
A dangerous monster bent on wanton wrath and destruction.

Armor Class 24 (meat shield and armor)
Hit Points 188 (15d12 + 90)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	9 (-1)	23 (+6)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +10, Cha +5
Skills Athletics +11, Perception +6
Damage Immunities fire
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Meat Shield and Armor. Argon has lashed and bound several live townsfolk to both his shield (1d4 + 2 commoners) and his heavy plate armor (3d4 + 4 commoners). The base AC for his armor is 19, but if the creature targeting Argon wishes to avoid hitting one of these innocent souls, his AC is 24. If a creature targets Argon and the attack roll is between 19 and 23, they deal the damage to the townsfolk instead.

Additionally, as an action on his turn, Argon can elect to "Hurl Meat," as a ranged weapon attack, violently throwing one of his bound captives at perceived threats (or, if he's feeling bored, a sturdy-looking wall). This act diminishes the protection offered by his protective wall of flesh by -1 AC per 2 bodies thrown, with a maximum penalty of -5 AC.

Actions
Multiattack. Argon makes two greatclub attacks.
Greatclub. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 28 (6d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage.
Hurl Meat. Ranged Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit*: 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage to both the target and the meat hurled.

Rathello "Rat" McDiggers *"Spare a little coin?"*

A slender teen boy, with thick, wavy brown hair whose freckled cheeks frame the wide, toothy smile on his face. He seems eager to please and incapable of standing still.

For the Perceptive

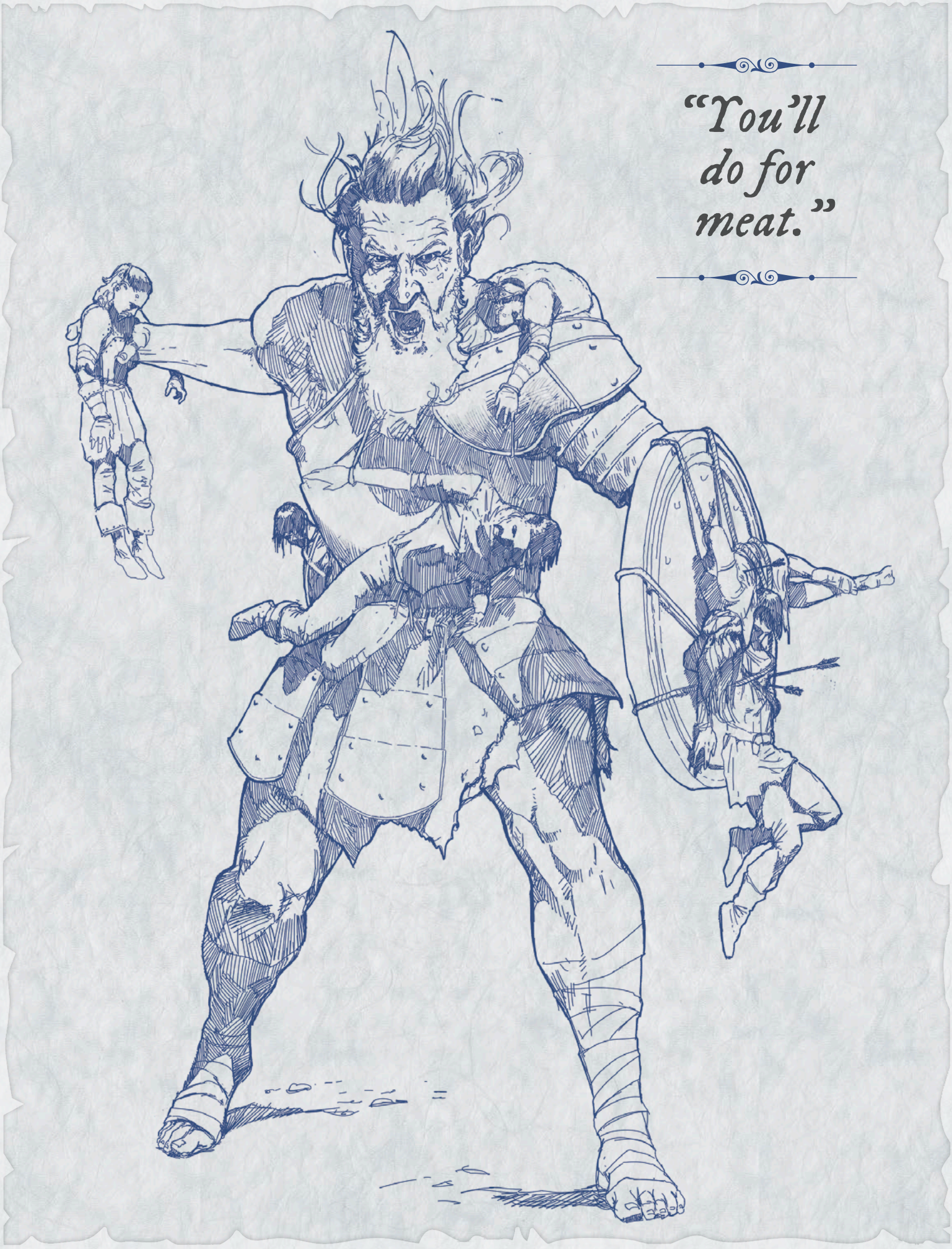
Rat seems incredibly interested in looking over all your more finely crafted items—and sizing up the heft of your coin purse.

THOUGH SOME of the old timer's would have you believe things were different when they were younger, there isn't much for a kid to do in this town, and many pass the time by getting into varying degrees of trouble. Young "Rat" is no exception, and while he is eager to please and help you with any and all tasks, he'd just as soon see if he's able to sneak off with your coin or daggers or both on a whim. It's not that he wants to steal—he just wants something to do.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Rat wants to prove he's not just "some kid," like the **bandits** camped near town say.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** In an effort to show he's more than just a pesky kid, Rat actually made a deal with those aforementioned bandits—find a way to lure unsuspecting out-of-towners to their den for a cut of the profit.

◆ **Carrying** 3 cp; a small pouch with dried berries; at GM discretion, one of the PC's personal items.


"You'll
do for
meat."

Oddballs & Outsiders

Not all those who dwell in or pass through smaller towns are able to assimilate into their more homogenous makeups, and in many cases, they wouldn't want to.

"Chicken Tom" (and Terry) Drakefeeder

"Terry's mad at me."

A gentle-faced, hunchbacked man of middling age, with ruddy brown hair and a turned up nose in a tunic that appears to have been fashioned from a large burlap sack.

For the Perceptive

Every now and then you hear a gurgled whisper emanating from the hump on Chicken Tom's back.

THERE ARE half-elves and half-orcs and even half-halflings all over the realm, but very few half-hobgoblins. In Tom Drakefeeder's case, his parents' coupling didn't create a hybrid but instead a set of fraternal twins, one human, the other goblinoid. Tom is not particularly cognizant of the rarity of his bloodline—he only knows he's bigger than his twin brother Terry, a hobgoblin who exists in a nascent state just beneath the surface of his back (well, all but the face), their spines fused together. "Chicken Tom," as the locals call him, is considered a harmless, if hapless, resident of the town. While he and his brother share very little in common, Tom does the best he can to keep Terry happy.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Chicken Tom would love for his brother to have his own set of legs, as Terry seems bent on proving his hobgoblin bona fides by exploring areas Tom views as unnecessarily dangerous—like the sunken temple ruin a few miles south.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Terry is physically aging much more slowly than Chicken Tom, but feels as if he might sprout a working arm any day now—a fact he has thus far kept to himself. It won't be long before he can control the spine (and spinal cord) he and Tom share.

◆ **Carrying** 3cp, 9sp; a particularly advanced back scratcher; a map detailing the location of a nearby temple ruin.

Carolina Pollydart

"I would if I could."

A frail-looking, hairless child in a faded blue linen sari, with green eyes that see everything and a smile that's contagious, carrying a well-loved fox plushie under her arm.

For the Academic

As your eyes examine this child you can't help but note the similarities between her circumstances and those of "The Seed of Progress," a prophesied arrival that faded into folklore generations ago.

CAROLINA ARRIVED as an infant hidden within a burned supply cart, the drivers burnt to cinders but still holding charred reigns, the oxen dragging their charge along the trade route to the first village they came to. Ten years have passed since, and though Carolina's body is weak, her mind is sharper than any in town. She's read every book in the area archive and absorbed the skillsets of a varied set of artisans around the region and is evermore curious about what she might learn beyond its borders. Her legs aren't strong enough to carry her on their own. She's so bored, however, that she's starting to think she might just crawl.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Carolina has learned of dozens of sites for exploration beyond the borders of her village, some of which are home to artifacts and items of great value. Thoughts of collecting them all and using them to better her village and then the realm are all that fill her head at night. That and the occasional flash of her mother, whom she's sketched on several pieces of parchment over the past year.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** If this child is truly the Seed of Progress, the power structure in the realm will dissolve by her hand. Those at the top will stop at nothing to snuff out that possibility, no matter how remote.

◆ **Carrying** 3cp; a sketch of her mother drawn from a dreamy vision; a series of notes on where to find items of great value; Cadabra, her fox plushie.

ADELAIDE ARABESQUE "Yippee!"

A red-hued geniekin girl, with hair like flame and who buzzes with energy, nervously keeping her hands in her dress pockets.

For the Insightful

It seems like an overabundance of excitement isn't the only thing Adelaide is trying to contain.

JACKWELL AND Morgatta Arabesque wanted a child. They pleaded, begged and finally wished for one. Their desires made their way to the ears of a benevolent genie, who offered to grant their request. A few seasons later, little Adelaide came screaming into the world, and she's barely shut up since. A natural talent, Adelaide's arcane spark has been fueled by her insatiable curiosity and an alacrity that borders on the masochistic. Her parents are hopeful that by allowing her to leave town—under the supervision of a paid charge—she'll choose to come back once she's...honed her gifts, which will hopefully give them time to repair the damage to their house.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Adelaide's parents are willing to pay 300gp to an adventurer or adventurers willing to personally give her a wider view of the world.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Adelaide's parents have not divulged that Adelaide occasionally talks in her sleep—and her favorite thing to say is: "I cast *fireball*."

◆ **Carrying** 31sp; a tiny bedroll; a knit cap; a spell focus crafted out of a piece of pumice; 4 cucumber sandwiches.

Adelaide Arabesque

Medium geniekin, chaotic good

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, History +7
Damage Resistances Fire
Senses darkvision (60 ft.), passive Perception 11
Languages Abyssal, Common, Primordial, Terran
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Firebug. Adelaide's spells that cause fire damage always deal the maximum amount possible.

Spellcasting. Adelaide is a 5th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She can cast *burning hands* once per long rest without a need for components or expending a spell slot. She has the following Wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, produce flame*
1st level (4 slots): *find familiar, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *burning hands, flame blade, flaming sphere*
3rd level (2 slots): *fireball, hypnotic pattern*

Actions

Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20-60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

HALODRETH EMBERWHITE "I might have that somewhere."

A middle-aged man with greying brown hair and a well-oiled beard with well-worn laugh lines around his eyes and a bit of a pot belly his loose-hanging clothes don't conceal.

For the Perceptive

Though his hair is graying in places it looks as if the gray streaks are painted in, perhaps as a ploy to seem wiser?

HALODRETH "retired" from the adventuring life to run a very clean and tidy arcane supply shop. That was the plan, anyway. Magical components have a way of requiring more magical components and his shop is now overrun with plant pieces and animal parts in various jars and vials and in many cases baskets piled high with all they can hold. He thought running this shop would make his life a bit easier, but things got particularly complicated particularly fast, and the only way to recover his investment is to sell through his supply.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Halodreth could use an inventory expert, or perhaps someone who can help him determine how many items in his shop "spark joy," or something—it's possible a lot of his wares are useless junk. He just fears throwing anything away. After all, you never know when you're going to need a pickled crow's cloaca, amiright?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Halodreth, has unknowingly acquired a pile of sentient books, and they've been silently plotting a takeover.

◆ **Carrying** 14cp, 4sp, 55gp; a hand carved wooden pipe with silver inlays; a *plane shift* spell scroll (for security).

Cisha Impilo

A barefoot girl, around 8 or 9 years old, with dark skin, a missing front tooth in her innocent smile and hair tied up in floofy pigtails atop her head. Dressed in a black dress with a scrappy red scarf tied around her neck, she is trailed by a skeletal cat.

For the Devout

Cisha has a strong aura of necromancy surrounding her. Most of it might be attributed to the skeletal cat following her every move, but she also seems to have the touch of undeath at her fingertips.

Cisha Impilo, the reverend's daughter, has always been an outcast. Rumors among the villagers say she's cursed at best and a servant of evil at worst. But Cisha mostly just wants what every young child does: friends to play with. Unfortunately, the first friends she ever made were skeletons from the local graveyard beyond the annex of the church. Shunned by the village and her own father, Cisha spends her days playing with her loyal pet, Cat—a skeletal feline who refuses to believe it had just nine lives—and any other friends she can make, alive or dead.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Cisha always wants to make a new friend. And while the dried corpses of Mr. Smithwright, Ms. Callowell and Young Fredrick are fun to have as playmates, they are terrible at hopscotch and none of them can talk to her.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The people in town are decidedly anti-zombie, and want to destroy Cisha's circle of "friends," despite her pleas to the contrary.

◆ **Carrying** 3cp; a tattered notebook of sketches of her "friends" (most of them skeletons), which serves as her spellbook; a dried lilac flower; an almost complete bird skeleton.

Cisha Impilo

Small human, chaotic good
A small girl who just wants to make some friends to play with. Flesh, blood and life are optional.

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 25 (7d6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +6
Skills Arcana +6, Religion +6, Medicine +6
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Spellcasting. Cisha is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Cisha has the following Wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, mage hand*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, find familiar, hideous laughter*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, gentle repose, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, feign death, remove curse*
4th level (1 slots): *charm monster, summon greater demon*

Actions
Cat Attack. Cisha can command Cat to attack her enemies. If Cisha is under threat or incapacitated, Cat will attack without her direction.

Cat

Tiny undead, unaligned
As the bards often say, some cats just...come back.

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 18 (4d4 + 8)
Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Damage Immunities poison, necrotic
Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages –
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces Cat to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5+ the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, Cat drops to 1 hit point instead.
More than Nine Lives. If Cat dies, it will put its scattered bones back together again and reanimate itself after 12 hours. Cat will only permanently die if its bones are destroyed.

Actions
Multiattack. Cat makes two attacks with its claws.
Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage. On a hit, the creature must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. A creature's hit point maximum is reduced by this damage until they finish a long rest. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, that creature dies.

"Will you be my friend?"

Camembert "Bear" the Owlbear *Squark!*

An outsized purplish owlbear with massive paws and an inquisitive face just itching for a head scratch, wearing a bright yellow leather collar around her neck.

For the Perceptive

On Bear's collar is a small piece of tin engraved with "Bear" on one side and an address for a house in town on the other.

For the Arcane

Bear radiates with a powerful aura of transmutation magic.

A DE FACTO town mascot, Camembert the Owlbear (or "Bear" to those who love her, which is pretty much everyone) wanders these parts seeking treats and pats. She would put herself in harm's way for anyone in trouble, using her squawk-bark and inexplicable magical abilities to keep everyone safe.

◆ **Wants & Needs** In order of preference: 1. Treats, 2. Ear scritches, 3. Pats.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Bear's mother, Daisy Northman, once broke contract with a witch, an action for which she did not believe there would be any consequence. But two years later, she gave birth to an owlbear cub. Bear is none the wiser, but her mother would do anything to reverse what she sees as a witch's curse.

◆ **Carrying** A deep love and affection for any creature that shows her kindness.

Camembert "Bear" the Owlbear

Medium beast, chaotic good
The most precious girl, the best owlbear in the world, Bear will protect and help those in need—particularly if there's a chance she'll get a belly rub.

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages understands Common but cannot speak it
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. Bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Innate Spellcasting. Bear's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells.
At will: *friends*
3/Long Rest each: *charm person, heroism*

Actions
Multiattack. Bear makes two attacks: one with her beak and one with her claws.
Beak. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 11 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.
Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Ravin DeBlanc *"I've said my peace."*

A squat, slightly hunched-over gnomish woman with a face covered in scratches or wrinkles (possibly both) who moves with a wobbly gait, though faster than expected given her age and stature.

For the Insightful

Though she seems to seethe with hatred for all who dwell here, it's clear Ravin truly loves this town.

NEARLY FOUR centuries ago, when the river that flows through this valley was as wide as a lake, seven families poured their sweat and souls into establishing a village here. Part of their efforts involved ensuring the river wouldn't overtake the town. Their solution was the "Hold Fast," a stone imbued with the power of the *control water* spell. This rock's existence has largely been lost to time, but Ravin DeBlanc's grandmother helped place it, helped form this town from nothing, and Ravin would rather drown than let those who think they're better than the town itself take it farther away from its founders' intentions. What some view as progress she sees as corruption, and her outbursts have made her a pariah in her hometown.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ravin is desperate to no longer feel like a stranger where she grew up, and for those who dwell here to have more respect for their forebears.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ravin knows the location of the Hold Fast, knows how to reverse its power, and knows no other way to wash away the filth currently masquerading as citizens of the town she loves.

◆ **Carrying** 1cp, 4sp, 9gp; an original copy of the town charter; more than her fair share of grudges.

MORGAN "PICKLE" PICKELNY

"Would that I could."

A shambling figure whose porcelain mask obscures his face, though not the smell of vinegar that seems to hang in a cloud around him, wearing a priest's cossak and carrying a staff.

For the Devout

The stench of undeath is undeniable when you enter this creature's space—but there is also a palpable sense of penitence in the air. And vinegar. Lots of vinegar.

DESPERATE PEOPLE often turn to the gods for guidance or forgiveness, but when their prayers appear to go unanswered it's not uncommon for those truly at the end of their rope to shop around. Such was the case for Morgan Pickelny, a dedicated priest whose wife endured a degenerative bone disease Morgan knew would claim her life. He prayed unceasingly for more than a year for her safekeeping, but as her condition worsened, he drew up an agreement with a lesser being—a **planetar** who agreed to give Morgan a fair amount of power in exchange for service. Morgan's wife did not survive the night and in a blind rage Morgan furiously took his own life. But a pact is more than a promise and the following morning Morgan Pickelny arose—dead, but very much alive—with a newfound understanding of his calling: to snuff out the undead and end their suffering. Himself an animated corpse, "Pickle" as he's come to be known within the region, spends most of his days politely patrolling local crypts and caverns for **ghouls** and **ghosts** and sinister **specters**, and most of his evenings soaking in vinegar in hopes of preserving the flesh he has left.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Pickle could use some assistance clearing out a nearby ruin, which he recently discovered is crawling with lesser (well, mostly lesser) undead.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The terms of Pickle's pact with his patron are unclear, but it's possible that if he hits a certain quota destroying undead, he'll be absolved of his agreement—an event that would leave any relying on him for backup in a bit of a...tight spot.

◆ **Carrying** 14cp, 9gp; a holy symbol from another life; 8 vials of vinegar.

Morgan "Pickle" Pickelny

Deathlock of Life

Medium undead, lawful good

A former priest now turned hunter of the undead (despite being one himself), Pickle is a warlock with a bleeding heart, if not a living soul.

Armor Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 110 (20d8 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Int +6, Cha +8
Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Perception +5
Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft. (including magical darkness), passive Perception 15
Languages Celestial, Common
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Healing Light. Pickle has a pool of 15d6 per long rest. Pickle can target a creature he can see within 60 ft., healing them up to 5d6 per use as a bonus action.
Radiant Soul (1/Turn). Whenever Pickle deals radiant or fire damage, he adds 1d10 to one radiant or fire damage roll of that spell against one of its targets.
Celestial Resistance. Whenever Pickle finishes a short or long rest he gains 19 temporary hit points. Additionally, he can choose up to five creatures he can see at the end of the rest to gain 12 temporary hit points.
Piss and Vinegar (1/Long Rest). Whenever Pickle makes a death saving throw at the start of his turn, he can instead regain 55 hit points and then stand up if he chooses. Each creature of his choice that is within 30 ft. of him takes radiant 2d8 radiant damage and is blinded until the end of the current turn.

Spellcasting. Pickle is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). He regains his expended spell slots when he finishes a short or long rest. He knows the following Warlock spells:

At will: *chill touch, detect magic, disguise self, light, mage armor, mage hand, minor illusion, poison spray, sacred flame*
1st-5th level (2 5th-level slots): *counterspell, cure wounds, darkness, dimension door, dispel magic, guiding bolt, fly, hold monster, invisibility, wall of fire*

Actions
Holy Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage and 7 (2d6) radiant damage.
Divine Bolt. Ranged Spell Attack: +8 to hit, range 120 ft., 10 sq. *Hit*: 23 (4d8 + 4) radiant damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or become restrained as spectral tendrils wrap around it for 1 minute. A restrained target can use its action to repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Captain Osirus Telluride Armbender-Darwilly IV, Esq. aka "Cap-O"

The most well-dressed lizardfolk any of you have ever encountered, in a fully tailored grey three-piece suit, with a pith hat and monocle. A rolling steamer trunk is nearby and a large, fire-branded scimitar hangs at his side.

For the Scholarly

The name rings a bell, but you don't recognize the face.

For the Arcane

Nearly all the gear sported by Osirus Telluride Armbender-Darwilly IV, Esq. is humming with magical energy.

A social anthropologist and arcane archeologist, Captain Osirus Telluride Armbender-Darwilly IV, Esq. (or "Cap-O" if you're on his payroll) is both a student and teacher of the mysteries of antiquity. He has traveled every continent seeking rare (and yes, legendary) magical items, and is altogether adept at grave robbing, crypt sacking, tomb raiding, keep thieving, dungeon delving and any other form of adventurous adultery you can imagine. He pays handsomely for information leading to the location and procurement of magical artifacts and has even been known to offer items on loan as part of his advanced studies (although such agreements nearly always involve a phistophilus named Gordy whom he has on permanent retainer). He is currently working out of this town in pursuit of The Eye of the Sun, a powerful spell focus said to allow its wielder to channel the radiant power of a star with each spell they cast.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Cap-O is always on the lookout for wondrous items he's not yet had a chance to catalogue or examine up close and he knows pursuing The Eye of the Sun will take at least a few stalwart freelancers as its location is said to be guarded by a **young dragon trio**.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Cap-O wasn't always a lizardfolk, and though he's not ashamed to admit his new form is a result of his touching a cursed item without proper precautions, he's also vain enough on the inside to have made a deal with Gordy the phistophilus in exchange for his old body: if he finds The Eye of the Sun and hands it over to Gordy, he'll be back to his old self. Should he fail, his soul is Gordy's for the taking.

Captain Osirus Telluride Armbender-Darwilly IV, Esq. aka "Cap-O"

Medium lizardfolk, lawful evil
A dastardly, if gentlemanly pursuer of the realm's most exotic magical items, "Cap-O" is a formidable foe with friends in low places.

Armor Class 18 (+2 breastplate)
Hit Points 162 (17d10 + 68)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +9
Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +7, Perception +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Draconic, Infernal
Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Scoundrelous Strike (3/Short or Long Rest). When one of Cap-O's attacks hits a target, he can use a bonus action to attempt to trip or disarm a target (DC 17 Strength saving throw).
Devilish Advocate (1/Long Rest). If he's in a jam or simply wants to hammer out a new contract, Cap-O can summon his phistophilus, a **pit fiend** named Gordy who will lobby on Cap-O's behalf and protect his interests (at GM discretion).

Actions
Multiattack. Cap-O makes three melee weapon attacks or one weapon attack and one Big Bite.
Flame Tongue Scimitar of Warning. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft, one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d8 + 6) slashing damage and 7 (2d6) fire damage.
Big Bite. Cap-O's toothy maw is a natural weapon, which he can use to make unarmed strikes. Unarmed Melee Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage. On a hit, Cap-O gains temporary hit points equal to half the damage dealt and the bitten creature must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of Cap-O for 1 minute. The creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of its subsequent turns, ending the effect on a success.

◆ **Carrying** 43sp, 59gp, 12pp; +**2 Flame Tongue Scimitar of Warning**, **Amulet of Health, Norzul's Marvelous Pigments**, a *wish* spell scroll and 3d4 other wondrous items (at GM discretion).

"Talliest of Hos"

PREET SLYFOOT *"Sensational. Simply sensational."*

A young human man dressed in silks of pink, yellow and powder blue, gently strumming a lute. He wears a garish hat from which protrudes a length of peacock feather. His face is adorned with a carefully manicured Van Dyke and his nose has a small ring in the left nostril.

For the Insightful

It seems clear the only person enjoying this bard's performance is the bard himself.

For the Perceptive

There are two additional instruments strapped to the young man's back. A pan flute and a set of bagpipes. You shudder to think what would happen if he stopped playing the lute.

THE LOCAL bard college is widely celebrated for luring some of the most talented troubadours in the realm to this isolated village in order to further their skills and sharpen their songsorcery. It also, occasionally, admits students like Preet Slyfoot. Born with an entire set of silverware in his mouth, Preet had no interest in the bardic arts and was instead hoping his considerable wealth combined with the college's reputation would set him up for further success. But even those hoping to buy their degrees still have to earn their credits, and Preet's been charged with penning 100 songs that speak to the trials and tribulations of the common man as part of his graduating thesis. So far, the largest challenge facing the commoners here is listening to his music.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Preet needs to write 100 songs about regular people before the end of the term next month, a difficult task compounded by the fact that he's only written four (three of which are about himself). He has heard there's a large collection of unpublished works in the college's forbidden cellar archive—a cordoned off portion of the grounds playfully referred to as "The Dungeon of the Batshite Bard," and would gladly pay a willing troupe to take them on his behalf.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The bard whose songs Preet is hoping to lift still roams the college's cellar archive like a phantom, and takes great pleasure in scaring students foolhardy enough to wander into his domain.

◆ **Carrying** 39sp, 15gp; a +1 rapier; a pan flute, a lute, bagpipes; **bracers of defense**; an IOU for up to 600gp from the Slyfoot estate; a layout of the first three floors of the bard college basement; scrap sheets featuring titles for three songs in progress: "That Little Girl Who Stares at People," "The Cleric's Wife's Lover's Lovers," "The Butcher, The Baker, The Is This Something Probably Not."

Preet Slyfoot, bard

Medium human, chaotic neutral
A foolish, self-absorbed, insanely rich young man who is trying to buy his way through bard school.

Armor Class 16 (bracers of defense +2)
Hit Points 17 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +7, Performance +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan, Undercommon
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Motivating "Music." During a short rest, Preet performs one of his songs-in-progress. Any friendly creatures who can hear his performance and use one or more hit dice to heal gain an additional 1d6 hit points, in the hopes that they can more quickly finish whatever task Preet's hired them for so they can be rid of him.
Withering Shade (3/Short or Long Rest). As a reaction when a creature Preet can see within 30 ft. makes an attack roll, ability check or damage roll, Preet can expend one use of Withering Shade, rolling 1d6 and subtracting the number from the creature's roll. He must do this after the roll but before the score is announced.
Fiscal Inspiration (3/ Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action on his turn, Preet can inspire one creature within 60 ft. other than himself through the universal language of money earned. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6—as well as the promise of 10gp if they are successful in their next ability check, attack roll or saving throw. The creature can wait until after it rolls the D20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once the Bardic Inspiration die is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Bardic Inspiration die at a time. The gold bonus is only applicable to the action or saving throw that Preet asked them to perform (at GM discretion).

Spellcasting. Preet is a 3rd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Bard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *prestidigitation, vicious mockery*
1st Level (4 slots): *charm person, disguise self, healing word, unseen servant*
2nd Level (2 slots): *enthrall, suggestion*

Actions
Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage.

BENJAMIN "BEN" DABBLER *"Oh, no. What's wrong now?"*

A middle-aged halfling with shaggy brown curls bounding from under his tan floppy cap with grey, watery eyes peering out above a heavy brown beard. His clothing, all in various shades of brown, is worn and utilitarian but appears well cared for.

For the Perceptive

Care has been taken to clean his boots and clothing but hints of dirt and plant clippings can be seen clinging to his knees and the cuffs of his shirt.

For the Insightful

Ben appears to be one startling event away from passing out or running off. Perhaps a calming approach would prevent misunderstandings.

BEN HAS not cultivated much success over the course of his years. He first attempted to master the arcane arts but multiple apprenticeships ended in disaster as he lacks the manual dexterity to combine precise, complicated gestures with the manipulation of spell components. A longtime lover of plantlife, he then attempted to join a druidic society, but his relationship with flora didn't translate to the fauna and after a rogue racoon bit off one of his fingers he decided he'd had enough. So Ben came back to the farm, but he never gave up on his dream of making something of (and for) himself. He started combining what little he knew from both schools while humming a few of the tunes he picked up from that one semester at bard college to create half-baked magic plant hybrids in his spare time, stumbling upon a few useful and now proprietary products he's certain will one day make him a fortune. He's nearly out of start-up capital, and so his little adventurer supply shop—the Bargain Ben—is in danger of shutting its doors for good. He's still hopeful one of his creations will prove useful enough for him to start planting coin seeds to grow some money trees.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ben is always looking for willing adventurers to test some of his creations, and will also pay for intact seedlings or potted plants from other parts of the realm.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ben is a very skittish creature. His nervousness makes it difficult for him to be steadfast when the situation calls for it, and as a result, his business has suffered quite a great deal. He also isn't aware that most of his creations have positive (and sometimes negative) side effects when applied to a creature in a way other than the one he's prescribed.

Ben Dabbler

Small halfling, chaotic good
A sleight, skittish halfling striving to make the world a little better (and his pockets a little heavier), one plant splicing at a time.

Armor Class 11 (14 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 20 (4d6 + 4)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Insight +10, Stealth +10
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Lucky. If Ben rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, he can reroll the die. He must, however, accept whatever the new roll is.
Halfling Nimbleness. Ben is small. If he needs to flee, he can move through the space of any creature that is at least one size larger than him.
Naturally Stealthy. Ben can try to hide if he's obscured by a creature at least one size larger than him.

Spellcasting. Ben is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Druid and Wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, mage hand, message, thorn whip*
1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat, faerie fire, goodberry, mage armor, magic missile, shield, spike growth, unseen servant*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, mirror image*

◆ **Carrying** 2cp, 4sp, 19gp; a tri-pocket pouch of soil samples; 6 rolled up leaves of ***Heroes' Wort***.

Heroes' Wort

wondrous item, rare

This plant, a hybrid spliced together and then embued with arcane energy through the transitive properties of Ben Dabbler's absent-minded bardic humming, is more than it appears. Incredibly filling when consumed as part of a light salad or as feed for cattle, it reduces the need for food, sating even the most voracious appetites for 12 hours. When smoked, however, the plant's botanical underpinnings are activated in a different way, granting any who inhale the vapors released by igniting it a more established sense of self. This alteration is mental and physical, manifesting in a +3 to proficiency until the start of one's next turn. Inhaling Heroes' Wort as part of a rolled cigarette or pipe requires a bonus action.

Random NPC Generator

The wider realm could contain billions of characters—this list is a start. Roll 1d20 on any of the following three tables, or roll 6d20 (one for each column) for a less predictable persona. Combine columns from all three tables for more chaos.

	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Blossom	Silversheen	…with a colorful dress, bright eyes and a ragged scar along the temple…	…who desires a warrior to help reclaim their farmland…	…and wants vengeance on the child who betrayed them.	13cp, 4sp; a small knife; a horn made of bone.
2	Zenthi	Aragnaed	…with dark skin and bright yellow eyes…	…who is the only representative of their race in the region...	…and has an evil twin.	7sp; a jar of honey; a few stale biscuits.
3	Silas	Winterberg	…with a waxed mustache and milky left eye…	…who wants an apprentice…	…and thinks they might be able to get away with murder one last time.	7sp, 9gp; an expired letter of marque; a spyglass.
4	Brin	Bundlewine	…with fair skin and pageboy haircut...	…who desperately wants to remember who they are…	…and who can't stop asking a member of the party if they've met.	6cp; a play they wrote and will definitely get produced one day.
5	Thessaly	Broadbelt	…with a stocky build and a permanent smirk…	…who never met a pie they didn't like (or want to steal a piece of)...	…and can dance better than anyone else in town.	4cp, 14sp; a wooden fork; a pound of smoked fish; a large piece of cardboard.
6	Lovejoy	Whiskermane	…with elaborate white facial hair and wrinkled skin…	…who needs to find a magic potion that they lost…	…and who is certain they can cure zombification.	9gp; a very loud hen named Eggy.
7	Evull	MacNeil	…with wild shaggy hair and a crazed look in their eyes…	…who wants to unite the area's clans…	…and has no social skills to speak of.	20cp, 4sp; a needle and thread; a bottle of good wine.
8	Chog	Roughwind	…with long, tangled hair and teeth filed to points…	…who wants to to learn how to read a map…	…and has a map that leads to a long-lost treasure.	21cp, 9sp, 2gp; a red cap with a fish embroidered on the side.
9	John	Kerosk	…with a leather vest and short, curly brown hair…	…who wants a ship and a star to sail her by…	…and is obsessed with hunting the shark who killed their father.	3gp, 2pp; a set of fish hooks; two spears; a bucket of chum; a written will.
10	Derabat	Kesab	…with a bald head and numerous gold earrings…	…who wants a sign that their god really exists…	…and doesn't seem to understand that life is precious.	A set of dominos; a small vial of poison; 4 strips of beef jerky.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Donall	Adair	…with a blue mohawk and a ring in their nose….	…who is in search of their missing family…	…and can't stop shouting expletives.	2sp, 9gp; a bottle of holy water; the skull of a pigeon.
12	Ricor	Thulane	…with a missing hand and an angry stare…	…who needs to exert their dominance over everyone they meet…	…and hide the fact that they are incontinent.	8cp; an extra pair of shoes; a deck of cards with 5 aces.
13	Celeshie	Elfain	…with curly golden hair and a skip in their step…	…who just wants the love of a good woman…	…but doesn't realize they're cursed to be alone.	24cp, 2sp; an ear horn; a necklace made of small bones.
14	Ezekial	Pylus	…with close-cropped gray hair and a humble demeanor…	…who is training to become a priest…	…and whose false teeth were recently animated by a local bard.	9cp, 10sp; an incomplete sketch of their deity; four meat pies.
15	Shard	Orcfriend	…with a fierce countenance and wild corona of hair…	…who seeks high adventure and bold companions…	…and has a hard time avoiding trouble.	6cp, 9sp; a knife carved from bone; 6 darts; a bottle of ale.
16	Guiles	Slippershane	…with hooded eyes and restless hands…	…who wants to steal something really valuable…	…and has two siblings who wish them dead.	4cp; a tiny leather bag of magic teeth.
17	Brila	Deth	…with all black clothes and an expression of madness…	…who needs a rare frog's blood to concoct a poison…	…and wants to get into local politics.	4gp; a quill pen; some leather straps; six needles covered in black resin.
18	Hannis	Whipwielder	…with a golden eyebrow ring and smart blue vestment…	…who wants the townspeople to fear them…	…and can't fight their way out of a paper bag.	8sp; a sack of marbles; a copy of a king's decree.
19	Cord	MacDougally	…with a patch over one eye and a long pipe drooping from their mouth…	…who would like a canine companion…	…and forgot where they buried a priceless stash of truffles.	22cp; a bedroll; a bag of small dead lizards; a flyswatter.
20	Lanaea	Candlewick	…with fiery eyes and a small, pouty mouth…	…who wants a cure for the hair on their back…	…and is showing the first signs of lycanthropy.	6gp; a basket of peaches, one of which is rotten.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Liana	Birdeg	…with strong arms and a silver tongue…	…who just wants a good night's sleep…	…and who is being stalked in their dreams.	1cp, 19sp; a set of artist's tools; some sketch paper; a talisman they don't know about in their boot.
2	Butcher	Crow	…with short black hair and a worn leather jerkin…	…who dreams of becoming a giant slayer…	…and suffers from extreme claustrophobia.	21cp; a jagged knife; a holy symbol; two bags of kindling.
3	Loweck	Droth	…with lard-slicked hair and mud-encrusted hands…	…who just needs a day off…	…and to determine whether or not to kill the king/queen.	7gp; a small metal box whose lock cannot be picked.
4	Zaceria	Splinthold	…with a whisper-like voice and a record-length beard...	…who seeks retribution for a move against them…	…and hasn't got the energy to walk more than 50 yards without a rest.	44cp; a wineskin; a bag with a hole in it.
5	Neb	Dugal	…with a ruddy complexion and a runny nose…	…who thinks they should be running the show…	…and was at one time an exotic dancer.	804cp; individually wrapped slices of cheese; a half-full wine skin.
6	Weasel	Shiverson	…with a missing front tooth and badly burned hands…	…who desires forgiveness for the fire they started…	…and finds danger intoxicating.	12cp, 43sp; 2 halves of a broken flute.
7	Reese	Wardenford	…with a prominent brow and crooked teeth…	…who wants to keep humans from encroaching any further on the wild…	…and suffers from a horrible case of fleas.	5sp; a hair pin; a small ivory radish worth 35gp.
8	Elovia	Trueblood	…with an elegant gait and fine clothing…	…who needs a special cheese for a fondue they're making…	…and has lost their hearing in one ear.	3gp; a sizable amount of pocket lint that is actually a **violet fungus**.
9	Fasha	Mudtiller	…with an attractive but dirty face and nine fingers...	…who needs to get married within the next three days…	…or they won't inherit a vast piece of land.	9cp, 1sp, 13gp; a bag of parched corn; a pork chop wrapped in waxed paper.
10	Shyneila	Longfoot	…with dainty ears and a pert nose…	…who isn't happy with their current station in life…	…and has a secret that could lead to war.	9gp; a fox brooch worth 70gp; a sack of candies.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Gul	Mak	…with broad shoulders and a salty tongue...	…who needs to get a bad wound attended to...	…and doesn't realize they'll be dead in 20 minutes.	9gp; a pair of undergarments that do not belong to them.
12	Slice	McQuivvers	…with an easy grin and receding hairline…	…who needs the purse on that man's belt…	…and suffers from terrible allergies.	92sp; razor-sharp knife; a homemade bar of soap; a list of known irritants.
13	Bron	Titantamer	…with a long, elegant mustache and narrowed eyes…	…who desires their neighbor's spouse…	…and has a dagger instead of a hand.	34sp; a small canary; a bag of beans; a lute.
14	Totonkin	Rangewalker	…with long black hair and tan leather breeches…	…who believes they are the reincarnation of a great mage…	…and needs a human skull for an idea they have.	8cp; a bundle of rabbit skins; a bag of wild onions; a sling with 4 stones.
15	Ulia	Stomrock	…with one twitchy eye and a prominent lisp…	…who loves the chase…	…and was paid to distract the guards.	20gp; a long pipe, a pouch of aromatic tobacco.
16	Orlin	Fleg	…with dirty blond hair and pock-marked skin…	…who is trying to lay low and avoid the tax collector…	…and has several thousand gold pieces hidden away.	5cp, 9sp; a dirty handkerchief; a map written in an unknown tongue; a sextant.
17	"Wild" Sam	Myrrdin	…with one ragged ear and bright red hair…	…who just wants to be left alone…	…and who hears a voice that keeps saying "Just bloody do it."	A magnetized piece of iron; flint and steel.
18	Morgan	Duchampe	…with a highborne air and neatly trimmed whiskers…	…who is a powerful bard in disguise…	…and has a magic weapon they haven't learned how to wield.	Plans for a roadside attack on a caravan.
19	Zacharia	Fek	…with bushy gray hair and four wooden teeth…	…who needs a bath more than anything…	…and who angered the wrong farmer's daughter.	4cp; a silver ring worth 4gp; a whistle that makes no sound (30 percent chance of attracting 2d4 wolves).
20	Boltoc	Evertrue	…with long white hair and a purposeful gait…	…who's searching for a holy tree guarded by a magical snake…	…and thinks they might be a deity.	10gp; a large wineskin; a full snuff box; a wanted poster.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Jebair	Shroomer	...with a high-pitched voice and campy attitude...	...who is searching for some "fine specimens"...	...and who collects body parts. For fun, honest.	12sp; a **bag of holding**; 1d10 bones and 2d4 organs.
2	Harrow	Nightfarer	...with brown bangs and eyes stuck in a permanent roll...	...who would do anything to escape this backwater...	...and has secured an apprenticeship with the local necromancer.	51sp, 5gp; a black pointy hat; earrings of ivory.
3	Shu-Ling	Wheelwright	...with hands the size of dinner plates...	...who can't find their housekeys...	...and is about ready to skip town.	23cp; two infant children.
4	Erwin	Dinger	...carrying a box that lets out an occasional "meow"...	...who is workshopping their new life philosophy called "Roll with it"...	...and is getting nervous about the coming eclipse.	22cp, 2gp; a cat in a cardboard box (at GM discretion, there's a 20 percent chance the cat is fiendish).
5	Rui	Butcher	...with a leather apron and cleaver at their belt...	...who vehemently protests against vegetarianism any chance they get...	...and who is a "strike first, sort it out later" kind of citizen.	6sp, 22sp; a portable cutting board.
6	Arhoha	Baker	...with a face covered in flour...	...who needs to bake another 568 loaves before the week's end...	...and knows the perfect loaf is the enemy of the good.	23cp, 83gp; an invoice from a noble; a belt with sacks of different types of flour.
7	Rashida	Magpie	...with silver buttons and precious stones sewn onto their clothing...	...who is wondering if you'd like to buy some junk...	...and who doesn't know the value of anything they possess.	31cp, 1gp; a button; a wooden token; a stone that unlocks a warded tomb; a fishbone knife; a **lich's phylactery**; an emerald eye; a snake egg; a paralyzed **pixie**.
8	Cole	Wayfarer	...with an innocent expression and a snug white cardigan...	...who is studying via carrier pigeon to become a barrister...	...and insists they will grow up to be a lawyer for dragons who've been robbed.	3sp, 154gp; a rusty key; a minor flamethrowing device.
9	Taika	Songreaper	...with a strong accent and a dominant chin...	...who is looking for their next gig...	...and struggles with performance anxiety.	12cp, 8gp; a set of panpipes; a pair of manacles; a lockpick.
10	Harpy	Armic	...with a beakish face and affinity for birds...	...who just wants to chat about birds...	...and is half-harpy.	23cp; a fan made from rare bird feathers worth 600gp that acts as an arcane focus.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Omar	Otter	...wearing large waterproof boots with a fishing rod over their shoulder...	...who only wants to go fishing...	...but can't get near water without having flashbacks.	45cp; a fishing rod of exceptional quality; a letter detailing "the incident."
12	Yiju	Seafarer	...in a dingey blue tunic and wearing a wig...	...who is definitely not an **ogre** in disguise...	...and who is lobbying for a parlay with the local ogres.	32cp; a crudely scrawled list of phrases in Common.
13	Penny	Button	...with a plump figure and heavy-duty apron...	...who is offering free samples...	...and who has an above average Constitution.	84cp; a heavy-duty cast iron frying pan; some suspicious mushrooms.
14	Rawiri	Stone	...with a woven bamboo hat that hides their eyes...	...who is looking for any kind of work...	...and is one of the realm's most revered martial artists.	3cp; a magic sword worth at least 3000gp.
15	Wormshy	Glass	...with watery eyes and slimy disposition...	...who will offer payment for information...	...and is the servant of a local mountain **hag**.	88sp, 3gp; an amateur map into the mountains with an X marking a well devised trap.
16	Amsu	Bellchime	...dressed in colorful rags with bells on their shoes...	...who is a master acrobat street performer...	...and who has had their leg broken by a local gang.	10cp; a baguette and some stinky cheese.
17	Kuanyu	Silver	...with a bust-worthy visage and a sparkle in their eye...	...who has a line on a fortune and knows you won't believe them...	...and has a reputation as a con artist.	32sp, 9gp; forged invitations to a nobleman's masquerade.
18	Tangaroa	Brass	...with impeccable posture and golden hair...	...who won't shut up about the debt...	...and is planning to start their own adventurer-for-hire business.	4pp; a handy haversack whose contents are worth 745gp.
19	Kephrii	Snipe	...with sharp eyes and a ready longbow...	...who wants directions to the local noble's estate...	...and is here to start a coup.	21cp, 30gp, 18pp; an assassin's guild seal; a contract detailing a noble's description.
20	Marty	Pondweed	...with algae-covered skin and a horrible cough...	...who recently crawled out of the pond they'd been dumped in...	...and who cannot die.	A pouch of soggy herbs.

OUTSKIRTS & OUTPOSTS

In some parts of the realm the balance between the civilized world and the natural one favors the latter in a significant way, with the trees (to say nothing of the creatures that dwell within them) outnumbering the people by an overwhelming margin. Whether it's a first line of defense against the wilderness or last stop before exploring it, the tiny communities that crop up far from the reaches of power are typically governed by the concept of autonomy in the name of altruism. Those who dwell in these pockets of civilization are generally of heartier stock than most, and their problems almost always center around one central challenge: survival.

Random Adventure Setting (Optional)

Roll 1d10 to determine the nature of the area into which your party has wandered.

1d10	The closest outpost is...
1	...a dragon lighthouse.
2	...a rehab center for disgraced sorcerers.
3	...an abandoned estate from a former age.
4	...a haunted battlefield.
5	...a landfill for broken weapons.
6	...a weather research station.
7	...a penal colony.
8	...a cenote with healing properties.
9	...a casino with no dealers.
10	...a camp for adventurous children.

Common Folk

Whether pursuing a dream or living a nightmare, those who call the farthest reaches of the known world their home wear many hats—especially since they might be the only hatwearer for miles.

Ricard "The Snowman" Gare

"That reminds me..."

A burly mountain dwarf with a build like a box of hammers, a generally cheerful disposition, and an ice hook where his left hand should be, wearing a red stocking cap and a dense bear skin coat.

For the Barbaric

This guy looks nearly as sturdy as you are, and he's not wearing much in the way of clothing given the conditions—perhaps he's a lot like you.

THOUGH HE LEFT his adventuring days (and right hand) behind in a bloody mist on the other side of the glacier, Ricard Gare never minded the cold and knew he could make a pretty penny shepherding large blocks of ice downriver from the flow. He makes his trade as "The Snowman," and his blocks have made their way as far as the capital for the king's feast day. Lately, however, business is cooling (haha), as his primary source of crystal clear ice (and therefore income) is swiftly shifting to water as part of an inexplicable temperature change.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ricard wants to know more about why the glacier where he harvests his ice is melting so rapidly. He would love any able bodied adventurers to investigate—especially if any of them are experts on the nature of ice or **fire salamanders**.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ricard is concerned the root cause of the melt is due to a herd of fire salamanders having settled nearby as part of their reproductive cycles, but what he doesn't realize is there are also a few **remorazz** hatching within the glacier's caverns.

◆ **Carrying** 10sp; a pickaxe; a map detailing his ice route; a tub of ointment made from walrus blubber.

Skylar Powell

"I'll make this up to you."

A woman in her mid-30s with a confused expression and cracked lips who seems extremely disoriented. She sports a brand behind her ear and hair so dirty it's hard to place its color. She wears a nondescript tunic.

For the Devout

The brand behind this woman's ear is a dark mark, a common icon utilized in ritual summoning.

SKYLAR POWELL WAS with her family, she thinks, when it happened. That's what's so troubling—she isn't sure. They were there, then they weren't. Then she saw black, and a pale yellow, and heard the screams—but that's about all she can recall. She knows where she is, she just doesn't have a way to get back. Which is all she wants. Home. Where the smell of fresh cornbread and braised meats will overpower the scent of sulfur she can't seem to shake from her sinuses. Home. Where her husband never leaves the door locked. Home. Where her young children are waiting, waiting to be held close enough to kiss forever.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Skylar wishes to be reunited with her family, whom she believes are roughly 40 miles down a nearby main road. She's taken on odd jobs in hopes of raising the necessary funds to pay for the travel.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** While her memory is foggy, something certainly changed within Skylar just a few weeks ago. As it happens, she was subjected to the darker aspects of a horrific summoning ritual performed by a cult based in the nearby hills and will transform into a **succubus** following her next long rest.

◆ **Carrying** 15cp, 2sp; a rapidly corroding holy symbol.

FIDDLEFEN COPPERFELD *"I can take you there!"*

A high-spirited gnomish girl in a well-tailored but slightly worn blue suit with tight curls of green hair peeking from underneath her uniformed cap, extending a would-be handshake to anyone within her view.

For the Arcane

Pinned to Fiddlefen's vest is a chain attached to a gnomish timepiece—a spell focus.

FIDDLEFEN COPPERFELD is a paradox to any wizard she meets, for after seven years of arcane study and tutelage she has only mastered one spell. No, not *fireball*, or even some of the entry-level cantrips—it's the *teleport* spell. That's right. Be amazed. Because it's amazing. This vexing development has brought Fiddlefen much attention from the wizarding community but also a quick and frustrated dismissal. So what's a girl to do? Start a business! Congratulations, you're speaking with the CGIC (Chief Gnome in Charge) of Hidden Ley Lines LLC. Fiddlefen is happy to take an adventuring party wherever they would like to go, for a fee of course. She's been everywhere, man. Just ask her. Or see for yourself. Just sign these waivers in triplicate. The yellow form is yours to keep.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Cold hard coin, and the Coachmen's union off her back.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Fiddlefen tends to overexaggerate her knowledge of geography as well as the borders of the realm, which (at GM discretion) leads to the occasional teleportation mishap. But that's what the waivers are for!

◆ **Carrying** 10cp, 11sp, 5gp; gnomish timepiece and spell focus that protects the attuned (and only the attuned) from the effects of a teleportation mishap; a letter containing a cease and desist order from the local Coachmen union; lint comb.

NORVILLE BERNARDE *"It'll change everything."*

A young human fresh into adulthood with hair that refuses to stay styled as he moves about wearing sturdy workmen's clothes that are more pockets than not.

For the Perceptive

A young boy seems to be watching Norville a little too closely.

NORVILLE BERNARDE WAS transferred to the nearby Whitaker Ghast Laboratory for Artificing Achievements as part of his senior thesis—but he's so past that now it seems foolish he was even trying to develop a new type of lever. No, no—he's done with levers and buzzers to boot. Norville's got a new invention, more of a structure for inventions, but he knows it'll change the world. Two contestants control pintsized constructs in combat, and to the winner go the spoils. He calls it the Gladiatron 4000 (on account of what would be its 4,000gp betting maximum). It started as a game, you know, for kids, but now he sees the money to be made, friends. Artificing isn't cheap, not to mention the patent fees and other supply costs, so Norville is looking for backers. He's approached several nobles or "sharks" due to their predatory nature, but alas none have bitten on his idea. What about you? You want to make some coin by giving him some?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Norville needs his designs filed at the local patent office, which costs 25gp. He also needs materials to finalize his first construct competitors. He thinks another 50gp would get him going and that he could return the investment plus 20 percent within the next few weeks, assuming demand stays high.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Unbeknownst to Norville, one of his "sharks" is interested in putting Norville through a bit of gladiatorial combat and plans to have a group of thugs from the nearest town hit him for everything he's got.

◆ **Carrying** 11cp; 4sp; tinker's tools; gears of various sizes; jeweler's glasses; small chipped crystal ball; broken music box; 1oz block of unknown material; a book on martial combat; a dead **sprite** in a clear glass bottle; a diagram of two small constructs attached to the same base with two sets of controls.

HAVANA CRAWLEY *"Stick it to the Hand."*

A wiry-framed woman with a wily gaze, in cut-off shorts and a blue midriff top, tugging absentmindedly at her hair.

For the Devout

It's hard to overstate how off-putting you find this woman's opinions on nearly everything.

BORN IN THIS backwater that has slowly but surely progressed toward settlement status, Havana Crawley doesn't take kindly to strangers, doesn't cotton to salesmen, has no time for authority and would laugh in the face of any who might suggest she spend a little more time in divine meditation. She's a walking scoff at the establishment, despises government in all its forms (particularly those built around any sort of theocracy), and though she supports the idea of reading in theory has no cause for doing so in practice. What Havana lacks in terms of respect for the systems that help grow towns into cities and cities into empires she more than makes up for with a disgust for those she calls "the Hand"— the invisible forces that she's certain control each and every life in the realm.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Havana would love to organize a group of like-minded people to take on the Hand—whoever/wherever they are. She could also use some help finding her loyal sheep dog Spuds. Naturally, Havana suspects the Hand is involved in his recent disappearance.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** While the existence of the Hand is unconfirmed, Spuds's disappearance is very real, as is the ransom note for his return that is due to arrive in Havana's hand by courier any moment. The request? "Stop what you're doing or else." The note is written in expensive ink and includes traces of blood.

◆ **Carrying** 3cp, 9gp; a leash for a missing dog; pamphlets detailing the Hand and the ways in which it operates; a detailed list of property values in the surrounding area.

"SAM THE SLOW" BOXBACK *"That really burns my biscuits."*

A dark brown humanoid tortoise with green and yellow splotches on his shell, dulled somewhat by age, wearing a small white toque, stained only slightly from decades of use. His flour-covered apron emits dust whenever Sam pats it and looks almost as ancient as he is.

For the Insightful

When you watch Sam at work you are overcome with the feeling of observing a creature in their natural element.

SAM IS A long-lived humanoid turtle who has a deep passion for baking as well as a hunger for helping others. He's mastered the particular challenges posed by his surroundings on things like rise rate, fermentation differentials and the proper time to proof. What he can't seem to perfect is his supply chain. The remote nature of his circumstances requires quite a bit of planning. Sam knows that, just like in baking, there's a precision to supplying an outpost this far afield that requires attention and a not-insignificant bit of good fortune. All it takes is for things to be a little off—a missed shipment here, a bandit raid there—and suddenly the entire settlement could be without food for months. Unfortunately, one such error has taken place, and he fears for the future.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Sam knows a munitions merchant was headed this way with his order of flour and yeast in tow. He's concerned bandits raided the shipment for the weaponry, leaving what he needs to feed the hungry in the dirt somewhere between here and the nearest town.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Within his shell Sam has a recipe for popovers that are so good they act as a *heroes' feast*. Unfortunately the ingredients required are not available to him at this time. Maybe you can help?

◆ **Carrying** 14cp, 2sp; oven mitts; cooking utensils; a sourdough starter dating back to the Port'ak dynasty.

DR. FELLMAN GRAYN *"In 12 years you'll thank me."*

A well-built, mustachioed man with a mole on his right cheek, shrouded in a black cloak.

For the Perceptive

This man has a few stains on his hips, where he wiped his hands.

YOU'D BE FORGIVEN for assuming Dr. Fellman Grayn is up to no good—the slinking about, the single word replies to inquiry, the way echoing sounds of pain are left behind in any property he visits. Everything about him suggests he's looking for trouble, and in a way he is: He's a travelling doctor specializing in proctology who prefers to keep his (and his patients') needs private. Despite appearances, he's a good man. And thorough.

◆ **Wants & Needs** A little extra coin to help further establish his business would be nice, as would a permanent structure to serve as a clinic. He's not doing himself or his patients any favors by inspecting them out in the open.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Dr. Grayn has discovered something unsettling about the stool of the area's few residents: it's alive.

◆ **Carrying** 4cp, 31sp; a satchel holding his medicine and herbalism kits; five rations; three samples of what he calls "bad BMs."

ROGER BIX *"If only."*

A man with matted hair and grubby hands whose clothes have a thick layer of caked dirt all about them holding armfuls of seemingly useless junk.

For the Insightful

This individual seems to care very little for coin. If you want some of his goods, you'll need to trade.

ROGER BIX knows money is only as good as what you can buy with it, and if there's nothing to buy, well, good luck eating your gold, buddy. His expertise is in scrap, salvage, seeds, pieces of pieces of parts, tiny tools and big spell components—the stuff you forgot to grab on your way into the wilderness but now realize you might die without. He wanders the region taking odd jobs, asking for payment in food and drink or stuff, and has subsisted solely off the barter system for nearly two decades.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Roger wants anything you no longer need, especially if it's easily carried. He also needs to be alone at night or, you know. It might happen again.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** A former member of a far off royal council, Roger suffered a night terror and strangled his wife in her sleep. He left the continent and has been on the move ever since.

◆ **Carrying** A stock of random goods (at GM discretion), including a shoehorn, a whetstone, a dog whistle, the hilt to a magical blade, a hot water bottle, a bedroll, a bag of ball bearings, a half-burned candle, a quill and ink, spellbook pages, and a sketch of a woman stained with tears.

JACK "RABBIT" LARZOATH *"Jack Rabbit, that's me."*

An energetic older man in peasant's clothes with a grey beard and a large leather patch over his left eye.

For the Perceptive

Jack's eyepatch is somewhat oversized and crudely made.

JACK RABBIT is a wanderer, but a regular at the various small villages and outposts in this region. Known for being somewhat eccentric—he tends to "hop" from place to place—in reality, he's sharp as a tack. He seems unable and unwilling to sit still or stay in one spot.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Jack would love to settle down in a small town, but has a profound fear of his "prize" being discovered.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Jack's "prize" is a large red ruby which he hides beneath a homemade eyepatch. Left behind in the bar he used to own, the gem's value was immediately apparent. Rather than try and find the owner, Jack Rabbit shut his bar down and hit the road. Unfortunately, because the gem is a powerful arcane focus, it's only a matter of time before the **mage** who lost it locates this rabbit on the run.

◆ **Carrying** 14cp, 26sp; a hunting knife; a backpack with two week's worth of food and water; a large red ruby worth 1,000gp.

AGGIE HRUND *"That's nature's way."*

A skunk-haired woman with a sturdy frame whose clothing—a bluish skirt, rust tunic, brown boots and a green-grey shawl—looks fourth hand.

For the Perceptive

A faint glow can occasionally be seen from the breast pocket of Aggie's tunic.

AN OCCASIONAL midwife to some of the settlers here, Aggie Hrund is stubborn as they come. She spends most of her free time on long walks, preferring the company of birds and bees to most of humanity. In spite of herself, she does love the sound a baby makes when it exhales that first eruptive cry, just about the only thing that has kept her from retreating fully into the wilderness. She wanders the region making house calls as needed, ensuring that even in the harshest of conditions, newborn children receive a bit of tender care.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Aggie's been made aware of a half-orc woman in a hovel a few miles upriver who is expecting quintuplets. She's certain they'll arrive any day now but is having trouble making it through **orc** territory.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The crystal Aggie carries in her breast pocket is possessed by an angry fey creature, trapped by the power of a *magic jar* spell gone awry. Once per full moon this spirit attempts to possess a creature within 30 ft. of the crystal—thus far Aggie has proven a little too thick-headed for the spirit to take root.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 9sp; a pouch of medicinal herbs; medicine kit; flint and steel; 50 ft. of rope; a hatchet; a crystal possessing the soul of a **fomorian**.

GAMBOL INTH'RELLO *"Not my problem."*

A dark-skinned elven man whose tired eyes are mostly hidden by a mop of silver hair, wearing a cloak that blends with the landscape, a full satchel over his shoulder and a short quarterstaff in his right hand.

For the Roguish

The marks on Gambol's quarterstaff are in Thieves' Cant, and relay that his life is vouchsafed in every realm on the continent by the assassin's guild.

HAVING ESCAPED the realm below this one not long ago, Gambol Inth'rello always keeps one eye at his back and another fixed on the road ahead. His desire to see the world above far outweighing his fear of the consequences for leaving, Gambol left his family's deepside lair under cover of darkness and hasn't returned. Sure, they could be looking for him—or maybe they're all spider bait. Either way, he doesn't care. He knows the sun's heat could eventually kill him, but he's always been able to find plenty of shade, and would rather die in a field of green than wrapped in a gauzy cocoon. He's made a name for himself as a delivery boy (well, delivery man) for some of the most dangerous members of the realms' criminal underground, but calls this outpost home. No matter how deep into the figurative underworld he descends, Gambol knows he could always be deeper.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Gambol has a baseline of deliveries he must make and is a bit behind due to the weather. He'll need to double-time it to get where he's heading, and isn't afraid to "borrow" a mount.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** While he left much of his family behind, Gambol incidentally brought numerous egg sacs with him on his journey out of the dark, dropping clutches of soon-to-be **giant spiders** and **ettercaps** along his route.

◆ **Carrying** 31cp, 9sp; a satchel of letters bearing the seals of the Guttersnipes, the Gulls, the Rich Poormen and the Alewives—all prominent criminal enterprises in the realm—as well as other letters at GM discretion; a clutch of **giant spider** eggs stuck to his pant leg.

Tomas "Peeping Tom" Ogdenbill *"According to my research..."*

A young human man with a greasy face, wearing a hooded cloak covered in local vegetation that acts as improvised camouflage and a spyglass hanging from a bit of rope around his neck.

For the Perceptive

Tomas is hiding a nasty wound on his forearm that appears recent.

For the Medically Trained

The wound is definitely infected with a preternatural illness.

AS A CHILD of one of the king's most celebrated consorts, Tomas spent much of his time out of sight. With access to the Lady Hoxendulla's adventurer's archive as well as the court's expansive trove of adult literature, Tomas "Peeping Tom" Ogdenbill's obsession with the boundless bestiaries penned by some of the realm's bravest explorers collided with his burgeoning hormonal desires and he lit out on his own to study the natural urges of the natural (and supernatural) world. Given the fact that he has occasionally been tempted to turn his examining eye on the area's humanoid denizens, some are of the opinion that he's less monstrous morphologist and more privacy-piercing pervert.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Tomas is looking for leads on where he could find some monstrous mistresses: a scintillating **centaur**, a happening **harpy**, a "gnaughty" **gnoll**, a demur **dryad**, even a shapely **sprite** or a perky **pixie**. A bawdy **behir** perhaps?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** While observing a **slaadi** seduction up close, Tomas was injured and contracted a disease known as chaos phage. Without intervention he will transform into a **red slaad** in the next 24 hours.

◆ **Carrying** 11cp, 6sp; a spy glass; a bedroll; an in-progress manuscript: *Tomas Ogdenbill's The Little Deaths of Big Beasts: A Field Guide to Creature Copulation.*

Nikki Basil, *with Floyd the Pig* *"Expand your mind."*

A halfling freshly out of her adolescence who wears a look of suspicion, with hair stuffed under an oversized knitted cap and joints and fingernails black with trapped dirt. A grey and black pig nearly twice her size and loaded up with supplies nuzzles at her for attention.

For Animal Handlers

The pig with this halfling girl has pronounced lesions on its skin, a telltale symptom of an illness known as "greasypig." Its condition will worsen if left unattended.

NIKKI BASIL WAS ONCE the epitome of "a nice halfling girl," but then she fell in with "the wrong crowd." Nikki and her friends, being so summarily dismissed from provincial norms by their neighbors, decided to embrace their title of "bad apples." They committed every jape and misdemeanor they could think of, which included thieving a few herbs and spices from the local temple—substances the halfling elders would call "a bridge too far to cross to have a good time." The mushrooms Nikki discovered expanded her view of the world, so much so that she left home in an effort to help others expand theirs. With the help of her good pal Floyd (who can sniff out a single ***tantric truffle*** in a 5-mile radius), Nikki wanders the countryside looking for 'shrooms and "astral curious" adventurers intrigued enough to try them.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Secrecy is important for Nikki while she is on the hunt for tantric truffles. If anyone found her hunting grounds, she could lose her exclusivity on them.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The other halfling "bad apples" Nikki used to hang around with just kept spoiling and are now legit bandits and cutthroats. They call themselves "The Halfwaymen," and would like to get their hands on Nikki's mushroom supply.

◆ **Carrying** 11cp, 9sp; a few chunks of chocolate; 12 ***tantric truffles*** worth 250gp each.

Tantric Truffles

wondrous item, very rare

These exotic fungi offer a passport to the astral plane. If ingested, a target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a success, the target is under the influence of the *astral projection* spell. On a failed save, the target is under the effect of the *phantasmal killer* spell, with the source of the frightening visions projected in the mind of the target entirely up to GM discretion.

HALSTREA CLOVER *"What are you, a poser?"*

A young woman with high cheeks and fine elven features and a body seemingly formed out of knotted wood and taut rope. She wears a permanent scowl as well as a very old set of leather armor.

For the Intuitive

Behind her judgemental exterior Halstrea is holding back excitement at seeing anyone who appears to be an adventurer.

HALSTREA CLOVER IS A third generation half-wood elf. Her great grandmother Laurel settled down with her great grandfather after she defended the village from goblin raiders. Laurel, being an adventurer, didn't stay for long, leaving her children behind. The Clovers and their kids became known as hardworking, unrelenting farm folk in spite of the village murmuring about their "wild" bloodline. Another generation later, little Halstrea grew sick of her family's reputation and the lack of opportunity within her village and decided to give the locals something meaningful to gossip about—she joined a caravan headed west, without a care about its final destination. What she thought was a collection of adventurer-types seeking danger turned out to be a sect of kuo-totalitarians, religious fundamentalists who worship whatever god the **fish-men** in the region have conjured into existence with their muck magic. Halstrea is... not impressed.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Halstrea is looking for her great grandmother Laurel, so she can join her as a fellow adventurer. She recently found a buried **bag of holding** containing 500gp in gems and believes it came from a fabled jewel coach robbery that occurred 20 years ago. She is cautious about this new wealth and is cognizant of the dangers it could bring. As a result she doesn't carry it on her, but would try and trade parts of it for the opportunity to go on a legit adventure.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The kuo-totalitarians have learned the fishmen of Dorkblarg have a new risen lord—Macktack the Morklork—and will soon take the caravan deep into the murk of the nearby Dorkblarg swamp.

◆ **Carrying** 3cp; a small, string-bound diary filled with fictitious adventures; a handcrafted shortbow and three arrows.

GILFORD BRAZENHAND *"I'd bet my beard."*

A shirtless dwarf of substantial size whose amber eyes stand out above a beard that blends almost seamlessly into a chest covered in pitch black hair, carrying an intimidating pole with a pickaxe on one end and a hammer on the other.

For the Dwarven

Those familiar with dwarven stonework would know the cruel-looking implement Gilford carries is primarily for splitting rock rather than skulls.

ONE FACT HAS always loomed over the dwarven race: their lives are often longer than those of the mines in which they ply their trade. Years ago, Clan Brazenhand reached the end of their mine's precious stone deposits. The oldest and wealthiest were able to stay in their keep, but many, like Gilford, had to head out for work elsewhere. Gilford learned there's plenty of stone needs movin' and breakin' or breakin' then movin' above ground. Mountains are hard going, and he knows it's always helpful to have a dwarf ready to cleave them into submission. He hires himself out as a geomancer to trading companies in the realm, and even though his back is made for this sort of work, there's a part of his heart that's no longer in it.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Gilford is desperate for something to break up the monotony of breaking rocks; whether darts or drinking, a long conversation with an elvish lady or a **kobold** pauper, or simply stories containing the likes of gems or germs, he is looking for something to pass the time.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Gilford just received a letter that he is being let go from his current trading company, but has yet to open it. Once he does, he'll learn the group he was breaking rocks for scaled back their plans once they uncovered the **green dragon** Domascus's lair.

◆ **Carrying** 6cp, 4sp, 5gp; unopened letter of dismissal; charcoal drawing of a dwarven family of four; uncut sapphire worth 10gp.

"K"—Kathul of the Hills (Egrok) *"You wouldn't believe it..."*

A statuesque, tattooed and shockingly hairless half-giant who seems to be attempting to occupy as much space as possible with both his physique and voice, wearing a studded leather tartan and a sheath for his greatsword.

For the Martially Trained

Egrok has shockingly few scars compared to the number of battles he claims he's seen.

For the Charismatic

You would hate to say Egrok is speaking too eloquently for a half-giant, but he definitely seems to be a trained orator.

EGROK DOESN'T remember how he ended up in the care of a carnival troupe or how he became known as "K". Honestly as a child he was having too much fun to care. With more family than most could claim, "K" had a raucous upbringing. Even though he learned almost every trade in the carnival, his aptitude as a strongman became clear as he grew into his half-giant body. For years the carnival made its way across the land, surviving more than thriving, but doing so happily. Until one day a new routine of the carnival called "The Aristocrats" caught the ire of a nobleman who had many of the carnival incarcerated. Without proper organization, the carnival limped along and soon was bankrupt. But as they made their way to more and more remote mining and trading camps in search of paying gigs, "K" noticed how hungry people were for stories of heroism and daring. Developing the character of Kathul of the Hills, he struck off on his own to thrill audiences desperate to hear tales of man against beast.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Egrok is looking for a new gimmick. He has grown tired of the "'K'—Kathul of the Hills" schtick, and the decrease in coin he's been seeing says so is his audience. Maybe what crowds are looking for is realism? What if he just started attacking everyone in sight? Would that be enough to pry the elusive coin from their collective purses?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The noble that had the rest of Egrok's band locked up also has a bounty out for Egrok to the tune of 500gp.

◆ **Carrying** 17cp, 6sp, 16gp; dull greatsword; letter of introduction from a noble, signed M.C. Mann.

Luther Anvilson *"There's work to be done."*

A barrel-thick gent who looks as if he's spent his life crafting horseshoes or wagon wheels or both simultaneously with a completely bald head, thick bushy eyebrows and curl-ended mustache, wearing a heavy leather apron and a grimy gold pendant over worker's clothes.

For the Perceptive

Luther's dingy pendant has an image engraved upon it: a bull with wings of fire in heavy iron chains.

For the Devout

You know nothing of the god or being depicted by this pendant's symbol, but it strikes you as darkly divine—as if tied to some kind of penance.

LUTHER ANVILSON IS what one might call a "handy" sort of fellow, capable of shoeing a horse, hunting a turkey or chopping down a tree as the situation may require. He's affable enough, but is nearly always coming from a job or on his way to one. Work is his religion and he has no time or patience for the indolent or idle. Of course, this is the new Luther. The old Luther was decidedly different.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Though he's not sure why, Luther is driven to do work. Sometimes for coin, other times for the thrill of a job well done—he even herds the sheep he counts in his dreams. He'd happily carry your bags to the nearest town for you, or build you an inn right here if you'd prefer.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Luther was once a layabout who would barely lift a finger to help himself, let alone another person. When he came upon a tipped cart and refused to help lift it off the family crushed beneath, he caught the ire of the gods. He was cursed with the mark of the minotaur as punishment and will endeavor to be productive until the day he dies—which could be very soon given the strain on his heart.

◆ **Carrying** 22sp; smith's tools; tinker's tools; cursed medallion.

BAG'HARA "BEGGAR" DONAL *"Isn't that a sight?"*

A purple-haired half-elf outwardly radiating a sense of joy, with a broad smile stretched across their face, in a clover-colored tunic and missing their left arm below the elbow.

For the Insightful

Though this individual goes by "Beggar," they actually seem like the giving sort.

SAVAGED BY A gray-furred bear deep in the forest a mile or so from this outpost, Bag'hara Donal lost their arm and nearly bled to death. They miraculously survived and made a full recovery—and the outlook they took away from their near-death experience has informed their sense of overall gratefulness at the smallest blessings a given day might bring. Folks in the region wrongly assumed Bag'hara would need to panhandle forever given their condition, and the moniker "Beggar" took hold. For their part, the one called Beggar is anything but. Exceedingly outgoing and incredibly industrious, they are happy to pull an ale or wipe down a table, or manage any odd jobs that this outpost presents—just as long as they can earn enough to enjoy the fruits of another day alive.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Despite an outwardly positive aspect, Beggar still holds a grudge against the gray bear that took their arm three years ago and recently learned it was seen in a cave system near this outpost.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The bear in question is actually a **druid** who has lost all connection with humanity—save their love of human flesh.

◆ **Carrying** 18cp, 16sp; information about the location of the horde of a **blue dragon**.

SIMON "GOITER" HANNIGAN *"Whatchu lookin' at?"*

A strong-armed human teen with slicked back black hair, a mustache that carries down to his chin and a large lump bulging from the side of his neck, wearing common work clothes and carrying a large canvas bag over one shoulder.

For the Medically Trained

This young man appears to suffer from an enlarged thyroid, which can make it more difficult to swallow or breathe properly. Although enlarged thyroids don't typically wriggle.

BORN IN A part of the realm where any sign of weakness is viewed as a life-threatening liability, Simon Hannigan knew he'd find it tough to be accepted by his community if he didn't double the output of his peers and triple the malice they hurled his way. As the lump on his neck came into view, the first kid who called him Goiter got their teeth knocked in. The second lost an eye. After he bloodied the face of an elder who mocked his malady, Simon spent a month doing penance in the temple and began calling himself Goiter just to take away some of the sting. Most who know him understand his value as a worker and sometimes bruiser, but there are still those who occasionally gawk at the size of the lump on his neck. They'll receive lumps of their own in time.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Goiter would love to be rid of the lump on the side of his neck, but he'd like to know a bit more about the waterfall along the pass between here and yonder town, as it's oozing blood.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The lump in Goiter's neck is actually a large parasite which has been growing beneath his skin. Soon, it will emerge and look for a larger, more powerful host in which to deposit its larvae.

◆ **Carrying** 5cp, 11sp, 22gp; a bag of cleaning supplies; two "energy bars" of his own creation made of figs, flour and honey; a parasite known as a ***burrowing stirge.***

The Burrowing Stirge. Distantly related to the standard **stirge**, the larvae of this creature burrow into the skin of a host through the area water supply. The worms curl up in a ball and slowly feed off of the host, growing larger over the course of a few years, at which point they awaken and burst out from underneath the victim's skin, causing 3d12 + 10 points of damage on a failed DC 15 Constitution saving throw (half damage on a success). The creatures unfurl their wings, deposit their larvae in the nearby water supply or spray them at an able-bodied host, then die. An adult burrowing stirge is in all other respects like a standard stirge. A victim of a burrowing stirge can be "cured" with a *greater restoration* spell, which will destroy the parasitic beast as if it were a disease.

ANGA FLINTWIELDER *"Not the sharpest pickaxe in the mine, are ya?"*

An older dwarven woman with dark brown skin and black hair shot through with gray, dressed in laborer's clothes and boots. Her extremely long beard, which she clearly has allowed to grow unchecked, is tucked into the front of her leather apron.

For the Perceptive

Anga's right eye is somewhat milky, suggesting she may only be able to see out of the left.

ANGA FLINTWIELDER remembers when these hills were packed with dwarvenkin. That time has long passed, but she's chosen to stay, in part because she doesn't know anything different. A walking encyclopedia of the region's lore and landscape, she could be an asset to any traveler moving through these parts—provided they don't say anything remotely negative about dwarves.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Anga wants to share her vast knowledge and the riches she's certain are still hidden in these hills with a worthy soul—hopefully one who will carry her knowledge of this land forward for the next generation.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** As a young girl, Anga was taught a rhyme by her mother, which she still remembers (and is prone to dramatically reciting):

My eyes've seen what may not be,
as prose of legend and line
It waits for you, alone and free,
through tempest, sand and wine.
Red Beryl 'lone is not the find,
but is a place to start
Insiders be, the matron mane,
it summons from the heart.
Beyond the river Cairn it lay,
the glimmering light of soul
Golden home, inside yon chaff,
by barrel and wagon full.

Anga is certain this rhyme is a cryptic series of directions that will lead to the vast Browbeater horde.

◆ **Carrying** 6sp; 38gp in uncut gemstones; a hand drawn map of this region.

WARLYN STONE *"Outta the way, hump!"*

A bronze-skinned human with close-cropped hair and a tidy beard wearing a leather jerkin over his beige top and a bright green cap on his head. An orange parrot sits on his shoulder.

For the Insightful

Clearly in a rush, Warlyn also seems to be upset about something, though he's trying (poorly) to hide it.

THE WILDS ARE a difficult place to live, and men with scowls like Warlyn Stone's make it even less welcoming. If he had a lawn, he'd be yelling at kids to get off it. He has trouble keeping work, even in this area where manpower is at a premium. Whether his temper makes it hard to find work, or a lack of work makes him angry is a ponderous question, but most in the area agree it's likely a combination of both. The parrot is a recent acquisition and one of Warlyn's few friends. Warlyn spends most of his days mired in his grievances, trying to block out the voices from the past, and avoiding the riverbed in as many ways as he can.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Warlyn is a loner, but not by choice and not by fault. There's nothing he'd like more than a family. He had one once, and should fortune favor him with one again, he'd more than welcome it.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Warlyn's wife, son and daughter died tragically during a river crossing a few years back, an incalculable loss he's not truly processed. He's too busy trying to ignore the voice of his wife calling to him each time he goes near the river.

◆ **Carrying** 37sp; a serrated knife; 30 ft. of rope; a leather haversack; four days of rations and water; a bright orange parrot named Phineas, whose voice is eerily similar to Warlyn's wife's.

GUNNY PITTS *"I'm small. But I'm twitchy."*

A young, sandy-haired halfling dressed in fisherman's garb, who smells of the sea and walks with a swagger, holding a thick coil of rope over his right shoulder and a bag over his left. He has a thin scar running from his temple to his jaw.

For the Perceptive

It's clear from the way Pitts moves that he's carrying a weapon of some sort secreted inside his jacket, though it's unclear exactly what it might be.

A FISHERMAN BY trade, Gunny Pitts often takes work on land when the season ends. He's high-spirited and friendly, but also a bit of a carouser with a weakness for wine, women and more wine. He's never keen to start a fight, but he's never once run away from one—which is why he's gotta head down into the wetlands and settle up with the **troll** who called him "runt."

◆ **Wants & Needs** Pitts would love nothing more than to own his own fishing boat and captain his own crew.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Pitts will have a tough time getting his own boat if he's squashed like a bug into the dirt by an angry troll. Perhaps the slurred and forgotten blood oath to a watery patron he made during a late night bender a few months past will come into play in memory-jogging fashion.

◆ **Carrying** 24cp, 30sp; a stone key; a length of 25 ft. of rope; a bag of hardtack; cheese and salted meat; and Pitts's "lucky" knife, a **+1 dagger of giant slaying.**

WILHELMINA PLEASANT *"As my late husband used to say..."*

A lovely, dark-skinned young woman who is at once radiant yet distant, her hair pulled back and tied with a leather thong and dressed in finer than expected clothes, given her distance from any city or large town.

For the Perceptive

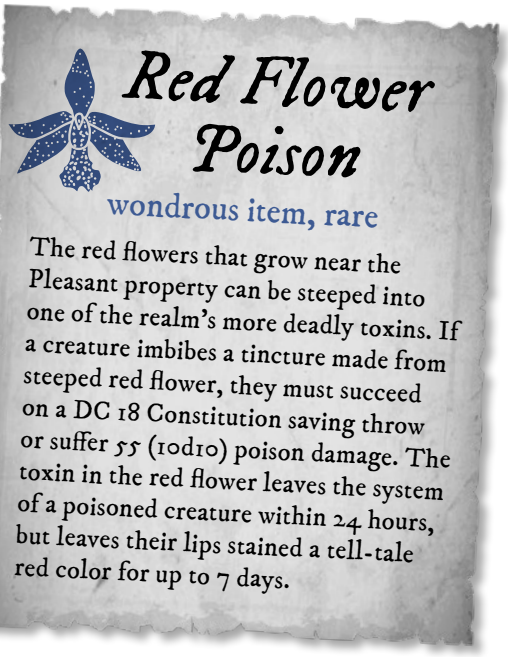
Wilhelmina's hands show the wear of hard labor, which belies the quality of her dress and bearing.

WILHELMINA PLEASANT was, for the first few years of her adult life, a farmer's wife, trapped in an unhappy existence of daily, backbreaking labor and abuse, receiving no true affection or respect in return for her efforts. That all changed when a red flower started to bloom on the Pleasant fields. It felt hot to the touch, but smelled divine and Wilhelmina took care to dry it and steep it for tea—an indulgence she tried to hide from her husband Unger. When Unger Pleasant discovered this simple act of individuality, he drank her entire cup of tea in one spiteful swig, wiped his mouth then dropped stone dead. Wilhelmina told the elders he must have been allergic. They chose to believe her. Wilhelmina soon discovered the truth: The flower itself is poisonous, and she's since started growing it for some of the realm's more slippery assassins.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Wilhelmina wishes to keep her flowers safe as they are the main source of her income.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Unger Pleasant's family never really bought the idea that he was "allergic to red flowers." They've hired an investigator, Constable Don Manchego, with less scruples than Unger to look into his demise.

◆ **Carrying** 17sp, 5gp; a scroll of *sending*; a small vial of "emergency" ***red flower poison*** in a small pouch inside her waistcoat—enough for three uses.



CARLA "THE SLEIGHT" FEINT *"Watch closely, love."*

A middle-aged **kobold** woman in a plain frock and good shoes. She appears to be fit and trim, with short red hair that frames her face and accents her startling light blue eyes. She carries a deck of cards in a clawed hand.

For the Perceptive

Carla absentmindedly juggles and cuts the deck with one hand without looking at it, suggesting a high degree of proficiency with cards.

CARLA FEINT is a wanderer, recently run out of the last sizable town she lived in. She is a card sharp and con artist. Her specialty is three-card monte. She's happy to take on anyone at any time, and will put down whatever she's doing in order to accommodate. She's got big time talent but can't seem to gain the respect of actual criminals—and as such has yet to strike it rich as a con. She settles for the tips she receives as a backroom dealer once a week at a spot called The Shed.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Holding a regular day job (though she'll do it when she has to) is simply no fun. Carla is looking for her first big score—she just needs a little muscle to back her up.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Carla was born lucky, and while her confidence is inspiring, she's never truly been tested. Her scheme to impersonate the escorts for a shipment of dwarven cast offs—the broken bits chipped off large gems in the refining process—could net her and her associates quite a bit of coin. But the legion who accompany the shipment have papers she's not yet been able to forge.

◆ **Carrying** 21sp, 22gp; leather shoes crafted for a quick getaway; a deck of cards; contact info for a man who can fence hot gemstones.

Carla's Three Card Monte. Played like the standard game, but almost impossible to win. Carla is so proficient at the game a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check is unnecessary. In order to win against Carla, a creature must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check. If Carla suspects her opponent will succeed, she will unconsciously expend a Luck point to try and change the outcome of their original Wisdom (Perception) check.

ARTIMUS "CHUBBS" NARGANTH *"I'll see you when you die."*

An exceptionally gaunt man whose face is stretched thin over his skull and whose sunken eyes suggest someone very near the end of life.

For the Perceptive

The one called "Chubbs" watches everything that passes before his eyes as if he can see into the ethereal plane. Maybe he can?

BORN WITH the gift (and possibly curse) of *true sight*, Artimus Narganth had a childhood filled with visions of incessant death and ghastly cruelty at every turn. The ability to see all manner of ghosts, specters and haunts terrified Artimus and he spent much of his adolescence searching for a cure. Thus far the only things that seem to work are excising himself fully from areas where ghosts are known to roam and a dense, chewy concoction of his own design, which he calls ***"Taffy."*** It smells like tar, but does help keep his vision on this plane and keeps "Chubbs" thin.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Chubbs is hoping to get farther out of the realm of the living, but has very little chance of surviving on his own—and the swamp he'll need to pass through was once the site of a wide scale military invasion that claimed thousands of innocent lives.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Taffy—Chubb's proprietary blend of tree sap, spider venom, snake oil and vanilla extract—is slowly killing him.

◆ **Carrying** 7sp; a small bag with a lump he could cut into 17 pieces of ***Taffy***; a small knife; a tiny balance.

"Taffy"

wondrous item, rare

A 10-minute chew on Taffy offers a creature advantage on all ability checks for one hour, as their focus on the prime material plane blocks out interference from any other plane (including the ethereal, astral and elemental). This drug negates *true sight* and *devil's sight*. Any creature ingesting Taffy must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned. After using Taffy a creature must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, they desire only more Taffy. A creature using Taffy more than once per day will permanently lose 1 HP from their max HP each day until they die.

Nobles & Leaders

Though these lands are relatively untamed, they still feature the power dynamics at play in more populous locales. Those with sway here lead through example, intimidation or the leverage of wealth.

Lady Kayla Whisperlake

"So brave. So daring. So—historic."

An elf with bronze skin and long black hair, in intricate robes and unsensible shoes, carrying what looks like a small easel across her svelte back.

For the Perceptive

Kayla has a set of frequently used, yet exceptionally clean, paintbrushes and quill pens tied to her girdle with a leather thong.

A HIGH SUN elf noble who expects to be addressed as such, Lady Kayla Whisperlake's haughty instincts are occasionally offset by her artistic pursuits. Driven by a passion for chronicling the best of humanity (a relative phrase as far as she's concerned), she never stays in one place for too long. Acting as a traveling "historian of the short-lived races," she returns to her hidden home in the east every few months, taking back her artistic "records" for proper exhibition and archiving, before heading back out into the unknowable wilds of what you likely consider civilization.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Kayla is fascinated by non-elves and has devoted her life to documenting their brief lifespans and the speed with which things like birth, marriage and death occur for them. She's happy to paint you if you're willing to sit for an hour or so. There's a crystalline cavern with exquisite lighting nearby—the perfect spot for a portrait.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Kayla's obsession is less with non-elves and more with particularly unnatural death, occasionally prompting her to lead her muses into dangerous situations (like a cave inhabited by a **behir**) in order to get the details of their gruesome ends just right.

◆ **Carrying** 38gp, 12pp; an artist's brush and paint set; nine quills.

Finestra Longdraught

"It's tradin' time!"

A heavyset halfling who is a bit shorter than her peers but also seems stronger, with long grey hair wound up in a chunky bun on her head, wearing rough worker's clothes and a dingy lavender apron.

For the Perceptive or Martially Trained

Her knuckles appear to be somewhat bruised and battered, but her face is free of marks—telltale signs of a person who throws, but does not receive, bareknuckle punches.

FINESTRA Longdraught's thriving trading post—the only one in these parts—is the premier spot within the region to acquire furs, beads, skins, carvings, seeds and other necessities (including specialized services) without growing, gathering or skinning them yourself. A vital institution, Longdraught's Short Shack is an important one in these parts, helping maintain connections between the settlers in this region and allowing budding villages to thrive. As the trading post's sole operator and proprietor, Finestra carries a significant amount of weight around here—a fact she has a habit of repeating.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Finestra loves a good deal and always fights to get the best bargain she can. She loves a good fight in general.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Finestra's trading post is, as one might expect, a hub of news and rumor, meaning she's likely to have information about all the goings on in the area. But were someone to ask about the underground fighting ring she hosts in the caverns beneath her shop, well, no—she's not heard of that.

◆ **Carrying** 38sp, 33gp; a ledger detailing her sales through the month; two fine pens; a flask of whiskey for when business is slow.

Commander Harvash Taanwal

with Skaarsbael

Riding atop a massive, armored white wolf is a gnome with a steely look in her eye—singular, because the other is sewn shut due to a deep scar that runs diagonally across her face, as if an axe had almost caved it in at some point. A walking miracle, she appears around 40 years old (by human standards) and is wearing a set of armored robes and electric-blue leather gloves.

For the Martially Trained

If the giant, armored white wolf didn't give it away, Commander Taanwal seems to know her way around the battlefield and has a powerful presence. But she is not carrying any visible weapons.

Commander Harvash Taanwal has seen more death than most can imagine, a not insignificant amount of it occurring from her direct orders or intervention. During wartime, she commands armies and is a tactical mastermind, riding her white wolf, Skaarsbael, like a lightning strike across the battlefield in order to coordinate troops. During peacetime, Taanwal has command of tenuous border territories and roams the wilderness with a squadron of her best soldiers, keeping the monsters that threaten the realm at bay.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Fiercely loyal to her Liege Lord, Maester Grandwall Packer, Commander Taanwal will protect her territory from whatever threatens it with her squad of warriors. Today? That means rounding up the **yeti** duo locals are calling the Twin Blizzard.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Commander Taanwal is intensely distrustful of outsiders and it will often take more than words to get her on your side. She's been tracking the Twin Blizzard for nearly a week. She's not aware that they're tracking her.

◆ **Carrying** 21sp, 32gp, 76pp; ***Conduit Gloves***; +2 armored robes; rations.

Conduit Gloves

wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

These toasty leather gloves also help spellcasters harness the fury of the storm. Any time the creature wearing these gloves casts a spell that deals lightning damage, these gloves add an additional 1d10 lightning damage.

Commander Harvash Taanwal

Small gnome, lawful good
A gnomish tactician who packs an arcane punch.

Armor Class 16 (armored robes)
Hit Points 72 (11d6 + 33)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Cha +9, Con +7, Int +9
Skills Arcana +9, Persuasion +9, Perception +5
Damage Resistances lightning, thunder
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Gnomish, Elvish, Dwarvish
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Magical Resistance. Commander Taanwal has advantage on saving throws to resist magic.

Spellcasting. Commander Taanwal is an 11th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Taanwal has the following Wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, message, shocking grasp*
1st level (4 slots): *chaos bolt, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *dragon's breath, gentle repose, suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, lightning bolt*
4th level (3 slots): *dimension door, storm sphere*
5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold*
6th level (1 slot): *chain lightning*

Actions
Shocking Grasp. Melee Spell Attack. +9 to hit (advantage if the target is wearing metal armor), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 19 (3d8 + 1d10) lightning damage and the creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn.

Skaarsbael

Large monstrosity, unaligned

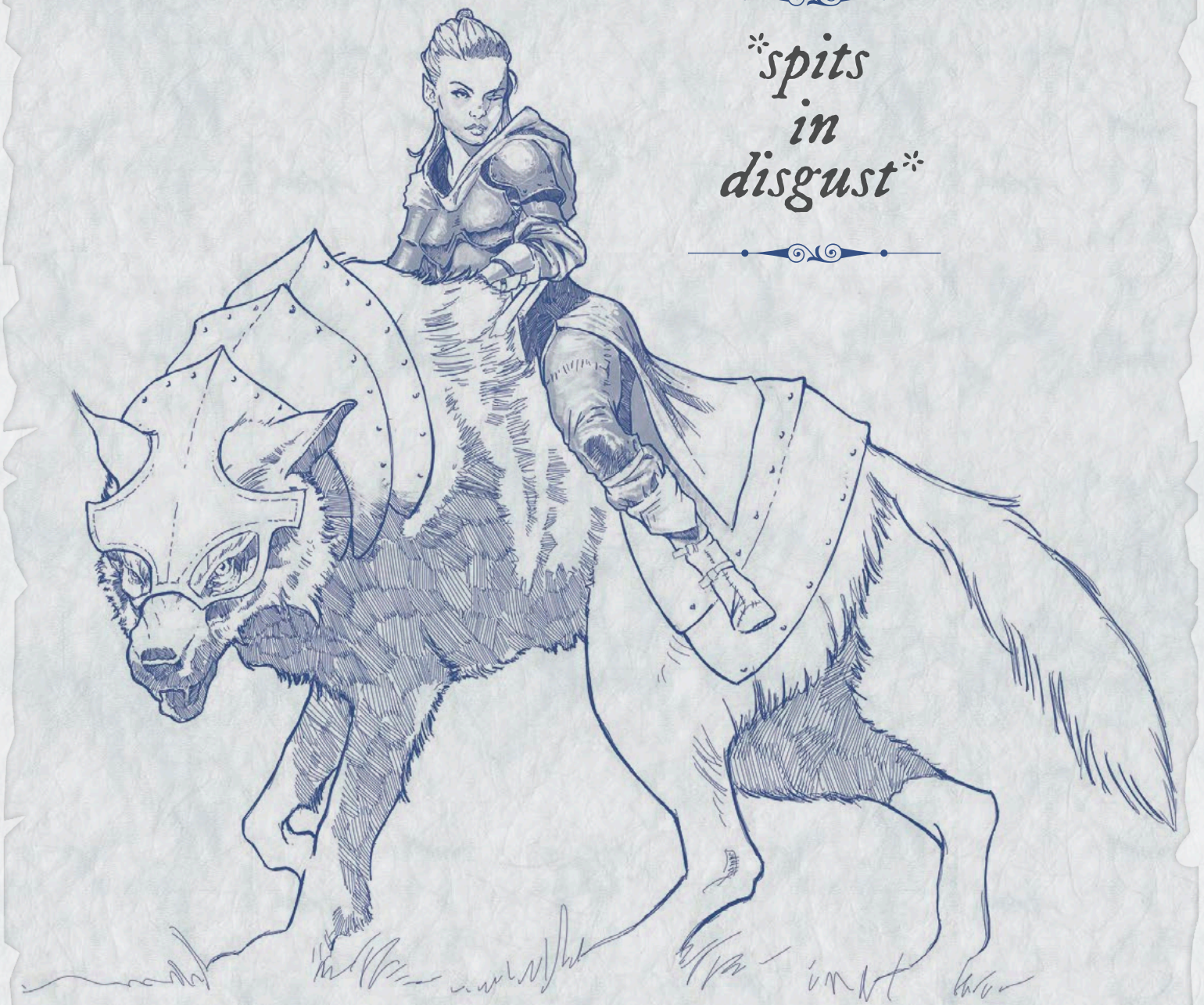
Armor Class 18 (plate armor)
Hit Points 95 (10d10 + 40)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	7 (-2)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Giant, Gnomish (but cannot speak)
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. Skaarsbael has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Actions
Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
Lightning Breath (Recharge 5-6). Skaarsbael exhales a bolt of lightning in a 30 ft. line that is 5 ft. wide. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (6d8) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.


*spits
in
disgust*

LADY SHADALA DUSK

"I sense you are unhappy. Good."

A battle-hardened high elven woman dressed in leather armor that she wears with the grace of a ballroom gown. Shadows seem to cling to her dusky skin and close-cropped hair.

For the Arcane

Lady Shadala sports a whip at her waist that glows with an aura of divination magic.

AFTER HUNDREDS of years stalking the outer and under planes on behalf of her deity, Shadala Dusk received a portent that led her into the material plane. She wandered searching for a sign of how to best serve her queen and came upon a trading outpost circled by an unkindness of ravens, and it is here she has remained for more than a century. Appointing herself Lady Shadala Dusk and rising as the leader of this area through both guile and force, she began to levy taxes, and impose arbitrary restrictions on things like worship and child birth in order to further impose her will. While life is hard under Lady Shadala, she protects the outpost from more deadly threats and acts as de facto judge, jury and executioner. Her judgements often appear fair, but typically leave both parties a little worse off than they were before they sought her advice.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Lady Shadala seeks tragedy for all who cross her path, a sort of twisted tribute to her god. She endeavors to keep those under her care alive for as long as possible, while ensuring their lives are mired in a general malaise at best, and profound horror more often than not.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** A bard named Lucious the Plucky has recently arrived at the trading post spreading cheer with their music. Music is all but banned. Perhaps this harbinger of happiness—the one Lady Shadala saw in her dreams—will be the reason it is outlawed for good.

◆ **Carrying** 4sp, 45gp, 1pp; a small ledger featuring several locals' names and an encrypted points system associated with each of them; a raven's skull; the ***Migraine Whip.***

Migraine Whip

weapon, very rare (requires attunement)

The damage dice for this whip is a 1d6. When a creature is hit with the Migraine Whip it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity saving throw or become restrained. While restrained in this way the wielder benefits from a successful *detect thoughts* spell on the restrained target. A target restrained by the whip can use their action to make a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity check (target's choice). On a success, the creature is no longer restrained.

Lady Shadala Dusk

Medium elf, neutral

This elven maiden from the fell shadows of the underworld has risen to power on the prime material plane.

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)
Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +6, Cha +8
Skills Acrobatics +8, Perception +6, Stealth +8
Damage Resistances necrotic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Fey Ancestry. Lady Shadala has advantage on saving throws against being Charmed and magic can't put Lady Shadala to sleep.
Burden of Time. All creatures other than elves from the fell shadow have disadvantage on saving throws while within 10 ft. of Lady Shadala.

Innate Spellcasting. Lady Shadala's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.
At will: *eldritch blast, suggestion*
1/day: *chain lightning, finger of death, hypnotic pattern, phantasmal killer, seeming*

Actions
Multiattack. Lady Shadala casts Eldritch Blast or makes three attacks with her Migraine Whip.
Eldritch Blast. Lady Shadala fires 3 beams of Eldritch energy at her foes. Ranged Spell Attack: +8 to hit, 120 ft., one target per blast. *Hit*: 10 (1d10 + 4) force damage.
Migraine Whip. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or suffer one additional effect of Lady Shadala's choice:
- The target is grappled (DC 15) if it is a medium or smaller creature. Until the grapple ends the target is restrained and Lady Shadala cannot grapple another target.
- Lady Shadala can detect the target's thoughts, as in the *detect thoughts* spell.
- The target takes 20 (4d10) necrotic damage.

Reactions
Misty Escape (1/Short or Long Rest). When Lady Shadala takes damage, she can turn invisible and teleport up to 60 ft. to an unoccupied space she can see. She remains invisible until the start of her next turn.

FINCH CLOAK *and the* CHEERFUL ASSOCIATES *"Could be worse."*

A charming halfling man with sun-baked skin, freckles and bright red hair with a finely-made short bow held loosely in his hands.

For the Perceptive

Hidden well, but not far away, are Finch's Associates: a **thief**, **scout** and a **veteran**.

FINCH CLOAK AND his band of Cheerful Associates are wanted all over the countryside. Surely you've seen their posters. No? No matter. They do what they can to protect the commoners from all manner of beasts—particularly the area's greedier, seedier nobles. They're quite good. Come and see!

◆ **Wants & Needs** Finch wants to create a more equitable society, even if that means redistributing a little wealth. For example, Lord Belch of Bilderborough, has plenty of coin—and Finch has designs on turning the trickle-down theory into more of a waterfall.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Finch Cloak and the Cheerful Associates have a 2,000gp bounty on their heads—a life-changing amount of coin for even their closest allies.

◆ **Carrying** 14cp, 9sp, 58gp; a +2 shortbow; 20 pieces of +1 ammunition; a wanted poster of himself.

Finch Cloak

Small halfling, neutral good
A capitalist's worst nightmare, Finch Cloak and his band of Cheerful Associates are optimists first, socialists second.

Armor Class 16 (leather armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d10 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +9
Skills Deception +6, Perception +8, Stealth +9
Senses passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Halfling
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Finch can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.
Evasion. If Finch is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw and only half damage if he fails.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Finch deals an extra 18 (5d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally and isn't incapacitated and he doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions
Multiattack. Finch makes two attacks with his shortbow.
Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d6 + 8) piercing damage.

DEVIN THRISBY *"Trust me."*

A middle-aged human man with a horseshoe of hair and a thin handlebar moustache, wearing fine clothes and using a gilded pitchfork as if it were a walking stick.

For the Insightful

The pitchfork looks as if it hasn't touched dirt in its life and has the finest polished handle you've ever seen, suggesting it is ceremonial or symbolic in nature.

DEVIN THRISBY WAS born to be a politician. Unfortunately he was also born dirt poor and therefore disconnected from the backrooms of clubs and courts where the gears of government are properly greased. Undeterred by his financial shortcomings, at the age of 17 he relocated to a part of the realm where houses are small, skies are big and the voting districts are massive—and started building a network of potential voters to leverage against the big city tycoons. Three decades later he has the ear of the commoners who dwell this far beyond the seats of power and he considers it a privilege to voice their opinions in the hallowed halls of the realm as their advocate. In a world where what those at the top fear most is an organized underclass, the man who commands 10,000 pitchforks is king.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Rivers redirected by a regional logging concern have led to an overall drought, a major concern for Devin's farm-focused constituents.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Politicians make a few compromises on their march toward higher office and in Devin's case, the Grim Reachers (a group of **bugbear** mercenaries) were paid a tidy sum to go away. But now they're back, and they want more money: or else.

◆ **Carrying** 8sp, 16 gp; a fine pitchfork with gold inlays; a threatening note from a group calling themselves "The Grim Reachers."

Carnath Pelicant

A human man in his mid-50s with shaggy black hair, brown eyes and a wry look on his face. He wears a long black cloak over traveler's clothes and carries a wooden staff topped with the head of a dragon. On his shoulder sits a rather large pelican.

For the Perceptive or Devout

Carnath has a tattoo on each forearm in a spiral pattern. They appear to represent blessings from a well-known deity of the wind and waves.

Carnath began his adventuring career as a wizard who primarily used his burgeoning abilities to seduce women and gain access to wine. But after being abducted during a brothel visit, he found himself in the cargo hold of a vessel heading for parts unknown. It was in this hour of crisis that he felt a calm like a placid sea sweeping over him—followed by the unrelenting crash of a raging ocean battering the hold. His captors' ship was scuttled and sent to the depths, but Carnath survived, floating on a bit of scrap and visited only by a pelican he conjured with sheer willpower. Or so he thought. The pelican has stayed with him ever since, a creature he now recognizes as an avatar of the sea itself—a conduit for the deity who saved his life. Carnath repented his past sins, changed his name to Carnath Pelicant, and has since dedicated himself to the service of those who spend more time on the ocean than the docks. A penitent cleric of the wind and waves, he serves his deity as best he can, by shepherding and blessing those who know the foamy taste of the sea.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Carnath has grown increasingly unsettled over the past few weeks as there are reports of **sahuagin raiders** and kraken worshippers gathering—and communing together—in the nearby Bay of Less.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The **kraken** that will soon menace this seaside village is a pure expression of the aims of Carnath's god. The cleric may be forced to choose between defending his home and serving his savior.

◆ **Carrying** 13cp, 44sp, 19gp, 48pp; inscribed silver ring worth 10gp; pipe and tobacco; pen and inkwell; 50 sheets of parchment; +2 leather armor; +3 flail; **staff of fire**; **cloak of the manta ray**; holy symbol.

Carnath Pelicant

Medium human, lawful good
This washed up wizard is now a full-blown cleric of the storm.

Armor Class 17 (+2 leather armor)
Hit Points 90 (1d6 + 13d8 + 28)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +10
Skills Medicine +10, Persuasion +6, Religion +6, Perception +10
Senses passive Perception 20
Languages Acquan, Common
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Channel Divinity (2/Short or Long Rest). Carnath can present his holy symbol to channel the power of his god for one of the following effects:

Fury of the Storm. When Carnath rolls lightning or thunder damage he can use this feature to deliver maximum damage instead of rolling.

Turn Undead. As an action, Carnath presents his holy symbol and utters a prayer censuring the Undead. Each Undead that can see or hear him within 30 ft. of him must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. If the target fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. Creatures of a CR of ½ or lower that fail this save are automatically destroyed.

Thunderous Strikes. Carnath's melee attacks channel the unbridled fury of his god, dealing an additional 2d8 thunder damage and, if the target is Large or smaller, pushing the target 10 ft. away from him.

Spellcasting. Carnath is a 14th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following Cleric spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, gust, message, minor illusion, shocking grasp, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *absorb elements, create or destroy water, find familiar, fog cloud, purify food and drink, thunderwave, shield, unseen servant*
2nd level (3 slots): *gust of wind, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, create food and water, sleet storm, spirit guardians, revivify, water walk*
4th level (3 slots): *banishment, control water, ice storm, mass cure wounds*
5th level (2 slots): *destructive wave, greater restoration*
6th level (1 slot): *heal*
7th level (1 slot): *resurrection*

Actions

Flail. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage and an additional +9 (2d8) thunder damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, they're pushed up to 10 ft. directly away from Carnath.

Reactions

Thunderous Rebuke (5/Long Rest). When a creature hits Carnath with a melee weapon attack, he can force the creature to make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

"All one needs is prayer and a good ship."

IVY GOLDFANG *"Ugh. As if."*

A 7-foot tall **gnoll** wearing a ripped silk gown with a machete tucked into her belt. Her mane is braided with ribbons, her eyeliner is in a killer wing style, but she doesn't seem pleased about either.

For the Perceptive

Ivy has a ring featuring a massive ruby on her finger.

IVY GOLDFANG just wanted to be a normal gnoll: attack a village here, rough up some travellers there. You know, gnoll with the punches. Instead she was "sold off" to the local noble's son as part of a treaty agreement. With nuptials imminent, Ivy yearns for a taste of the gnoll life she'll be missing before she ties the gnot.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ivy wants to act like a real gnoll for one last time, and is primed to loot some travelers.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ivy had been seeing the noble's son off and on for months, but as the alpha in the relationship, she wanted to be the one to propose.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 3gp; a ruby engagement ring worth 680gp; ruined petticoats; a machete.

Ivy Goldfang

Medium gnoll, chaotic neutral
A disdainful gnoll on a quest to do gnoll stuff before she enters into a marriage of convenience.

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Gnoll
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Rampage. When Ivy reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on her turn, she can take a bonus action to move up to half her speed and make a bite attack.

Actions
Multiattack. Ivy can make one bite attack and one machete attack.
Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.
Machete. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

STEPHAN O'CHARNY *"That sounds like a you problem."*

A youthful man of middle age (you know the type), who carries himself with an air of earned, if occasionally suspect, superiority in tailored leather slacks, a turquoise vest and a white blouse, with a rapier of exquisite design serving as an extension of his arm.

For the Martially Trained

While this man's sword appears to be of a fine make, he's holding it with a reverse grip—as if he suspects the only attack he'll need to stave off will be from behind.

A SWASHBUCKLER in his earlier days, Stephan O'Charny left the sea life behind and settled down in this remote part of the realm with eyes toward starting a family and living off the interest of his considerable ill-gotten gains. The plan worked to perfection for the first few years, but as he's gotten older he's gotten more cautious, more concerned, more—bored? Surely some member of his crew spilled the tea about his exploits. Certainly a magistrate will attempt to send bounty hunters after him, given his reputation. Undoubtedly, he'll be forced to forgo the day-to-day trappings of a landowner and run a would-be assassin through with his steel. Yes, he's retired, but can he reasonably expect to be the first of his peers to have died of old age? If anyone knew of his location, they'd absolutely try to brace him for intel about the whereabouts of his buried hoard. Unless...they already know where it is?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Stephan is growing increasingly concerned about the security of his buried treasure. He's also a bit restless in general, as the landowner's life is not quite as exciting as he'd anticipated.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Earning Stephan's trust will take time, but he's wily enough to know he can't check in on his treasure alone. He'll need to form a new crew if he wants to see his hoard in person. He can always jettison them after it's buried again like he did the last time.

◆ **Carrying** 34cp, 12sp, 95gp; 20pp in dubloons; a small bag of chewable gum; a coded map.

Rakish Panache. Stephan makes every attack with advantage and can leave a creature's space without provoking opportunity attacks.

LOTHERIAN, THE UNBRIDLED FURY *rustles angrily*

A 15-foot scorched birch tree that unfolds into a spindly **dryad**, her head crowned with a halo of broken twigs. She moves with a limp, her bark blackened and burnt along her left side.

For the Druidic

There is no reasoning with an angry dryad. Best to help her or get out of her way.

HAVING GROWN within this grove and flourished as the forest itself expanded, Lotherian now seeks justice for the trees that were her family. This ancient forest was recently set ablaze and while she has no proof, Lotherian believes the flames were arcane in nature. As the sole survivor and without hope of a chance to rebuild her life, Lotherian has no care for her own wellbeing and will do whatever it takes to destroy anyone responsible for the death of her forest home.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Revenge is best served hot, and Lotherian will find whomever was responsible for burning her forest and make them pay.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** A miller's boy named Trickle Dorne recently discovered his arcane spark while playing in the woods near his father's lumber mill. With a flick of his wrist he sent a gout of fire at a stump. The unnatural flame erupted and carried across nearly 300 acres. He's been hiding from his father ever since.

◆ **Carrying** Grief.

Lotherian, the Unbridled Fury

Medium fey, chaotic neutral
Lotherian will not be able to see the forest for the trees, as all her trees have been destroyed.

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)
Hit Points 83 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances fire
Senses darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Magic Resistance. Lotherian has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Speak with Beasts and Plants. Lotherian can communicate with beasts and plants as if they shared a language.
Ignite (1/Long Rest). Lotherian can ignite her form and wreath herself in fire for one minute. A creature that touches Lotherian or hits her with a melee attack while within 5 ft. of her takes 11 (3d6) fire damage. Any melee attacks she makes deal an additional 11 (3d6) fire damage on a hit.
Tree Stride. Once on her turn, Lotherian can use 10 ft. of her movement to step magically into one living tree within her reach and emerge from a second living tree within 60 ft. of the first tree, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 ft. of the second tree. Both trees must be large or bigger.

Innate Spellcasting. Lotherian's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *druidcraft, thorn whip*
3/day each: *absorb elements, earth tremor*
1/day each: *barkskin, daylight, fireball*

Actions
Multiattack. Lotherian can make two swipe attacks.
Swipe. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d4) slashing damage plus 11 (3d6) fire damage if she uses Ignite.
Fey Charm. Lotherian targets one humanoid or beast that she can see within 30 ft. of her. If the target can see her, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed. The charmed creature regards Lotherian as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Lotherian's control, it takes her requests or actions in the most favorable way it can.
Each time Lotherian or her allies do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Lotherian dies, is on a different plane of existence from the target or ends the effect as a bonus action. If a target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to Lotherian's Fey Charm for the next 24 hours.
Lotherian can have no more than one humanoid and up to three beasts charmed at a time.

LINCOLN DUDLEY, *Human Tamer Extraordinaire*

A broad-chested humanoid lion whose mane flows in the breeze and whose maw seems curled in a menacing smile. He's wearing audacious burgundy and navy blue robes that scream luxury, and wielding a glaive that says "stay back."

For the Charismatic

While you hate to admit it, there's something dashing—maybe even endearing—about this slaver. If his profession weren't so abhorrent, you might get along.

A proud lion-born of the beastlands, Lincoln Dudley didn't know what to make of himself when he was shunned from his pride and left to die in the prime material plane. He quickly mustered his courage, however, and found that his commanding presence, natural charm and deafening roar served him well in altercations with most creatures in this part of the realm—but was particularly effective on humans. He took to imposing his will on them before he fully came of age, and soon had them eating out of the palm of his paw (or pulling wagons or loading stores or skinning kills—whatever the customer wants, really). Today he is one of the realm's most notorious slavers and if his charm doesn't persuade you, well, there's always the rod.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Lincoln is always on the prowl for fresh flesh to mold into an impressive labor force. He's currently a few bodies shy of his quota for Saskia Cordish, the Baroness of the Outer Glade.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** He's done his best to keep it a secret, but as it turns out, Lincoln is particularly terrified of mice.

◆ **Carrying** 31cp, 9sp, 66gp, 21pp; the ***glaive of submission***; an elegant hairbrush; a **bag of holding** crafted from gnoll skin; an iron brand (LD) formed to create the shape of a crudely drawn lion.

Lincoln Dudley,
Human Tamer Extraordinaire
Medium lion-born, lawful evil

A charming big cat with a powerful roar, who's never met a human he couldn't coerce into servitude.

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +6
Armor Class 18 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 161 (14d12 + 70)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation, +8, Perception +7
Senses passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Lion-born
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Devastating Roar (1/Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, Lincoln can let out an especially menacing roar. Creatures of Lincoln's choice within 60 ft. of him that can hear him must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of Lincoln until the end of his next turn.
Pride King's Rage (5/Long Rest). As a bonus action, Lincoln can enter a focused, primal rage. For one minute he has resistance to all damage except for psychic, advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws and has +3 to damage rolls for Strength-based attacks.
Overwhelming Charm (3/Long Rest). As an action, Lincoln can impose his will on any humanoid creature of his choice within 30 ft. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by Lincoln for 24 hours or until the effect is broken by *dispel magic* or *greater restoration*. Humans make this save at disadvantage.
Legendary Resistance (3/Long Rest). If Lincoln fails a saving throw he can choose to succeed instead.

Multiattack. Lincoln makes three attacks, two with his Glaive of Submission and one with his Sharpened Claw.
Glaive of Submission. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 5 (1d8) lightning damage. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.
Sharpened Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Glaive of Submission
wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This +1 glaive is imbued with the stunning power of a lightning strike. On a hit, the target suffers 1d10 bludgeoning and 1d8 lightning damage, and must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target is stunned until the end of its next turn.

"Back, scoundrel."

Edgar von Hinkelberg III, "The Fiend"

"Very interesting."

A tall, pimply, half-elven youth wrapped in a long cloak of fine make, with dark eyeliner accenting his shifty gaze.

For the Insightful

This man's confidence comes not from experience, but from wealth—without his noble titles, he'd very likely have amounted to nothing.

THE DRAWBACK of living this far from the main commerce centers of the realm is it's next to impossible to get your hands on items most would consider common place. The inverse is also true, however, as the rare and obscure beast bits, plant pieces and mineral matter prized in larger cities often have their origins in hard to access areas such as the one Edgar von Hinkelberg III calls home. Using his mother's connections and his considerable free time, "The Fiend" has developed a particularly robust black market for organic spell components and other oft-sought obscurities. His reach is considerable, as is the depth of his coin purse, and despite his young age he commands a significant amount of respect—at least among those who value their lives. After all, The Fiend may be a mama's boy. But his mother is the Queen of Knives.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The Fiend is looking for some steely-eyed travellers who would be willing to carry a parcel to the city's smaller apothecary.

Edgar von Hinkelberg III, "The Fiend"

Medium half-elf, neutral
A cultivator and aficionado of rare materials available within the region and an utter momma's boy.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Con +4
Skills Deception +5, Persuasion +5
Damage Resistances poison
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions
Dagger. Meelee Weapon Attack. +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d4) piercing damage.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The parcel in question contains a set of **basilisk** eyes, which still maintain the ability to turn any who gaze into them to stone.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp, 34sp, 140gp, 12pp; jewelery worth 140gp; a packet of herbal cigars; a small parcel marked for delivery to Martini's Manse of Magical Macguffins.

Dancier "Tiny" Despval

"Rhythm is life, and life is rhythm."

Silver haired and draped in flowing silver vestments, this diminutive dark elf evokes dappling moonlight. Short even by dark elven standards, he could be confused for a sickly halfling at first glance, but moves with an otherworldly grace.

For the Devout

Dancier wears a necklace bearing a depiction of a female dark elf dancing before a full moon—a widely denounced deity as far as dark elven society goes.

DANCIER "TINY" DESPVAL and his family are exiles from their dark elven community, having fled from the underworld and its backstab-centric society to find the fabled moonlit grove described in the founding documents of their faith. While they escaped unscathed, Matron Mother Funnelweaver often seeks to make examples of those who dare depart. Dancier's family sent their seven children to every corner of the realm—which is how Dancier found himself here, maintaining a small shrine that shimmers when the moon is full. He may never see his family again, or live to see another full moon. That's why he dances like this day might be his last.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Though Dancier desperately wants to be reunited with his family he knows gathering together might lead to their execution. If he could find the grove detailed in his collection of ancient poems, he is confident his god will shepherd his family there.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Apart from the fact that each day his would-be captors from the world below draw closer to his location? Well, Dancier hasn't had a proper dance partner in a dwarf's age.

◆ **Carrying** 8cp, 5sp, 9gp; a magical stone that plays recorded music.

Lawkeepers & Lawbreakers

The wilds and outlands of the realm are cruel and unpredictable. While there are those who choose to add to that cruelty by stalking others with impunity far from the reach of the crown or council, some take it upon themselves to ensure these incursions are as mitigated as their mounts will allow.

Wisewoman Greenberry *"This be my judgement."*

A granite statue of a human-sized woman, finely wrought, with details of clothing, hair and skin that are astonishing to behold, and exhibiting a level of artistry and realism that's surprising given its location this far from the civilized world.

For the Perceptive

This statue seems to whisper as you approach. The sound is so low and soft that you second guess yourself about whether it's just the wind.

WISEWOMAN Greenberry was a real woman once. The wisest woman, by all accounts, and considered a great arbiter of disputes. She was so revered for her perspicacity that the people of the area made her the de facto judge for all conflicts and her reputation only grew, as did her name. Unfortunately, when Wisewoman Greenberry was at the height of her regard, she stumbled into the path of a **basilisk**. A party of woodsmen were able to kill the beast before it ate her, but not before it rendered her to stone. The locals here have yet to find a way to cure Greenberry of her miserable condition, but were able to find a traveling **druid** who was at least able to give her a voice of sorts, enabling her to render judgement even still. It's a less than ideal situation.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Greenberry is desperate to get out of her current predicament and is open to suggestions.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Though Greenberry is technically still alive, her condition has done a wonder on her mind, robbing her of the insight that made her such a reliable arbiter. Her pronouncements have become increasingly skewed in favor of one or neither party involved, but due to her reputation no one dares question them, no matter how lopsided, obscene or inscrutable they are.

◆ **Carrying** Nothing.

Brix Butterfield *"Here alone? Be wary, friend."*

A portly fellow with a thick mop of black hair atop his round, clean-shaven face, wearing simple peasant clothing and a worn leather belt into which has been shoved a short wooden club.

For the Perceptive

This unassuming individual is subtly sizing up the largest and strongest members of your party.

THOUGH HE appears harmless enough, Brix Butterfield is what's known as a "batt-scout," paid to look for healthy, hearty wanderers who won't be missed if they happen to vanish. Brix makes a note of an appropriate target's appearance, resistance capabilities and where they're staying, even following them as necessary to get the information he needs. He passes this intel to the Battery Shepherds, a group of highly specialized acquirers of humanoid species employed by Dr. Shallow Fielding. At an opportune time, when the would-be battery is alone, drunk or otherwise at risk, the Battery Shepherds swoop in and collect Dr. Fielding's new power source.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Brix loves working for Dr. Fielding and the Battery Shepherds, but what he really wants is a construct powered by one of the batts he's turned in.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** If Brix comes across a tremendous specimen, he's been known to drug them into submission by slipping a sleeping potion into their drink or adding it to their food.

◆ **Carrying** 20sp, 4gp; a bag of green figs; a wineskin; a small yet heavy club; three doses of *sleep* potion (DC 20 Constitution check, or the target falls unconscious for four hours).

MIGUEL THE MAGNIFICENT

Master of the Marauding Marquee

A flamboyant, charismatic green **kobold** who wears a finely made costume reminiscent of a circus ringmaster and carrying a beautifully carved cane, accompanied by a troupe of performers, acrobats, bards and other circus folk, who follow his lead.

For the Charismatic

Miguel seems less ringmaster, more cult leader. You'd be wary, or perhaps even jealous, if you weren't so entertained.

For the Elven

Every member of the Marauding Marquee is elven, save Miguel. You also feel compelled to join them.

The Marauding Marquee, led by Miguel the Magnificent, is the premier travelling circus and occasional sneak thief troupe in the realm (just ask them), and they're bringing joy and revelry wherever they go! They're always recruiting more performers. Why not join them? Can you juggle or breathe fire or perhaps swallow a glaive? Why then you're wasting your life if you don't share those skills with the wider realm! Especially if you're an elf! Come! Come! To the cave in the mountains for our next big show!

◆ **Wants & Needs** Miguel the Magnificent is always looking for more members to join the Marauding Marquee. He also has quick fingers and a proclivity for gold and precious objects.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Miguel works for an **ancient green dragon** named Tarrowing and is on his way back to her lair with her favorite treasure (artistic entertainment) and her favorite food (elves).

◆ **Carrying** A handy haversack including: 888cp, 455sp, 2,349gp, 27pp; precious stones and gems worth 700gp (all of which once belonged to the accompanying elves); ***Staff of the Elf-Charmer.***

Miguel the Magnificent

Small kobold, chaotic evil

A charismatic kobold who is a staunch supporter of the arts, as well as the dragon for whom he spends his days acquiring dinner and entertainment.

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 18 (4d8)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Cha +7
Skills Sleight of Hand +6, Survival +3, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances poison
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Elvish, Draconic
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Staff of the Elf-Charmer (1/Long Rest). Miguel can use an action to attempt to magically charm all elves within 60 ft. that can see and hear him (DC 18 Charisma saving throw, which elves make at disadvantage), into following his commands. On a failure, the elf is charmed until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or by Miguel ending the effect early.
Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Miguel has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
Pack Tactics. Miguel has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions
Dagger. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage.

PLUNK "PLUNK!"

A simple-minded cyclops in a hardly useful loincloth whose gigantic eye has a branch sticking out of it.

For the Medically Trained

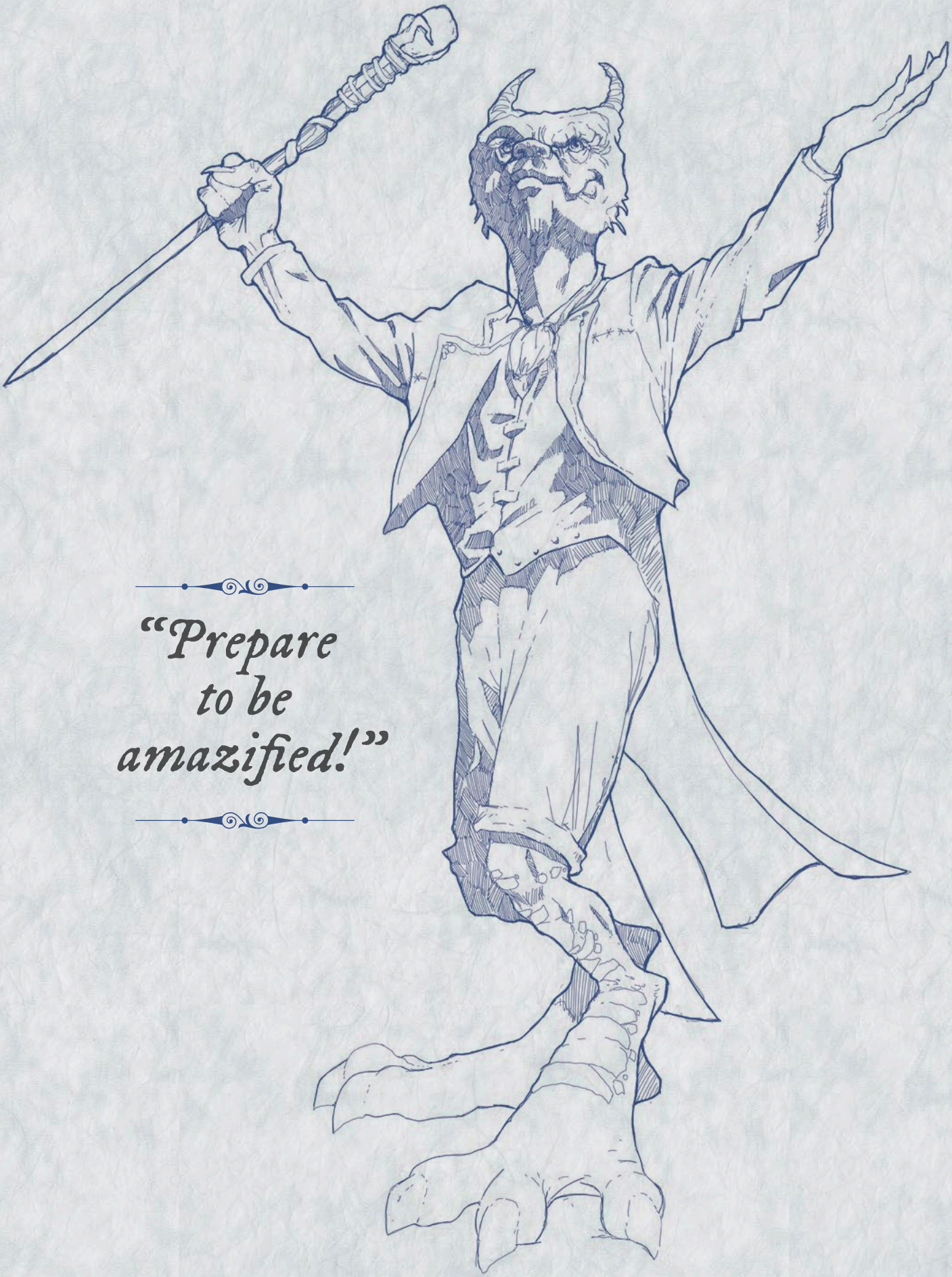
You could probably remove the branch if Plunk were willing to be still for a moment.

PLUNK IS pretty docile as **cyclopes** go (which is to say violent, but not extremely so). A bit of a local legend and old wives' tale meant to keep children from wandering off ("lest you be stomped by the one-eyed giant!"), Plunk has been a fixture of the region for decades now even if he isn't aware of the stories he inspires. His favorite hobby is tossing large boulders off the side of the arch that crosses the river and watching them splash at the bottom while shouting his own name. He also enjoys hurling them at anyone who doesn't bring him gifts.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Plunk has "a splinter" in his eye. FIX IT.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The land bridge Plunk loves leads the abandoned Temple of Tallistrel, a long forgotten ruin from another age.

◆ **Carrying** Two boulders.



"Prepare to be amazified!"

DAMON "LICH HEAD" LAMORE

"Friend of the lich king is a friend of mine."

A tall and slack-shouldered individual with colorful but sun-bleached robes. His head and face are covered in long, matted hair and a scraggly beard. He appears to be lost.

For the Perceptive

Damon's eyes have a red and glassy tint, as if he hasn't slept in weeks.

For the Naturalists

There's a tang in the air like burnt barnyard moss with just a hint of necrotic flesh—the telltale scent of hazebush, a plant used in necromancy and portal magic.

DAMON LAMORE IS ONE of many self-proclaimed Lich Heads who worship a notorious bardic Lich King named Jerri. Unfortunately for Damon, Jerri was destroyed by a band of adventures long before Damon was born. But Jerri's music lives on, and so in a way, the Lich King does too. Damon tends to prosthelytize when it comes to sharing Jerri's tunes with the world, and he's spent quite a bit of his spare time perfecting the art of necromancy in an effort to connect himself to his idol's past. An easy going guy without much of a plan, Damon's only desire is to bring Jerri back however he can, listen to some chill tunes and destroy anyone who would speak ungratefully of the undead Lich King. Yeah, OK, he stole some bones from the temple's cemetery. Chill out, man. It was just a couple femurs and some ribs. Sure, he collected some hearts from the taxidermist by the lakeside but c'mon man, he was just going to throw them to his dogs. Phylactery? Yeah, he's trying to build one. Is that a crime now? Thinking of building something?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Damon seeks the Stone of Recording, a magical artifact said to contain Jerri's last performance for a literal captive audience. He is also looking for a captive audience of his own.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Damon has been in contact with other Lich Heads who are attempting to raise Jerri back to his undead form. They're all planning to rally for something they call Lichapalooza on an open stretch of farmland not far from here.

◆ **Carrying** 1cp, 4sp, 3gp; an ossuary containing 2 skeletons; incense for ritual use; a bag of hazeshrub; a beaten up lute; a lute pick made from a toe bone, his arcane focus.

Damon "Lich Head" Lamore

Medium half-elf, chaotic neutral
A lifelong fan of the Lich King Jerri, this necromancer isn't afraid of trouble ahead or trouble behind.

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 66 (11d8 + 11)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +8, Wis +5
Skills Arcana +8, Performance +6, Religion +8
Damage Resistances necrotic
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Deep Speech, Draconic, Elvish
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Dark Star (1/Turn). When Damon kills a creature with a spell of 1st level or higher, he regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level, or three times the level if it is a necromancy spell. This ability does not work on constructs or undead.
Workingman's Dead (2/Long Rest). When Damon uses the *animate dead* spell he can target an additional corpse or pile of bones, creating another **zombie** or **skeleton** as appropriate. Whenever Damon creates an undead, its hit point maximum is increased by 9 and it adds +3 to its weapon and damage rolls.
Dismiss Taste (2/Short or Long Rest). Damon can use a bonus action on his turn to target one creature within 30 ft. of him and question their taste in music. If the target can hear Damon, the target must succeed on a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or have disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls and saving throws until the start of Damon's next turn when he stops belittling for them enjoying music other than the Lich King's.

Spellcasting. Damon is an 11th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Damon has the following Wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, dancing lights, mending , vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *false life, hideous laughter, mage armor, ray of sickness*
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, hypnotic pattern, ray of enfeeblement, web*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, bestow curse*, vampiric touch**
4th level (3 slots): *blight*, compulsion, dimension door*
5th level (2 slots): *arcane hand, cloudkill, dominate person*
** = Necromancy spell of 1st level or higher*

Actions
Low Five. Unarmed Melee Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) necrotic damage.

ANGELINA SERRANO *"You causing trouble?"*

A golden-haired woman in her late 40s wearing the remnants of a military uniform and armor. She carries a beautiful greatsword and a grim expression upon her face.

For the Martially Trained

Angelina appears to have done her best to remove any signifiers of who or what she fought for, but the make of her uniform and armor place her as a higher-ranking officer—albeit perhaps a former one.

THERE ARE those who follow flags and others who follow ideals. When one is in conflict with the other, many stick by the flag, believing loyalty to the crown and true honor to be one and the same. Angelina Serrano felt differently and, despite being the king's most accomplished commander, has become one of his most determined antagonists. After deserting, she took to the trees and has been on the run ever since. She will occasionally step in to help those in need, brandishing her ***blind luck blade*** with which she once led thousands of the king's fighters, but she knows every time word of her reappearance reaches the king she'll need to flee to bury her identity once more.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Angelina heard that royal bannermen are currently throwing settlers off their land to make room for a baroness's summer home. She won't abide it.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The king has grown tired of chasing Angelina and has decided to make her come to him by capturing and torturing her wife and three children.

◆ **Carrying** A sketch of her family; the **blind luck blade.**

Angelina Serrano

Medium half-elf, lawful good
A deserter of the royal army who now keeps her own peace instead of making war.

Armor Class 17 (half plate)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +8
Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Halfling
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Great Weapon Fighting. When Angelina rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack she makes with a melee weapon wielded with two hands, she can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2.
Second Wind (1/Short or Long Rest). As a bonus action, Angelina can regain 1d10 + 12 hit points.
Action Surge (1/Short or Long Rest). Angelina can take one additional action on top of her regular action and a possible bonus action.
Indomitable (1/Short or Long Rest). Angelina can reroll one failed saving throw. She must use the new roll.
Blind Luck Blade. Angelina's greatsword functions as a common **luck blade** (ha!) with one exception: any time Angelina uses its *wish* feature, she has no power over what spell or *wish* will be cast—all she can do is hope for the best.

Actions
Multiattack. Angelina makes three attacks with her Blind Luck Blade.
Blind Luck Blade. Melee Weapon Attack: Two-handed. +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

RED LAN-FIN *"Don't be scallywaggin' me!"*

A ruddy half-elf in a red striped top and clamdigger slacks. His long, bright red hair is tied back in a ponytail.

For the Perceptive

Red carries a small dagger and a metal belaying pin in his belt, perhaps for protection.

LOOK. RED LAN-FIN will level with you. He's a pirate. Always has been, likely always will be. "You can take the pirate out of the sea, but you can't take the sea-set tattoos off a pirate" as the saying goes. He's a better cook than he is a fighter, and truth be told, he's a terrible cook, which is why his shipmates left him here a few weeks ago. He'd love a chance to get on with another captain, especially if they're seeking to give chase to his former shipmates aboard the *Dirty Byrd*. For now though he's looking for work, or maybe a few pockets to pick. Whichever comes first, or pays better.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Red would love a job, revenge on his shipmates and a chance to pursue the Gilded Isle—a **dragon turtle** said to contain a proper hoard of treasure on its shell.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The *Dirty Byrd* is now a ghost ship. Crewed by **ghosts**. The evil kind.

◆ **Carrying** 26sp, 1gp; a stolen **cap of water breathing**; two of his own teeth (he's sentimental); a belaying pin; a dagger; a detailed log of the movements of the Gilded Isle.

Fandle "Rockhound" Penlock

A young gnome with long black hair and light blue eyes in slate-colored leather armor and bearing a backpack with a sling belted at his side.

For the Druidic or Fey Touched

Fandle seems remarkably connected to the earth, possibly even the fey wild.

As a young boy raised near these forests, Fandle "Rockhound" Penlock's family interacted with the fey on a regular basis, befriending a number of sprites and fey elves, ultimately becoming welcome in their inner circle. While attending a large fey wedding, Fandle watched helplessly as a band of **orcs** and **goblin worg riders** ran down the entire bridal party, including his parents and fey godmother. Pursued into the forest by brutish forces, Fandle summoned his courage and all his might, splitting the earth beneath the remaining armies and sending them careening headlong into a freshly carved ravine. The remaining fey creatures rallied around him and gifted them with their blessing, as well as a new nickname, and he's been an ally to the feywild ever since.

He regards most humanoids with suspicion and his hatred of orcs and goblinkind has led him to pursue them aggressively, often striking first before they can gain a foothold near his domain. Rockhound understands protecting the wilderness is a job only those with hearts of stone can fully stomach, and he's long past negotiating with any who don't see the value of maintaining the purity of this place.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Rockhound believes the only good orc is a dead orc, and he's found a number of soon-to-be dead orcs in a cavern fortress up river. He is willing to take them out alone, but knows he'd have better luck with some backup.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The orc encampment up river is a sanctuary for outcast pacifist orcs, who wish to leave the warring ways of their people behind.

◆ **Carrying** 22sp, 17gp; a wooden shield; studded leather armor; cartographer's tools; component pouch; herbalism kit; a vial of calming earth scent (for when he's away from home); sling and river rock ammo (20).

Fandle "Rockhound" Penlock

Small gnome, neutral good
Tough, self-proclaimed "Guardian of the Fey," this clever gnome is ready for a fight with whomever has bad intentions toward his magical friends and their environs.

Armor Class 17 (studded leather, shield)
Hit Points 54 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Skills Animal Handling +7, Medicine +7, Nature +5, Survival +7
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Gnomish, Sylvan
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Elemental Shift (2/Long Rest). Rockhound can use his druidic wildshape to shift into an **earth elemental.**
Stone Camouflage. Rockhound has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to hide in rocky terrain.

Spellcasting. Rockhound is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Druid spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft, magic stone, thorn whip*
1st level (4 slots): *entangle, goodberry, speak with animals, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *heat metal, pass without trace, reduce/enlarge, spike growth*
3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, conjure animals, meld into stone*
4th level (3 slots): *polymorph, stone shape*
5th level (1 slot): *wall of stone*

Actions
Sling. Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit*: 8 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

"Hard pass."

GARRETT DuBOIS *"Sounds bad."*

A gruff, stoic bruiser of a man in rusty and dented heavy plate, whose long gray hair waves in the breeze, carrying a spear in one hand and a shield in his other.

For the Scholarly

You've heard of Garrett DuBois—his loss at Colder Downs was among the most significant of the last war. A celebrated warrior, his entire company was brutally defeated and it was assumed he died alongside his men.

AT NIGHT, Garrett DuBois can still hear their screams. The shouts to retreat, the panic in their faces—men who had stood by his side through the worst he encountered were frozen in fear as they stared across the battlefield. Garrett had prepared his company to hold the line, for the likelihood of death among their ranks. He hadn't told them the enemy would be riding **wyverns**. Or **hydra**. Or **dragons**. He hadn't known—not that it would have made a difference. Once these monstrosities hit the battlefield he knew the day's fight would be his last. But it wasn't. He emerged from the bloodsoaked wreckage of defeat, covered in the gore of men who trusted him, and knew he'd be cursed to endure his remaining days—gifted by the gods, he assumes—tracking each and every creature involved in the destruction of his company. It is this sole purpose that has brought him this deep into unoccupied territory, as he tracks Boorgon Griff—the hydra master.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Garrett plans to seek and destroy the hydra master and his mount, a seven-headed terror named Sliss.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Garrett suffers from crippling post-traumatic stress disorder and despite his brave face must attempt a DC15 Wisdom saving throw against being frightened at the start of any encounter. If Garrett fails this saving throw, he rerolls the save at the end of his subsequent turns, ending the condition on a success.

◆ **Carrying** 22cp, 9sp, 10gp; heavy plate; spear and shield; net; a hit list of other creatures and their riders involved in the Battle of Colder Downs.

Garrett DuBois

Medium human, lawful good
A disgraced veteran of the last war, Garrett DuBois plans to spend his final days tracking the monster-riding villains who decimated his company.

Armor Class 20 (heavy plate, shield)
Hit Points 119 (14d10 + 42)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +5, Con +6
Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Resolve (1/Long Rest). When Garrett is reduced to 0 hit point, he instead drops to 1 hit point.
Vengeful Surge (1/Short or Long Rest). Garrett can summon his own gritty determination to get the job done, granting himself two additional Actions on his turn in addition to his Action and Bonus Action. At least one of these additional Actions must be used to attack.

Actions
Multiattack. Garrett makes three melee attacks, two with his spear and one with his shield.
Spear. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.
Shield Bash. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (2d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Reactions
Parry. Garrett adds 3 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, he must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.
Shield Specialist. If Garrett is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he can use his reaction to take no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw or half damage on a failure, interposing his shield between himself and the source of the effect.

WARRYN KNACKLE OF THE TIMBERS, *Future Fighter*

"I was expecting this."

A sly-faced gnomish man in need of a haircut in overlong robes and twirling a set of dice that float above his open palm.

For the Insightful

When this individual speaks, you get the sense that he'd rather be doing anything but talking to you.

THE CURSE OF being a prodigy is you almost immediately outshine your peers, and their fragile egos tend to respond to true greatness by finding ways to cut it down. Even among the prodigious youths at the Strygianus Arcane Academy, Warryn Knackle was a standout, which made him a target for schoolyard bullying and relentless ire. Despite his skill he had few friends and fewer prospects upon graduation (no one likes a know-it-all, not even professors of the arcane arts) but Warryn knew he was destined for greatness. He saw his bright future clear as day. (He was, after all, a divination wizard.) As he continued to pursue his craft, he encountered visions of his former classmates engaging in horrific applications of their knowledge—pursuing lichdom, enslaving entire towns, using *minor illusion* to tip—and knew the only one capable of stopping these events from transpiring was someone who'd already seen them come to pass. But he couldn't see far enough, deep enough or long enough into the years to come to make a significant difference. So he retreated to the distraction-free wilderness of the Timbers to construct a device—The Spire of the Foreordained—he's certain is the key to stopping danger before it can transpire.

◆ **Wants & Needs** In order to complete The Spire of the Foreordained, Warryn needs a number of arcane supplies that aren't available in this part of the realm as well as several mechanical components that will need to be custommade. And he's worn out his welcome at the blacksmith's. Yes, he should have known he would need these items before fleeing to the wilderness. Bringing it up isn't going to change the past.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Like all gifted practitioners in a particular field, Warryn is prone to blindspots when it comes to his own skills. For example, the plans he's drawn up for The Spire of the Foreordained—the ones he claims to have seen himself building in one of his visions—were actually created by a malevolent demon, who is using Warryn's passion for saving the realm as a means for opening a dark portal into it.

◆ **Carrying** 15gp, 2pp; a **pearl of power**; plans for The Spire of the Foreordained: his lucky dice, which serve as his spell focus.

Warryn Knackle of the Timbers

Small gnome, lawful neutral

This ambitious gnome is prepared to protect the future from danger, no matter how dangerous that makes his present.

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 67 (15d6 + 7)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (0)	22 (+6)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +11, Wis +6
Skills Arcana +11, History +11
Languages Common, Gnomish, Elvish, Halfling
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Spellcasting. Warryn is a 15th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, message, true strike*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, feather fall, mage armor*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts*, locate object*, scorching ray*
3rd level (4 slots): *clairvoyance*, fireball, fly*
4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye*, dimension door, divination*
5th level (2 slots): *scrying*, telepathic bond**
6th level (1 slot): *mass suggestion, true seeing**
7th level (1 slot): *delayed blast fireball, teleport*
8th level (1 slot): *maze*
* = *Divination spell of 1st level or higher*

Portent (Recharges after Warryn Casts a Divination Spell of 1st Level or Higher). When Warryn, or a creature he can see, makes an attack roll, saving throw or ability check, Warryn can roll a d20 and choose to use this roll in place of the attack roll, saving throw or ability check.

Actions

Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d6-1) bludgeoning damage, or 4 (1d8-1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

WINTER MOON

A slender female cat-person with orange tabby fur in dark purple leather armor, wearing a belt of daggers, a fetching hat and a pair of tortoiseshell glasses with green lenses, which strike you as particularly hip.

For the Charismatic

You know the difference between confidence and con artistry, and you're watching a master of both at work.

Survival of the fittest is occasionally a matter of luck rather than skill, and those who persist through the wild's various trials without much error often live long enough to become experts in the field. Winter Moon, one of the realm's foremost assassins-for-hire, is certainly a "fake it 'til you make it" type, and her persistent ability to stay alive no matter the odds is both a testament to the long rumored multiplicity of the lives of her species as well as her general "don't tell me the odds" aesthetic. She's never met a subject she couldn't bluff her way through, and her BSing often works as well as or better than actual knowledge (much to her more academic colleagues' chagrin). Light on her feet and heavy on sarcasm, she exudes the type of effortless cool that some spend their entire lives hoping to cultivate, and though she's prone to exaggeration and a bit of malarkey in the name of a good yarn, there is one area in which her hyperbolic statements are stunningly accurate: She is positively deadly with a dagger and you will never see her coming.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Winter was hired by the party's most monied antagonist to put an end to their current quest. She has been tracking them for a few weeks and is waiting for the most opportune moment (or mood) to strike.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Though she's a killer for hire, Winter has a heart and is one of the few assassins you can reason with (or pay off) in your final moments. She is also particularly fond of musicians and has a hard time killing anyone who carries an instrument.

◆ **Carrying** 32gp, 19pp; +2 studded leather armor; ***Shades of the Wayfarer***; 5 vials of **purple worm poison**; four +1 daggers.

Winter Moon

Medium cat-person, neutral evil

A smooth-talking, wise-cracking dealer of death, this assassin for hire fakes her way through nearly everything and still comes out on top.

Armor Class 19 (+2 studded leather)
Hit Points 72 (11d8 + 22)
Speed 40 ft., climbing 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

Saving throws Dex +9, Int +4
Skills Acrobatics +13, Deception +9, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +13, Thieves Tools +13
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Thieves' Cant
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Assassinate. During her first turn, Winter has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that hasn't taken a turn. Any hit against a surprised creature is a critical hit.
Evasion. If Winter is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Winter deals an extra 24 (6d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of Winter's that isn't incapacitated and she doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Action
Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft. or 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d4 + 6) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reaction
Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that Winter can see hits her with an Attack, she can use her Reaction to halve the attack's damage.

Shades of the Wayfarer

legendary item
(requires attunement)

A pair of green-lensed tortoiseshell sunglasses, these frames allow the wearer to exude cool and charisma in equal measure under any circumstance. They grant +2 to Charisma (Max 20) and allow the wearer to replace book smarts with street smarts, experience with confidence and information with bloviation. When tasked with a check that requires your Intelligence you can use your Charisma instead. When using this feature to make a History, Religion, or Nature or Arcana check, any information given to friend or foe will occasionally sound like total baloney, but even malarkey artists are partially right much of the time. Additionally, Investigation checks using this feature are made at disadvantage, as finding clues is cool, but searching for them rarely looks dope.

"Very cool."

TSUME VALO *with Tyke* "I won't forget."

A stocky dwarven man with a wild, untamed wiry mane and unbrushed beard that obscures most of his facial features. He wears simple, threadbare clothes and carries a babbling toddler in a sling.

For the Perceptive or Tiefling

The young child is a tiefling whose horns haven't yet grown in. Tsume is very protective of her.

TSUME VALO IS the leader of the Furbidden, a tribe of were-people doing their best to live simple, fulfilling lives on the outskirts of civilization. When rumors of a **werewolf, wereboar** or other were-afflicted emerge, Tsume follows them in the hopes that he can intervene and suggest they join his nomadic lycanthrope colony before terrified but armed townsfolk make such a consideration an impossibility. Tsume wants his tribe to be safe and happy, but most nobles don't want "dangerous were-folk" settling in their back yards.

◆ **Wants & Needs** If it were possible, Tsume would love a proper and permanent Furbidden refuge to be built within the wilds. This would take some doing.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Tsume is a **werebear** and the child he carries, Tyke, was born to were-lephant parents. She hasn't yet learned to control her shifting, and has already destroyed four cribs.

◆ **Carrying** 43cp, 18sp, 2gp; a sharp handaxe; a small child named Tyke who can transform into a terrifying elephant/tiefling hybrid.

Tsume Valo

Medium dwarf (shapechanger), neutral good
A gruff, hairy dwarf doing his best to make a life for himself and his people in the wilderness.

Armor Class 11 (12 in bear or hybrid form)
Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)
Speed 30 ft. (40 ft., climb 30 ft. in bear or hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5, Deception +6
Damage Resistances poison, bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons.
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Dwarvish (can't speak in hybrid form)
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Shapechanger. Tsume can use his action to polymorph into a large bear-humanoid hybrid or into a large bear or back into his true form, which is humanoid (dwarf). His statistics, other than size and AC, are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.
Keen Smell. Tsume has advantage on Perception checks that rely on smell.

Actions
Multiattack. In bear form, Tsume makes one bite and two claw attacks. In dwarven form, he makes two handaxe attacks. In hybrid form, he can attack like a bear or a humanoid.
Bite (Bear or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with werebear lycanthropy
Claw (Bear or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.
Handaxe (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Tyke the Tiefling Were-lephant

Tiny/huge tiefling (shapechanger), chaotic good
This bundle of joy becomes a rampaging elephant hybrid at the least (though sometimes most) opportune times.

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 84 (8d12 + 32)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Damage Resistances fire, bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons.
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Understands Common and Infernal but cannot speak
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Trampling Charge. If Tyke moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with a Horned Gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Tyke can make one Stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions
Horned Gore. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (5d8 + 6) piercing damage.
Stomp. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 23 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions
Hellish Rebuke (1/Long Rest). If Tyke takes damage from a creature within 60 ft. of her she can use her reaction to cast *hellish rebuke* at 2nd level, surrounding her assailant in hellish flames. The creature must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. It takes 17 (3d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

GM Note

If threatened or attacked, Tyke will transform into an elephant with massive tiefling horns, utilizing the statistics as outlined above. Otherwise, she is a toddler still learning and growing, and her attributes other than Charisma (10) are 4 (at GM discretion).

"GABRIEL #46" MALAIKA DAWNBORNE

"Serenity awaits! Join us!"

A small-boned human woman with the left side of her head (including her eyebrow) completely shaved, wearing a rich blue tunic and an eager smile and holding a knife as long as her forearm.

For the Perceptive

There's something unnatural about Gabriel's smile, as if she's not in control of it.

NO ONE WAKES up and says "I'd like to join a cult." It typically happens over time. A town meeting here, a self-help intensive there and suddenly—one thousand cuts later—you've made a commitment to offer up your firstborn to the Returned Majesty. In Gabriel #46's case, back when she was Malaika Dawnborne, she knew she was destined for something bigger than the shack of her birth. Now that she and the other Gabriels—her brothers and sisters!—have located the gate, the Returned Majesty can finally help her ascend. They just need the gatekey! And you can help! Do you have any children you no longer care for?

◆ **Wants & Needs** The blood of 17 children in 17 vials representing the 17 seasons of the Once Was. If that sounds like too much to ask, perhaps you should consider whether the lives of a few forgotten children would be too high a cost to pay for eternal bliss, hmm?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Children hate meetings more than they hate being stabbed, so it's been an uphill climb. And unfortunately for the majority of the Gabriels, the Original Gabriels are just a couple of cons who got in over their heads and started making increasingly outlandish requests of their commune assuming the group would eventually peter out. It has not. They've all come too far.

◆ **Carrying** 1cp, 1sp, 1gp, 1pp; her allotment from the Original Gabriels; 17 vials, 2 filled with blood.

Oddballs & Outsiders

This part of the realm attracts a certain sort to be sure, but that doesn't mean all who answer the call of the wild belong in it. Some residents stand out among the already outlandish.

Booboo Crawford *"Sensational!"*

A foppish man of middle age with an overwhelmingly large explorer's pack strapped to his back, a few pots and pans hanging from straps at his chest, holding a guide book like a mask.

For the Insightful or Survival-focused

While it's true that not all who wander are lost, Booboo is currently very turned around.

"SEE THE COUNTRYSIDE," he said. "Explore the wilderness."

This was the advice of Booboo's physician as he shared the sad news about the man's impending demise. His body overrun with a terminal disease, Booboo chose to get out into the wild and experience the unknown. After all—what's the worst that could happen? Death? Hahahaha. But seriously, do you think it's dangerous?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Booboo is hoping to see as much of the wilderness as he can get his eyes on. He'd love directions (or better yet, an escort or three) to any notable vistas, scenic buttes or beautiful bodies of water—anything you think he ought to put on his "To See Before I Croak" list.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Booboo's doctor didn't mention it, but part of his reasoning for sending the man out into the wilderness is that he is extremely contagious.

◆ **Carrying** 21cp, 3sp, 19gp; a foldable cot; a lantern; a portable cooking set; explorer's pack; a gaming set; a set of fancy clothes; a rain slicker; flint and steel; a double-thick guidebook to the region; a stained hankie with a bit of wet blood and sputum in it.

Zia Taxas *"Chaka latnahah! Ya?"*

A young and shoeless dark red tiefling girl in a dirty tunic, with leaf-strewn maroon hair and tightly wound horns whose tail is long and crooked.

For the Insightful

This child has the confidence of someone twice her age but does seem to be carrying herself with a bit of caution—she may bolt if approached too quickly or without care.

ZIA IS A literal "wild child," a feral creature of the Taxas forest, abandoned by her parents and left to survive on her own. She's fared quite well given the circumstances and has had some passing acquaintance with other tieflings, allowing her to have picked up enough of their language to speak a broken form of Infernal. Zia cannot speak Common, however, which has reinforced her role as an outcast in non-tiefling outposts. She has a vague recollection of being called "Zia" by people she presumes were her mother and father but has no memory of what happened to them or why she was abandoned. At some point, she took on the forest's name as a surname, in essence identifying herself "Zia of the Taxas."

◆ **Wants & Needs** Her willingness to tackle any task for a bit of food or supplies make Zia an excellent short-term hire, but her inability to speak Common makes it difficult for her to pursue what she's most interested in: the truth about her heritage.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Zia is the long-lost daughter of the Boorgatos, a wealthy tiefling family. Her parents were assassinated and their property and riches claimed by the state. Zia remains a "loose end" from the job. Were her true identity discovered she'd be eligible for land and titles—part of the reason she's still sought by the men who murdered her parents.

◆ **Carrying** A doll crafted from leaves and straw; a knife made of stone and bone.

JANUS THE HALF-HANDED *"Butterfingers!" (directed at self)*

A slim, woolly-bearded human man with wild, deep-set eyes wearing mismatched adventuring gear—a bit of plate here, a skirt of chain there, a splintered shield and what appears to be a broken rapier. He has three fingers on his left hand.

For the Martially Trained

Even a passing understanding of armor and weaponry tells you this man has no idea how to wear or wield the items he carries.

JANUS IS A well-meaning sort, aspiring to be the kind of courageous adventurer he admired as a boy, a fact he won't shut up about. Unfortunately, he has neither the strength of will nor body to pursue such a life. He's terribly clumsy, a fact responsible for numerous accidents involving both himself and others and is mostly shunned by those who dwell here, as they grow tired of his rambling about adventures he couldn't have undertaken. But they'd be wise to listen when he speaks of the Cavern of the Sacred Shadow—he found the entrance by happenstance. He may have inadvertently started a planar incursion.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Janus is keen to bring others to the entry of the Cavern of the Sacred Shadow, a location he visited in his dreams but has since convinced himself is accessible through the lake fed by a nearby river.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Janus is, in fact, a legendary adventurer and many of the tales he tells are true. In his last adventure, the discovery of the Cavern of the Sacred Shadow, he disrupted a portal door and was cursed by a necromancer to experience a withering of both body and mind.

◆ **Carrying** 7cp, 11sp; a map to the Cavern of the Sacred Shadow.

PEEKO THE LOST *"Peeko no like."*

A scrawny **kobold** dressed in rags, carrying a slaughtered rabbit in one hand and a broken knife in the other.

For the Perceptive

This creature looks incredibly skittish. He's hiding from everyone, even as he seems to be searching for someone/thing.

PEEKO IS A kobold who got lost from his clan during a raid. He knows he's frail and weak and has embraced the role of scavenger. He's got no money, power or magic and since he has no clue how to get back to the lair of his favored master, an **ancient blue dragon** named Shockfang, Peeko is purely looking for someone to please. And maybe grovel before. And possibly sleep in the shade of.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To be reunited with his fellow kobolds at the entry to Shockfang's lair. Help-p-please! Will tell Shockfang to reward you!

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** To date Peeko hasn't convinced Shockfang to do anything other than eat intruders.

◆ **Carrying** 3gp, property of Shockfang; a small broken knife; a slaughtered rabbit; a small wad of paper featuring a crude drawing of Peeko's mother, Parkot.

EMMA POWERS *"He is coming."*

A beggar woman in well worn rags with a porcelain face and expressive eyes, whose cracked lips seem desperate for water and whose outstretched hands are bloody and scarred.

For the Devout

There's something alluring about this woman—she may be more than she appears.

SENT WITH A singular message from her deity, a chaotic god—calamity manifest—who is prepared to sully the status quo in favor of the less fortunate, Emma Powers has wandered this region for months with a singular phrase on her lips: "He is coming." Run out of most of the communes and collectives and very close to losing access to the nearby village, it seems most want nothing to do with her. But her memory is long. And he is coming.

◆ **Wants & Needs** For others to listen, to hear, to understand: He is coming. He. Is. Coming.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Emma doesn't know the being she is heralding is an ancient aberrant creature whose only desire is to devour. Starting with its most faithful subjects.

◆ **Carrying** 2sp.

Henrick Steedcastle

A sturdy and battle-hardened centaur who stands proudly on three legs, his hind right haunch scarred from a wound that cost him his fourth. His athletic form suggests a youthful vigor, but gray in his beard and at his temples belie his age.

For the Martially Trained

Henrick could definitely handle himself in a hand-to-hand fight, assuming he doesn't trample his opponent first.

An absolute unit on the frontline and divine strategist behind the scenes, Henrick Steedcastle persevered through the second fey rebellion, helped topple the Margaster empire, freed the Dogmen of Direhall Isle and is among the most accomplished field generals of his clan. Though his gallop has suffered a bit due to his injury, he maintains pace with other centaurs half his age through sheer pride. Yes, he only has three legs. Yes, he could still kick your teeth in. No, you cannot ride on his back.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Henrick seeks admittance to the plane of Ysgard, where he would spend eternity killing and dying and waking anew on the endless battlefields that mark that realm of existence.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Henrick's desire to ascend to the plane of Ysgard has made him reckless, which may get himself or his company killed in their next battle.

Henrick Steedcastle

Large monstrosity, neutral good

Armor Class 15 (+1 leather armor; +1 shield)
Hit Points 115 (10d10 + 60)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +10
Skills Athletics +9, Perception +6, Survival +6
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Trampling Charge. If Henrick moves at least 30 ft. straight toward a target and then hits it with a claymoor attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) piercing damage and must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions
Multiattack. Henrick makes three attacks: two with his claymoor and one with his hooves.
Claymoor. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage if wielding with one hand, 12 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage if wielding with two.
Hooves. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

◆ **Carrying** 164gp; a claymore he can wield with one hand like a lance; a +1 leather shield; +1 leather barding and armor; compiled notes on mounted military strategy from several different cultures in a small book.

Thud the Barbarian

"Is water wet?"

A smooth-scaled, turquoise-colored merfolk with bright pink fins accenting their head and boulder-like shoulders that lead to equally muscular arms, wearing a loincloth of kelp and seaweed and carrying a large rusty axe covered in coral.

For the Arcane

Thud seems to be dripping with magical residue and emits a strong aura of wild magic.

THIS AQUARIAN barbarian hails from Portnoy Bay, an isolated body of water that has been a dumping ground for the byproducts of Anderton's Alchemical Artificiery for nearly a decade. The folks at Triple-A didn't want to harm citizens of the realm, but should have surmised humanoids dwell beneath the waves as well. The waters of Thud's homeland became poisoned by arcane energy and those of Thud's kin who didn't die evolved, growing stronger, faster and in many cases, angrier. Some even grew legs. They also started emitting arcane energy, not unlike their electric eel brethren—an ability Thud can't control. Thud wants the world to know what happened at Portnoy Bay. But first? Revenge on Triple-A.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Thud wants a new home and for the polluters at Triple-A to taste Thud's fury as well as his axe.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Due to Thud's exposure to arcane radiation, when Thud gets angry his body emits a chaotic surge of wild magic, represented by a roll on the wild magic table (at GM discretion).

◆ **Carrying** Seaweed loincloth; rusty greataxe.

GM Note

Thud has the statistics of a **berserker**, can breathe underwater and must roll on a wild magic table following every attack roll, whether or not it hits.

"Three legs are still better than two."

The Tinker

A humble traveller dressed in dusty white robes, with elegant long black hair in a rope-like braid, a large straw hat upon her head. Her elven features and easy-going smile make her age difficult to determine.

For the Martially Trained

While it looks as if you could cleave this being in two, something about her presence suggests you'd regret trying.

A traveller, scrap collector and talisman seller, The Tinker has wandered the realm for centuries, picking up odds and ends and sharing meals, stories and the occasional trinket with the travelers she encounters. Recently a group of very tricksy kenku made off with her "Bag of Questionable Items." It'll turn up eventually—things have a way of returning to her, but she'd rather not have to wait on the universe to dictate when that will occur. The Tinker might even be willing to offer a trinket from within it as a reward.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The Tinker desires stories attached to the objects and items she collects. If a member of the party gives The Tinker an item with a story that impresses her, she will offer them a chance to select something from her Bag of Questionable Items. If she ever gets it back. Which she will. You'll see. In time. What goes around comes around.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The Tinker is a travelling deity thousands of years old and one who long gave up ruling in the celestial plane in order to revel in the ways the unpredictability of humanity collides with the fated moments of the cosmos.

◆ **Carrying** 13cp, 1sp; an herbalist's kit; vegetarian cooking ingredients; a pot and rare spices; an ox cart of junk; strange items and various other objects (both mundane and magical).

The Tinker

Medium celestial, neutral good
A humble traveller collecting scraps and peddling her wares on the long road.

Armor Class 12 (17 with *shield*)
Hit Points 388 (25d20 + 125)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	26 (+8)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +14, Con +11, Int +12
Skills Religion +12, Insight +14, Medicine +12, Perception +14
Damage Immunities radiant
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 24,
Languages All (though The Tinker mostly keeps this fact to herself), telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Shapechange. As an action The Tinker can take the form of a **solar**, an avatar of her deific nature, or shift back to her humanoid form.
Celestial Revenge. If The Tinker dies, the Celestial Plane will swear revenge on the creature that dealt the final blow by sending a **solar** to destroy that creature.
Legendary Resistance (3/Long Rest). If The Tinker fails a saving throw she can choose to succeed instead.

Innate Spellcasting. The Tinker is a 25th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (DC 24, +14 on spell attacks). She can cast the following spells without the need for components.
5/Long Rest. *fly, greater invisibility, shield*
3/Long Rest. *greater restoration, true polymorph*
2/Long Rest. *wish*

Actions
Curse. The Tinker is a pacifist, but if her life is threatened and persuasion is no longer an option, she will attempt to curse a creature she can see up to a range of 120 ft. The target must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed with one of the following effects (The Tinker's choice). These curses may only be removed by the *wish* spell, or by The Tinker.
Curse of the War God. The target has disadvantage on all attack rolls.
Curse of the Ghost King. The target has disadvantage on all saving throws.
Curse of Neverending Pain. The target loses 10 hit points from their max hit points total after each long rest. If the target's hit points total drops below 1 as a result of this curse, it dies.

GM Note

The Tinker would prefer to trade for items but will take fair prices in gold.

The Bag of Questionable Items

Each talisman within this bag, presented on scraps of quality magical paper, represents a small blessing or minor curse. They cannot be invoked unless in the presence of The Tinker. Once a speaker invokes the word on the paper, the paper burns up, bestowing both the talisman's blessing and curse on the speaker for 1d100 days. To determine which effect is active each day, roll 1d6 following each long rest. On an even number, its blessing is triggered until the next long rest. On an odd number, its curse takes effect until the next long rest. The effects of a talisman cannot be removed unless by *remove curse*.

1d20	Talisman of...	Blessing	Curse
1	...the Traveler	You have advantage on all Wisdom (Survival) checks.	You never know (or care) where you are, and are prone to wandering off
2	...Swiftness	Your movement speed increases by 15 ft.	Your movement speed is reduced by 15 ft.
3	...Insight	You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks.	You have disadvantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks.
4	...Death	Once per long rest, when you drop to 0 HP you can drop to 1 HP instead.	The first time you fail a death saving throw it counts as two failures.
5	...Protection	Your AC increases by +2.	Your AC decreases by -2.
6	...the Beasts	You are under the effect of the *speak with animals* spell.	At least one animal per day will approach you to discuss its problems. You will not understand it.
7	...Reflexes	You have a +2 to all Strength and Dexterity saving throws.	You have -2 to all Strength and Dexterity saving throws.
8	...Resilience	You have advantage on all checks to maintain concentration.	You have disadvantage on all checks to maintain concentration.
9	...Water	You can breathe underwater.	You are frightened of water.
10	...Strength	Your Strength score increases by +2, to a maximum of 24.	Your Strength score decreases by -2.
11	...Stone	You are resistant to bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage from non-magical weapons.	You are vulnerable to all bludgeoning, piercing and slashing damage.
12	...Courage	You are immune to the frightened condition.	You make Wisdom saving throws to avoid the frightened condition at disadvantage.
13	...Tongues	You are under the effect of the *tongues* spell.	You lose the ability to speak.
14	...the Blade	Each of your melee attacks deal an additional 1d6 slashing damage.	Each of your weapons is dull and only deals half its total damage.
15	...Focus	You are immune to the charmed condition.	You make Wisdom saving throws to avoid being charmed at disadvantage.
16	...Constitution	You are immune to the poisoned condition.	You make Constitution saving throws to avoid being poisoned at disadvantage.
17	...Riches	You gain a boon of 100gp. This boon stacks and does not fade after a long rest.	You lose 100gp, or its material equivalent (at GM discretion).
18	...the Dragon Heart	You have the respect and favor of both **chromatic and metallic dragons**, and can speak draconic.	A **chromatic or metallic dragon** within 500 miles of you knows your precise location and wants nothing more than to destroy you (at GM discretion).
19	...the Winged Warrior	You gain a fly speed of 30 ft.	You are deathly afraid of heights.
20	...Luck	You have advantage on one attack roll per turn, and attacks against you have disadvantage.	You have disadvantage on all attack rolls and attacks made against you have advantage.

Zug'Praxis

An 8-foot-tall **ettin** wearing a strange mix of tailored clothes with cobbled together armor—one head features a neat braided mustache and glasses upon its nose, the other has no eyebrows, a scar across its lips and long, loose hair that looks like it hasn't been washed in years.

For the Perceptive

This creature has two heads but only one of them appears to be alert.

Though two heads are often better than one, in the strange case of the ettin known as Zug'Praxis, it's pretty clear the heads would be better off apart. Praxis is a well-read, rather debonnaire gent. Zug thinks books aren't as good as rocks but can still smash things so they are OK. Praxis has cultivated a rich knowledge of classical history and the lore of the realm. Zug once ate an entire winter wolf because it looked Zug directly in the eye. Praxis is hoping to apply to a far flung bard college once he scrapes together enough coin selling furs. Zug recently learned how to knock over trees with his hindquarters. The amount of blood required to operate their gigantic body prevents both brains from operating at the same time—which means the only times Zug and Praxis have to speak with each other are in the fading moments before or after a big sleep.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Praxis has heard rumors of a **remorhaz** in the area and needs some help in order to try and catch it for research. Zug has also heard rumors of a remorhaz in the area and wants to kill it. Because it's probably delicious.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** While Praxis would likely welcome the assistance of some adventuring types, there's a 50/50 chance Zug attempts to put one of them in his mouth.

◆ **Carrying** 85cp, 17sp, 49gp; a dense roll of pelts of various size; several tomes on the subject of magical zoology; two massive morningstars; remorhaz bait.

GM Note

When one of this creature's heads is asleep, its other head is awake. They cannot both be awake at the same time.

Zug'Praxis

Large giant, neutral
An ettin of two minds about their current quest as well as what to eat for dinner.

Armor Class 16 (chainmail)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	(Praxis) 17 (+3) (Zug) 7 (-2)	(Praxis) 12 (+1) (Zug) 6 (-3)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6
Skills (Praxis) Nature +6, (Zug) Athletics +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Giant, Orc
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Wakeful. When one of Zug'Praxis's heads is asleep, the other head is awake. Whichever head is awake will determine which attacks and mental stats Zug or Praxis can use.

Spellcasting. Praxis is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Praxis's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Praxis has the following Wizard spells prepared.
Cantrips: *mold earth, thunderclap*
1st level (4 slots): *beast sense, animal friendship, thunderwave*
2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, hold person*

Actions
(Praxis) *Thunderclap.* Ranged Spell Attack: 5 ft. Each creature within range, other than Praxis, must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or take 4 (1d6) thunder damage.
Multiattack. Zug makes 2 attacks with Zug's morningstars.
(Zug) *Morningstars.* Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit. *Hit*: 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

"I'm tired."

Random NPC Generator

The wider realm could contain billions of characters—this list is a start. Roll 1d20 on any of the following three tables, or roll 6d20 (one for each column) for a less predictable persona. Combine columns from all three tables for more chaos.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Braxius	Joshi	...with rusty metal contraptions for arms and legs...	...who is seeking oil or some other form of lubrication...	...and emits a screeching noise every time they move.	3sp, 9gp; tinker's tools; 20lbs scrap.
2	Cyrille	Chalise	...dressed in a military uniform decorated with many medals...	...who is searching for deserters of the royal army...	...and is charming but in an off-putting way.	3cp, 13sp, 33gp; a +1 rapier, a personal writ to allow cross-jurisdictional arrests.
3	Soma	Mahat	...carrying all manner of strange and somewhat sinister apparatus...	...who is a ghosthunter, hunting **ghosts**...	...and will tell gruesome and violent horror stories any chance they get.	12cp, 87gp; a device that can detect ghosts within 120 ft.; a book of horror tales.
4	Amal	Sigdel	...with an undercut and piercings...	...who is looking for a place to stay for the night...	...and ran away from home after a disagreement with their parents.	2cp, 7gp; a bag of black clothes and a toothbrush.
5	Lemmi	Tamang	...who is a teensy tiny person...	...who wants to ride a dragon...	...and never refuses a dare.	15sp, 9gp; 3 **potions of hill giant strength**.
6	Ulmog	Ghimire	...frothing at the mouth and carrying a flaming torch...	...who wants to burn everything...	...and is a serial arsonist on the run from authorities.	2cp; 2 canisters of lantern oil; flint and steel.
7	Gili	Niraula	...with serene eyes and a mouth that has been sewn shut...	...who is wandering the wilderness as a simple hermit...	...and must sew someone's mouth shut as reparation to their god.	6sp, 4gp; a needle and thread; a religious symbol featuring a sewn mouth.
8	Cheng	Hua	...with fine cheekbones, dark hair tied in a messy ponytail and red robes...	...who is searching for their beloved...	...and is an undead ghost king in disguise.	12sp, 96gp; a red umbrella; a jar of silver butterflies.
9	Ophir	Dahkal	...with gold plated teeth and a winning smile...	...who is a goldpanner looking for the next big win...	...and knows the location of a secret gold panning spot.	22cp, 3gp; a nugget of gold worth 340gp.
10	Zohar	Khadkar	...with a white lab coat and various glass jars...	...who is a researcher of monster poisons and venoms...	...and gets incredibly excited about their research.	23gp, 42pp; 2500gp worth of rare poisons and venoms in glass vials.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Mataan	Basnet	...with a shaggy appearance and two pet wolves...	...who is tracking down an insane **werewolf**...	...and can't speak Common.	12cp, 3sp, 17gp; a piece of ripped cloth; wolf treats.
12	Chiaki	Abasthi	...with a bright young face and large backpack...	...who wants to know if you've seen the **yeti**...	...and has 24 hours to deliver, or else their reputation will be ruined.	4cp; a half-finished study on the territorial nature of the yeti; a backpack of camping supplies.
13	Michi	Pockhrel	...with a thin silhouette and who rattles each time they take a step...	...who is searching for a nice patch of dirt to lay down in...	...and is a skeleton loose from its necromancer.	2sp.
14	Kohaku	Rosyara	...with a shepherd's crook and flock of sheep...	...who is looking for better pastures...	...and will tell you the names of all 44 sheep under their care.	12cp, 3sp; a pie; a crook; 44 sheep.
15	Duygu	Jha	...incredibly elderly and wearing thin-framed glasses...	...who is searching for a tower to spend their retirement...	...and is a master wizard.	43cp, 77sp, 2,500pp, all in a demiplane they can access with a wristflick; a spellbook and robes.
16	Turong	Akatyev	...with sharpened teeth and hollow eyes...	...who needs meat to keep them going...	...and will eat any kind of meat. Any kind.	1cp, 12sp; one jerky ration.
17	Vanja	Chesnokov	...with icy blue eyes and a large fur coat...	...who is looking for bears to make coats...	...and is the heir to a multi-realm fur coat corporation.	367gp, 88pp; priceless fur coat; 3 bear traps.
18	Koos	Ilyin	...with a flat top haircut and a heavy dose of cologne...	...who wants to solve your rat problem...	...and is cursed to play the panpipes forevermore.	6cp, 3sp, 8gp; a set of cursed panpipes.
19	Milo	Pavlichenko	...with dreadlocks, socks and sandals and a chill attitude...	...who is just seeing where the path takes them, man...	...and who can't stop tripping over their footwear.	2cp, 5sp.
20	Peyton	Shapolavov	...with slicked-back hair and a slimy attitude...	...who wants to sell you a second-hand horse and cart...	...and is an elite salesperson who has marked up their goods to ridiculous prices.	23sp, 286gp; 3 second-hand horses and carts.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Lord	Tiborian	...with perfectly coiffed brown hair and a striking underbite...	...who gets sick pleasure out of kicking others' shins...	...and is considered "untouchable" by the criminal element.	41sp, 12gp; a half-eaten pastry; a hat with a feather in it; an earhorn.
2	Jackson	Elegance	...with a bad case of bowlegs...	...who needs a new horse...	...and left their coin purse in a town that's nearly a week's ride from here.	2sp; a horse blanket; a saddle.
3	Ha Ha	Pinkerton	...with a heavenly voice and pinchable cheeks...	...who is trying to raise interest in **giant** jousting...	...and is leaking.	9sp, 1gp; a bucket; a rudimentary sketch of a giant joust.
4	Tempus	Fallowide	...with long white hair, an anxious manner and a pronounced limp...	...who needs to break into a remote prison...	...and find their hidden candle of invocation.	12gp, 6sp; a map of a prison; a set of thieves' tools .
5	Alizia	Angelus	...with a tear-streaked face and short spikey hair...	...who is looking for a lost cat...	...and whose pet is actually a familiar.	22cp, 4sp; a small pouch of catnip; basic spell components.
6	Gaius	Cudgelroar	...with broad shoulders, strong hands and a patch across one eye...	...who can't wait for their wedding day...	...and plans to murder their spouse.	44sp, 18gp; 4 vials of poison, a large hammer.
7	Lio	Hideworn	...with a wide smile and melancholy eyes...	...who must remember something that's been forgotten...	...and can lead you to a wizard's tomb.	31sp, 2gp; cartographer's tools; a small bag of ginkgo biloba.
8	Angar	Wormwood	...with lank black hair, yellowed teeth and horrible breath...	...who seeks arcane knowledge related to their birthmark...	...and is desirous of a way to return others from the dead.	6sp, 44gp; 4 red candles; an ancient grimoire in an unknown language.
9	Raphalia	Locus	...with long auburn hair and sparkling golden eyes...	...who needs their magic serum...	...and will turn into a **weretiger** at night.	12cp, 6sp; a hand mirror; a brush; an ivory hair comb.
10	Theoweis	Demora	...with bright red hair and a chain mail shirt that hangs down to their knees...	...who dreams of being a knight...	...and is possessed by a **ghost**.	4sp, 4gp; a broken shortsword; a +2 dagger.

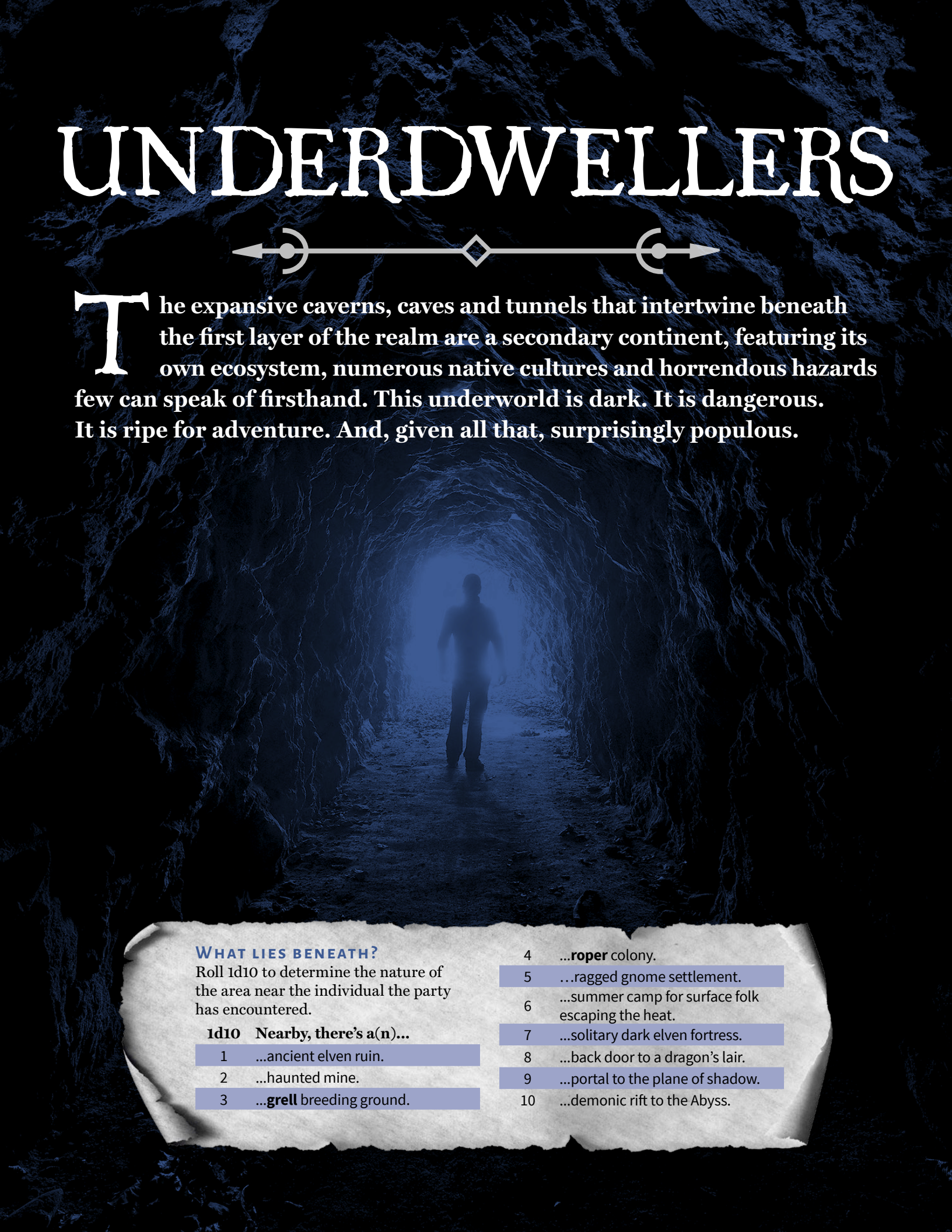
1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Llewellyn	Argot	...with short brown hair and priestly robes...	...who needs to appease their god or goddess...	...and will sacrifice an innocent to attain their goals.	9sp; a dagger; a holy symbol; a small bowl with dried blood in the bottom.
12	Moliar	Flaymont	...with perfectly trimmed hair, clean new clothes and an elegant walking stick...	...who needs to pay off a massive debt...	...and has contingency plans to fake their own death.	6sp; a fake mustache and beard; a forged letter of safe passage.
13	Machias	Peu	...with savage body odor and an exceptionally nice haircut...	...who needs a bath...	...and has no sense of smell.	11sp, 7gp; a full wineskin; a small bag of wild onions for snacking.
14	Philo	Ynyr	...with a tattoo of a spider in the middle of their forehead...	...who seeks an artifact that can alter reality...	...and has a cursed knife that requires the blood of a new victim every 24 hours.	14gp; leather apron; a cursed +1 knife.
15	Laqua	Marque	...without the ability to finish a sentence...	...who has a great story to tell...	...and a map with an "X" on it.	A bottle of ale; a map of a nearby territory; a personal journal.
16	Brascius	Overwatch	...with an unusually high end sense of fashion...	...who wants nothing more than to be a **vampire**...	...and has a scroll they can't read.	32gp; a bottle of perfume; a comb; a jar of pomade; a scroll.
17	Lysette	Willowrun	...with mutliple facial piercings and wearing a bright blue sari...	...who needs a safe place to hide...	...and has just ingested a handful of hallucinogens.	2gp, 17sp; a skin of milk; a pouch of weeds; a dagger.
18	Svengara	Useph	...with wavy brown hair, soft leather breeches and a pegleg...	...who is looking for a ship and a star to sail her by...	...and knows of a sunken temple overflowing with riches.	11sp, 7gp; a spyglass, a map of the coast.
19	Karga	Cutter	...with a large floppy hat and face-concealing scarf...	...who's looking for safe passage out of the area...	...and is wanted for murder.	13sp, 24gp; a silver key; a small box of candy; an Elemental Gem.
20	Zo	Dulac	...with a lavender gown and matching eyes...	...who wants their freedom from an arranged marriage...	...and knows where to find 1,000gp.	22sp, 2gp; a small portrait; several oft-read love letters.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Turl	Scardoza	...with bloodshot eyes and an upper lip that looks permanently upturned...	...who is searching for a spell that allows subjects to grow extra limbs...	...and is in danger of being fired from the fish sorting factory.	11sp, 5gp; a box of fish hooks, a tiny scalpel.
2	Ludlow	Kudd	...with a rectangular head and a fox tail necktie...	...who is searching for a lost or stolen pet capybara...	...and has a tendency to scream and spit while speaking.	13sp, 9gp; a human femur fashioned into a crude machete.
3	Carys	Aur	...with light blue robes, steady hands and blonde bangs that hide their eyes...	...who wants to bring peace to all...	...and plans to poison those in their care whom they perceive to be suffering.	5sp, 16gp; a notebook; a quill; a small jar of poisonous ink.
4	Antioko	Arandoño	...with an enviable tan and arms covered in blue tribal tattoos...	...who wants to become a bard...	...and can't carry a tune to save their life.	4sp, 23gp; a tuning fork; a lute; crumpled sheet music.
5	Farnoush	Safavi	...with a silver hooded gown and smiling eyes...	...who enjoys pickpocketing strangers...	...and has just snatched a ransom note.	11sp, 60gp; an amber amulet; a caramel candy; a ransom note written in foul-smelling green ink.
6	Efa	Miah	...with flowing hair, gold earrings and prominent cheekbones...	...who wants to win a beauty pageant...	...and woke up to find their nose was gone.	7sp, 29gp; gold earrings worth 500gp; a cracked mirror.
7	Osman	Bataev	...with a checkered vest, bulging eyes and a thunderous laugh...	...who wants to boost their cheese sales...	...and has added a highly addictive ingredient to their supply.	10sp, 30gp; a wheel of Camembert that emits a faint glow.
8	Akiko	Tokaji	...with a grey cloak covering a bony frame...	...who enjoys stealing from the dead...	...and has started seeing strange faces in mirrors.	38gp; a string of crystal beads; a stained burial shroud embroidered with gold thread.
9	Wella	Nancollas	...with a badly burned that body appears to be held together with wire...	...who is destined to save their village...	...and doesn't know they died.	4sp, 19 gp; a white jade medallion; an ancient longsword.
10	Alor	Suco	...who is missing an eye and is covered in bruises and scrapes...	...who needs to get rid of the two painful welts on either side of their head...	...and thinks it may have something to do with a red-eyed boar they killed.	7sp, 5gp; a bow and arrow; a small jar of ointment.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Mars	Konstantinov	...wearing a crown made of seashells...	...who brings tidings from the sea serpent Dakkfoarian...	...and is prepared to poison all the freshwater within 100 miles.	3 bags of brine shrimp laced with a deadly toxin.
12	Horace	Tikalt	...in a dress woven from caterpillar silk...	...who can't stop staring at the sky...	...and is trying to scream down the sun.	4gp; an orcish ritual knife.
13	Franz	Gribble	...with a thousand yard stare and an iron grip on their dagger...	...who is here to kill the man who killed their father...	...and whose father was killed by a vengeful son.	2sp, 7gp; a detailed description of a nearby house.
14	Silo	Jenkinholme	...in a set of dockworker's clothes that are covered in bog mud...	...who is dealing with a serious crab infestation...	...and needs an extra set of hands.	3gp; a corncob pipe; a rusty **luck blade**.
15	Griffin	Fayers	...wearing armor crafted from the bones of their foes...	...who is on the run from another realm...	...and has the key to a forbidden treasure.	49gp; a dark mace; a prism that doesn't refract light.
16	Reggie	Casanova	...with flowing straw-colored hair and flanked by a company of pike-wielding paladins...	...who is ready to meet a worthy suitor...	...and is particularly fond of anyone willing to kill on their behalf.	34pp; an unsigned deed to a parcel of land worth 175,000gp; a grudge against their father.
17	Casper	von Eck	...missing one cheek but covering the wound with a piece of plaster...	...who desires revenge on their lab-dwelling creator...	...and still has all the keys from their escape from prison.	22cp; a mouse that can do a time step; a full keyring; a small spoon.
18	Preet	MacFarthers	...a towering figure carrying a heavy lantern...	...who claims to serve as a human lighthouse...	...and is attempting to attract lost souls to this location.	30cp, 9sp; **a ring of spell storing**; **a +1 rod of the pact keeper**.
19	Tulum	Vespers	...heavyset gold dragonborn in ill-fitting clothes...	...who knows the truth about what the party seeks...	...and will be killed the moment they stray from their mission.	42gp; a *call lightning* spell scroll; a necklace made of crocodile teeth.
20	Lister	Dartmouth	...wearing all black save for a white orchid pinned to their left breast...	...who is here to repay a debt...	...and will transform into a **sea hag** momentarily.	52sp; a **hag's eye**; a small box of sweets; a child's thumb.

UNDERDWELLERS

The expansive caverns, caves and tunnels that intertwine beneath the first layer of the realm are a secondary continent, featuring its own ecosystem, numerous native cultures and horrendous hazards few can speak of firsthand. This underworld is dark. It is dangerous. It is ripe for adventure. And, given all that, surprisingly populous.



What lies beneath?

Roll 1d10 to determine the nature of the area near the individual the party has encountered.

1d10	Nearby, there's a(n)...
1	...ancient elven ruin.
2	...haunted mine.
3	...**grell** breeding ground.
4	...**roper** colony.
5	...ragged gnome settlement.
6	...summer camp for surface folk escaping the heat.
7	...solitary dark elven fortress.
8	...back door to a dragon's lair.
9	...portal to the plane of shadow.
10	...demonic rift to the Abyss.

Common Folk

Whether born here or having migrated from topside, the underworld is teeming with eccentric individuals aiming to make their way by any means necessary.

Gurgid Leadbelly *"Scoff. Scoff, I say."*

A middle-aged dwarf who looks like he stepped straight out of a war story, with countless scars—including one where a bottom lip ought to be.

For the Perceptive

Gurgid stares at any woman crossing his path, though it seems he's more interested in the clothes than the person inside them.

WHETHER ON the battlefield or in the tavern, Gurgid Leadbelly has never backed down from a confrontation. The dwarf has split more skulls than most warriors can hope, and he isn't shy about letting anyone in earshot know—especially after he's had a tankard or two of ale. But Gurgid put down his battleaxe two decades ago when a particularly close brush with death inspired him to retire as a warrior and pursue a dream he has nursed since his days as a beardless boy: creating beautiful dresses. A "dwarf's dwarf" in every other respect, Gurgid lets his emotions run wild. It's not unusual for him to curse you and your family back 18 generations in one breath while declaring you a friend for life with the next.

◆**Wants & Needs** Gurgid loves a challenge and desires to create a garment that combines beauty and utility that will force even the most traditional graybeards to acknowledge the value of couture clothing.

◆**Secret or Obstacle** Gurgid is convinced if he could create his masterpiece—an outfit that looks at home at a ball and in the middle of battle—he'll no longer need to keep his work a secret. He just needs some exotic silks and other fabrics from the surface, as well as moonore dust, which can imbue garments with an almost unheard level of durability. Unfortunately the only known source of moonore is in the cave of Klaus, a corrupted **copper dragon**, beyond the charted tunnels of the underworld.

◆**Carrying** 17cp, 5 gp, 1pp; Gurgid's journal, full of stories of his deeds in battle as well as his musings on current fashion and a hand-drawn map to the rumored location of moonore dust.

Brön Eversbee *"And how does that make you...feel?"*

A lanky, bed-headed young man covered in tasteful tattoos and sporting multiple piercings, wearing an open white shirt and the snuggest gray pants.

For the Perceptive

Although he's in common clothes, the quality of the craftsmanship is much higher than what a typical resident of the underground usually wears.

BRÖN EVERSBEE believes in the power of song to inspire. Bored of the stories and ballads most bards peddle in taverns, Brön spends his time collecting tales from those he encounters, then transforms them into fuel for his own songs. He's less interested in who killed what using such-and-such ancient sword—Brön wants to hear about the emotional journey. While he is relentless in questioning travelers about their experiences, Brön goes about it with sweetness and sincerity. So much sincerity.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Originally from the surface, Brön journeyed to the underground in search of stories he couldn't find anywhere else. His ambition is to compile these tales into a song cycle tentatively titled *The Deep Feels*.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Brön is the son of landed gentry on the surface, and had a successful career of his own at a lending house before moving underground. Brön's mother, the matriarch of the entire family, isn't impressed with his life choices and has hired mercenaries to track down her wayward son and bring him back to the family estate—whether he wants to return or not.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp, 14sp, 91gp; a golden ring engraved with the Eversbee Family crest (worth 200gp); a lute that's seen better days.

Steera Goodfeel *"I also do weddings."*

A **goblin** girl in mucky robes carrying a sack overflowing with alchemical supplies strapped to a highback chair functioning as a frame pack.

For the Insightful

This creature seems awfully excitable. Perhaps her joy is chemically induced?

DESPITE HER misshapen form and features, Steera Goodfeel and her ramshackle sack are a welcome sight for experienced travelers of the underground. While it can be difficult to actually close a deal with the animated and absent-minded Steera, those who persevere are rewarded with items that often mean the difference between life and death. No returns. No guarantees. No exceptions.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Steera adores her family, and wants to make enough money to ensure they never want for anything.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Steera has built up a loyal clientele among treasure-hunters and the like, but like most goblins is routinely turned away from the underground's larger settlements. Unfortunately, that's where the real money is made.

◆ **Carrying** Vials of ***Steera's Salvation.***

Steera's Salvation

wondrous potion, rare

This concoction created by Steera Goodfeel unlocks knowledge and offers a hyper, if scattered, focus. For one hour you gain proficiency in Arcana, History, Investigation, Nature and Religion, but all checks involving those skills are made with disadvantage as your brain careens and pinballs from one bit of knowledge to the next.

Dura Glitterspark *"But on the bright side..."*

A smiling dwarven maid in a tattered dress with numerous bows in her hair and beard.

For the Perceptive

Dura slightly drags her left leg and she's concealing some facial bruises. Seems like someone may have roughed her up.

A BRIGHT ray of sunshine in the gloomy underworld, Dura Glitterspark has a stein-half-full view of life. Sure her parents died in a mine collapse and her beloved grandfather is all she has left, but at least she has something! Yes, she's in debt, but now she can learn what it's like to pay your debtors! And if the Mineshafters end up breaking her legs, think of how strong her arms will become!

◆ **Wants & Needs** Dura's dream is to visit the surface to see the sun and feel the wind in her beard.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ever the optimist, Dura was sure the bet she made at the Mineshafter Gambling Hall would pay out. And she bet money she didn't have.

◆ **Carrying** 5cp; a list of what she wants to do on the surface.

T'chkall *"You bore me. Please continue."*

A **lizardfolk** standing almost 7 feet tall, with hunter green scales and a sturdy tail, wearing clothes that seem crafted from flesh and bone.

For the Insightful

T'chkall expresses a mixture of contempt, disgust and confusion about anything related to the world above—but sure does seem keen on asking questions about it.

WHILE MOST Saurians live together in their Grand Nests, T'chkall's interest in the wider world led him to pursue a life for himself beyond the cold-blooded comforts of home. His unwavering sense of fairness and loyalty to the truth have garnered the respect of many, and the friendship of few.

◆ **Wants & Needs** T'chkall isn't just curious about the world around him—he's also lonely. Finding a mate is his priority in life.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** T'chkall still follows The System—an obscure Saurian code of ethics that forbids lying and values literalism. This has made finding a partner difficult. For example, when someone asks him "What did you do this morning?" T'chkall might feel obligated to report on an interesting bowel movement.

◆ **Carrying** 4cp, 20sp; a manuscript titled *Radicalized Honesty: The Pain of Truth and the Lies of Love.*

THARG ROCKTONGUE *"Buncha amateurs."*

An elderly dwarf whose white beard reaches past his knees, in a once light-colored tunic covered in soot stains.

For the Perceptive

When Tharg gestures or reaches for his ale (or gestures with his ale) he reveals a tattoo on his inner arm depicting a crown above two crossed hammers.

For the Scholarly

If Tharg's tattoo is noticed, it would be clear to any dwarf or well-read historian that only royal smiths have the privilege of bearing this mark.

A DWARVEN man who proves maturity and age are not synonymous, Tharg Rocktongue would spend all his time at the pub if he didn't need coin to spend at the pub. Once a celebrated blacksmith, Tharg now takes odd jobs here and there, having figuratively and literally pissed away all the cash set aside for his retirement. Anyone within earshot of Tharg drinking would hear him talk about his daughter and how proud he is that she "made good" by marrying a wealthy merchant. While these boasts grow tiresome to listen to, most in these parts tolerate it as a drunk old dwarf's only solace.

◆ **Wants & Needs** One question looms in Tharg's mind every morning when he wakes up, whether in his bed or in the gutter outside of the pub: "When can I knock off work to start my drinking?" The only desire that can compete with his thirst for alcohol is his need to hear from his daughter Clarissa.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Clarissa has never forgiven her father for being dismissed from the royal smithery after showing up drunk to work, an act that plunged the family into poverty (Tharg's daughter had to marry an odious but wealthy merchant, The Water Bishop Grant McCorlee, to support the family). Tharg would love to reconcile this relationship, but doesn't know where to begin. It's been years since Tharg has found himself at a forge, but he used to be one of the finest smiths in the underground. Solving Tharg's problems might inspire him to put his (impeccable, when sober) skills to use.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp; a locket crafted from the finest silver containing a portrait of Clarissa when she was a little girl.

LEVLEBIM BROADCLOTH *"Make it snappy!"*

A middle-aged deep gnome wearing peasant clothing and a dark blue kerchief that holds back her long gray hair. Her belt has numerous pouches on the front, and she carries a snoozing newborn snug in a sling across her chest.

For the Perceptive

This woman's equipment appears to be that of a tailor or seamstress.

DESCENDED FROM a long line of seamstresses and tailors, Levlebim Broadcloth's reputation as a miracle worker with a needle and thread is well-earned, but it's also starting to falter as her darkvision has begun to fail. She runs a small storefront in a large deep gnome village, with a vast back room full of various garments being altered, bolts of fabric, stacks of skins and leathers, buttons, bobs, accessories and more. As she's the only seamstress in the area, her shop is typically a hub of activity, news, rumor and gossip. Lately, however, she's taken a few side jobs just to make up for the loss in income caused by a downtick in productivity.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Levlebim knows her time as a seamstress is growing short, and is hoping to groom her younger brother Garboglem to take over the shop until her infant daughter Blurp is old enough to thread a needle. A few more years should do.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Garboglem is unaware of his sister's failing vision and wouldn't care if he knew. He's been far more industrious than she knows and has become something of a skilled warlock, intending to open his own tailoring shop, called Witches 'n' Stitches, with some like-minded friends. They'll enhance their work with magically imbued elements and corner the market on alterations, custom creations and more. It'll put Levlebim out of business long before she has the means to retire, or leave a legacy for little Blurp.

◆ **Carrying** 4sp, 22gp; a belt with pouches for sewing tools and materials; a small bag of hard ginger candy.

RAMROD MORTARMITER *cough*

A heavyset dwarf with a thick halo of dark brown hair and an unkempt beard, streaked through with a touch of red. He wears a piece of dusty slate on a thong around his neck.

For the Insightful

This dwarf looks unfriendly, but his quiet nods and shoulder pats to those he passes suggest the opposite may be true.

RAMROD MORTARMITER is a good-natured fellow who's never been able to speak. Whether a psychological limitation or a physical one, no one knows why (well...a voice-stealing cave **hag** knows). He uses a set of hand signals known by the locals to communicate, and when those aren't enough, he'll write what he wants to say on the piece of slate hanging from his neck.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ramrod yearns to see more of the sunlit world and, if fortune permits, the wide-open sea.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Though he doesn't speak, Ramrod listens and knows a great deal about the surrounding area, including a back entrance to the horde-rich lair of a **behir**, but no one spends enough time communicating with him to learn what he has to share. Oh—and a hag stole his voice when he was a baby. No need to bother yourself with that. **Thumbs up**

◆ **Carrying** 14sp, 2gp; a pouch with six pieces of chalk; a piece of slate.

KALVIN ARMSTRONG "Go figure!"

A young human man with pale skin, broad shoulders and a glorious neckbeard, wearing a circlet that has a brightly glowing stone embedded in it.

For the Perceptive

This man's hands are rough and calloused, suggesting a lifetime of hard work.

A FARMER from above, Kalvin Armstrong had what most would consider the misfortune of falling in love with a dark elf. The folks in his village outlined the difficulties of a life underground for a man without darkvision and no understanding of elven (to say nothing of dark elven) culture, but Kalvin is as stubborn as he is lovesick for Jade of the Deep Sea. While a future where he can only see Jade's teeth would be enough, he recently commissioned a wizard to fashion a headlamp of sorts just so he can get through the day without bumping his head. He certainly bumps it less.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Kalvin takes on whatever odd jobs are required to pull his weight, which Jade of the Deep Sea finds hilarious, given that her inheritance would preclude the couple from ever working again.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Kalvin is not welcome among most of the populace, who are conspiring to arrange a little "accident" that's certain to make his life of bliss a lot shorter than he expects.

◆ **Carrying** 2sp, 14gp; two cheese sandwiches; a circlet of *light*.

DIVINA DARLINGTON "A man's heart isn't really in his chest: it's in his stomach."

A stooped dark elf in a slouching chef's hat and robes so black they seem to blend with the inky void around you.

For the Perceptive

Divina has spices and other ingredients hidden in her sleeves, ensuring her proprietary recipe can't be replicated at home.

OWNER AND operator of the famous Underground Hot Pot Pushcart, Divina Darlington spends most evenings creating her dishes while everyone else is sleeping or trancing the night away. No one is quite sure why they love the savory, sour and delicious daily stews she creates, but the line is always long and the take is large, despite the fact that no one can ever see exactly what she's ladling from her vat.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Divina needs a new line on the secret ingredient for her soup, which has become increasingly hard to come by.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** In order to keep the menu as good as it has been, Darlington needs a steady supply of spices, potions and some rather, well, unorthodox ingredients (They're souls. Shhhhhhh).

◆ **Carrying** A dozen-odd vials of mysterious spice blends and infused oils; an oilcloth bag tied with a triple knot that is itself protected by an unbreakable spell, containing **18 soul coins**; dried crickets (for umami and crunch).

GORAN McCRUNGE *"Hand me that thingamabob."*

A muscular **duergar** with light gray skin, and bushy white sideburns, wearing a grease-covered apron and a fully stocked tinkerer's belt.

For the Perceptive

Even when talking directly to him, it seems as if Goran's mind is somewhere else entirely.

A MECHANIC of sorts, Goran McCrunge ensures things are running smoothly for his clan. He's singular and solemn but if you get him talking about gears or rotors or propulsury pistons, he's likely to open up or even invite you to assist on his next repair. Goran heard rumors there's a container of sovereign glue hidden in an abandoned warlock's laboratory nearby. He'd be happy as a queen's pillow if he got his hands on such an extraordinary fix-it material. That and a good meat pie would make his day.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Goran desperately needs that sovereign glue to seal a massive, ornate brass vault door he discovered and accidentally opened while fixing a sewer blockage beneath the undercity.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Peering through the massive doorway, Goran glimpsed the twisted realm of Yitterack the Pustulent, second cousin thrice removed of an evil duergarian deity. He needs to seal that door to keep the demon horde from escaping.

◆ **Carrying** 28sp; tools worth 175gp; an empty flask.

BAL GAHOO *"We like the drip drip."*

A hairless, doe-eyed dweller of the underworld, this sharp-toothed creature slowly slobbers out the corners of its mouth, sucking drool in with each slow inhalation.

For the Perceptive

This creature is covered in a mixture of blood and...mucus?

BAL GAHOO wants friends and is usually pretty good at finding them. It's keeping them that's the hard part. They always manage to get out of the restraints. He is friendly to all! Until they try to leave!

◆ **Wants & Needs** Bal Gahoo actually needs help, as his home is being overrun by **giant rats** and other monstrous vermin. They are too many! And he is just Bal Gahoo! He will gladly reward any helpers by giving them a permanent home, safe and secure forever in his hovel. Why would new friends want to leave?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** There are currently an overwhelming amount of rodents and vermin in the jagged, humid and slick confines of Bal Gahoo's hovel, which is also the mouth of a dormant **tarrasque**.

◆ **Carrying** A barbed hook; a soiled tunic; a soiled loincloth; a soiled rag; a soiled sticky sack.

CARLO "THE KLUTZ" CALOQUILL *"Whoopsie."*

A foppish gnome in shoes that seem too big and a hat that trails the ground behind him or gathers beneath his toes.

For the Perceptive

If you didn't know better you'd think Carlo's tripping on purpose.

LIKE MANY gnomes of the underworld, no one noticed Carlo Caloquill, even as he diligently gathered supplies for what he called "The Calamity Surpassing Epiphany—the end of all knowing." No one listened. No one cared. But his seeming invisibility shifted after he absent-mindedly stumbled into a large stack of preserves in a vegetable supply depot and found himself covered in broken glass and pickled peppers. As the laughter from his peers rang out around him, Carlo discovered something of a gift: He had their attention. Now they listen. And now he can save them.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Carlo wants to prepare the realm for a tectonic event he's convinced will disrupt the entirety of civilization not just in the underworld, but on the surface.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Carlo "The Klutz" fakes slips, trip-ups and falls to get his neighbors' attention, then shares potentially life-saving intel.

◆ **Carrying** 21sp, 3gp; a rock hammer; leaflets on tectonic shifts; a whoopie cushion.

Yeardly Grunch *"If you say so."*

A dirty child, with a ripped cap, a few bruises and scrapes and mud in his shaggy hair.

For the Perceptive

Yeardly keeps looking over his shoulder as if he knows danger will arrive any minute.

PRONE TO wandering and not fond of home, Yeardly Grunch was gazing into a well near a village aboveground and fell straight in. He wandered the cave system beneath the well in search of help (and adventure!) and was discovered by a traveling band of dwarven merchants. The dwarves shepherded him through portions of the cavernous underworld, but they also creeped him out. So he snuck off. And maybe kicked one of them in the groin. And the teeth. And the groin again. The point is, he's alone. And wants to go home. But doesn't know where that is.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Yeardly is looking for any protection he can find. And food. You got food?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The merchants Yeardly evaded are slavers intent on hauling him to a vast city for processing. A boy would fetch a significant amount of coin, and they aren't going to let him get the better of them again.

◆ **Carrying** A torn cap; a wooden cup and ball game.

Parker "Slick" Gapminder *"Fascinating!"*

A bookish gnome of middle age with a crooked neck, his eyes observing the dirt, carrying several samples of ooze, slime, pudding and other ooblexian substances in glass jars of varying sizes draped from ropes around his shoulders.

For the Scholarly

Some of the substances in this gnome's jars and cannisters appear to be moving.

MOST GNOMISH children receive tinker's tools before they're old enough to crawl. But Parker Gapminder grew bored with his after a few days, tossing them into a puddle of sludge near his village. To the child's shock and delight, the entire box of wrenches and gears was corroded in minutes. He's been hooked on observing oozes ever since, dedicating all his time to collecting, cajoling and carousing with the ichorous jellies and gooey glops of sentient slime that muck about in the underworld. Did you know **slimes** can tell time? Or that **black pudding** is actually uncommonly sweet? Or that a single **ochre jelly** can consume an entire **bugbear** in less than a half hour? Fascinating!

◆ **Wants & Needs** Parker (you can call him Slick) is hoping to lead an excursion on the Slimy Sea, an underground lake teeming with (and possibly composed of) oozes. If he must, he'll take his custom glass-bottomed boat and make his "Ooze Cruise" a solo venture. But he'd love company.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The Slimy Sea is very real and very dangerous, as at the bottom is a portal leading to the abyssal lair of the lord of oozes.

◆ **Carrying** 21gp; 18 small jars of specimens; a **necklace of fireballs** (for ooze-related emergencies); a collection of notes in gnomish.

Marmee Lynne Thump *"Just keep on movin.'"*

A broad-bodied, elderly dwarven woman with power lifter's thighs wearing a knit shawl, a well-loved rucksack and carrying two sturdy walking sticks.

For the Insightful

This woman means what she says and says what she means.

FUZZY OF chin and thick of thigh, Marmee Lynne Thump is a legend within the core of this mountain, and recently finished a cross-continental hike in honor of her 500th birthday. When she returned to her keep, she learned her seven great-great-grandchildren (her "3Gs") had gone missing, so she finished her ale, turned back around and hit the trail to find them.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Marmee Lynne wants to give each of her missing 3Gs a bear hug and a rap on the rump.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** One of the 3Gs, a curious teen named Cash, led his siblings to another plane, which'll really scorch Marmee Lynne's toast.

◆ **Carrying** 14gp, 2pp; a sack of uncut gemstones worth 68gp.

LIPMAN CALF *"Check."*

A lithe, sure-footed woman with a powerful mohawk and a distinct lack of eyebrows, wearing form-fitting gear that includes a harness on her waist and a greasy strap flung over her shoulder.

For the Perceptive

Lipman's boots appear to conform to her foot, including slots for each toe. They appear to be covered in grease.

THE REALM on the surface has its byways and highways, tracks and trails. In contrast, the underkingdoms have means of conveyance unique to their subterranean circumstances (most involve stairs). One such method is "surfing the web," a travel tactic as efficient as it is treacherous. Daring individuals who choose to traverse the massive network of spiders' webs that criss-cross over canyons and chasms of the underworld shave days and sometimes weeks off a journey, assuming they don't wipe out or wind up in a **giant spider**'s clutches. Lipman Calf, one of the region's most celebrated straphangers, spends most of her days ripping from one side of the Coot Chute to the other—looking for gaps in the web and luring predatory spiders away from less agile travelers.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Lipman lost a group of fledgling straphangers out for their first spin surfing the web, and fears they may be spiderfood. She doesn't normally get sentimental—death comes for us all, particularly those foolish enough to surf the web. But she can't get this group's terrified screaming out of her skull and feels obligated to try to rally a rescue.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Lipman is brave but not dumb enough to battle a nest of giant spiders, so she's looking for backup. Additionally, Lipman's concern for this group of would-be straphangers stems from the fact that one of them looked particularly wealthy. And spiders don't typically eat coin purses.

◆ **Carrying** 6gp; dungeoneer's pack; a small bag of grease; **shoes of spider climbing.**

ABNER KEANE *"It's a living."*

An average-looking, pale man with thinning brown hair, wearing a large leather apron and leather gloves.

For the Perceptive

Abner seems completely oblivious to the fact that his wife and Count Vardus can't keep their eyes off each other.

ABNER KEANE IS a failed alchemist who runs a word-of-mouth poison shop in an old tunnel. Despite having set up his business in order to make inexpensive cure-alls for the ill while trying to turn lead into gold, Abner's dream soon turned into a nightmare as his clients began dropping like flies, and he fled underground, where his incidentally created poisons began attracting a less reputable clientele. In an effort to keep the lights on (and keep up with his wife Celeste's lavish tastes), Abner devotes much of his time to creating deadly brews, and is visited almost daily by Count Vardus, his most illustrious client, who continually orders a custom, arcane and increasingly impossible to craft poison. In return for Abner's discretion, the count often pays double the asking price. As these custom creations take time, to keep the count occupied while he waits, Abner will send Celeste to entertain his favorite regular. He's not certain what the count wants with these lethal brews and knows well enough not to ask. He also doesn't ask Celeste why she looks so flush each time she returns from the count's company.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Abner would like to keep paying the bills, sure, if it gets him closer to turning minor metals into gold. Celeste loves gold. He loves Celeste. He's doing this for her.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Count Vardus doesn't particularly care about poison—he spends the money to buy time with Celeste.

◆ **Carrying** 2cp, 30sp, 50gp; a mortar and pestle; **basilisk** phlegm; a beehive husk; juniper; lavender.

Gherick Alekiller

"Cursed? I'm the most blessed dwarf in the realm."

A dwarf who brings new meaning to the phrase barrel-chested, his torso is the exact shape and size of an ale barrel, and even has vertical lines accentuating the effect.

For the Perceptive

Gherick's torso doesn't just look like a barrel of ale: It is truly an empty cask.

ONCE ONE of the most productive miners in the realm, Gherick Alekiller decided to take an early retirement after amassing his riches. During a particularly hardy celebration, Gherick insulted an unscrupulous wizard who, noticing his prodigious thirst, cursed him with an unfillable barrel of ale for a chest: the drink he once had such love for now brings him no joy at all, only a succession of small paydays against would-be drinking champions.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Gherick longs for a cure for his condition that will replace his middle with actual viscera or some form of arrangement with a local distiller. Surely there's a market for dwarf-aged whisky?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Gherick's condition makes him extremely vulnerable to fire.

◆ **Carrying** Assorted coins of varying origin and value; an augmented ram's horn for ale.

Mardoth Chernovk

"Started from the top, now we're here."

A gentle-looking half-elf with a wide smile, wearing dirty but well-maintained linen clothes.

For the Insightful

Mardoth seems genuinely thrilled to be living in the underworld. There's something soothing about his certainty.

THERE ARE folks who will tell you the underworld is dangerous; a plethora of horrors where certain death lurks at every turn, suspended from the ceiling or sulking in the shadows or hanging in a cloud of spores in the very air they're meant to breathe. Mardoth Chernovk is not one of those people. Having transplanted to the underworld following a failed bid at farming on the surface roughly two decades hence, he couldn't be happier. He and his family (his wife Jassa and their infant son Qaurk), don't miss the sunlight, the seasons, variant weather systems, having to choose what to eat, a clear distinction between night and day, travel of any kind or seeing farther than roughly 60 ft. Why would they?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Maybe deliver this letter to his father on the surface? Archduke Gig Chernovk? If it's not too much trouble.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Sometimes, at night (or day? He's not sure), Mardoth will go and scream obscenities into the echoing halls to hear them repeated back to himself over and over and over again—a ritual that has caught the attention of a tribe of **quaggoth thonots.**

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 2sp; a letter requesting his substantial inheritance be given to whomever bears the letter to his father.

Mara Grigor

"Don't come any closer!"

A petite woman who keeps her face obscured, carrying several coats, hats and capes.

For the Perceptive

Mara's voice sounds a bit screechy, even squawky.

WHEN A brief foray into spellwork went terribly wrong, socialite Mara Grigor watched in horror as her well-kept body contorted into unnatural shapes before settling into its current half-human, half-**harpy** form. Aghast at the sight of her own reflection, the red-haired beauty quickly decided disappearing for good was better than revealing the truth. She grabbed every coat and cloak in her extensive wardrobe and hastily retreated to her estate's cellar, following its extensive underground tunnel system to a cozy corner. She's been laying low underground ever since.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To reverse the spell and return to her original body, of course. What **SQUAWK** else?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Beneath her cloak, Mara is covered in patches of dark blue feathers, and is too embarrassed to ask for help. The Harpy's Curse is irreversible after six successive full moons.

◆ **Carrying** 19sp, 88pp; an armful of coats and cloaks; a handful of jeweled necklaces worth 780gp.

SALLY SHORTHORNS *"Think of the possibilities!"*

A sharp-dressed tiefling woman with rich blue skin and a saccharine smile, her purple-hued hair in a very polished high bun between her short horns.

For the Insightful

A polished saleswoman, Sally would likely find a way to spin the benefits of waterfront living whether staring at a beach or a bog.

THE UNDERWORLD is in many ways a frontier, with plenty of undeveloped real estate just waiting for a buyer who can see its potential. And where there's land to be sold (which is to say commissions to be made) Sally Shorthorns is there to ensure that if you have means but lack imagination, you will find a property that's right for you. Looking for room to stretch your legs? Look no further than this plot by a bottomless pit. Enjoy the thrill of the chase? There's a cavern by a nearby lake that's home to a pack of **cloakers** that would love to send you screaming for the hills. Hoping to get into the precious stones business? There's a mine on offer at a steep discount and it's absolutely not haunted—but even if it were, isn't that so, so charming? Think of all the ghost catchers you could afford if you woke up on a bed of pyrite each morning!

◆ **Wants & Needs** Sally needs to make at least six more sales before the end of the month or she could lose her fourth house.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Most of the deeds to the land Sally is selling are forgeries. In fact, much of the underworld is not "for sale" as the dwarves, dark elves, gnomes and umberorcs whose ancestors have dwelled here for centuries have informed her on multiple occasions.

◆ **Carrying** 12sp, 9gp; a lovely handbag; a binder featuring several handouts on available properties in the area (at GM discretion).

TLARRGH THE TROGLODYTE *"My ap-o-lo-gies."*

A scuzzy, slimy creature with a lengthy tail and heavy claws, whose scaly skin appears to be leaking a noxious ooze.

For the Naturalists

This creature is clearly a **troglodyte**, though it seems to possess some degree of culture—a rarity among its kind.

JUST AS the first wolves who became dogs slowly made their way closer to the campfires of early man in a quest for food, certain monstrous species are capable of eschewing the primal trappings of their kin in favor of the easy meals that accompany domestication. Tlarrgh, a proud warrior in his troglodyte pod, was lured closer to civilization by the consistent temptations of roast pork and brown bread and gravy simmering at a stove not far from his ancestral home. Rather than approaching with menace, he supplicated so that he could sup on the scraps from this overwhelming feast. He returned again the following evening, and again the next day. That was eight years ago. A powerful, if still bestial, contributor to the community of settlers here, Tlarrgh hopes to continue learning Common, gaining access to simple tools and writhing in his own filth without fear of losing his status among other, stronger smelling kin.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Tlarrgh has been asked by members of his adoptive community to seek out a new source of fresh water.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Though he has communicated with his pod that they'd all be welcome as part of the growing community if they just submitted a little, Tlarrgh's former friends and family are not interested in the trappings of submission—no matter how tasty they smell. They are planning a raid on the community, and plan to wreck all the hard work Tlarrgh has done as well as the good will he's earned for himself.

◆ **Carrying** A steel rake; a large bucket.

Arawn "Wren" Rees *"Has the red sparrow come to roost?"*

A thin but muscular elderly man with snow white hair peeking out from beneath a black hood, dressed in badly worn black clothes and carrying a suede knapsack.

For the Perceptive

Wren looks like he hasn't seen sunlight in years.

THE LAST surviving member of the long-forgotten Crimson Sparrow Assassins' Guild, the man known as "Wren" barely escaped with his life when his crew was ambushed decades ago at the height of a blood feud with a rival guild. Retreating to a cave system beneath the city, Wren has spent the better part of his adult life out of sight, emerging only to steal a little bread when he tires of the taste of grubs. Following a recent accident in which he shattered (and barely managed to heal) his left wrist, Wren knows his health is beginning to fail. Having long outlasted all who knew him, he is determined to pass on the ways of the Crimson Sparrow to a worthy pupil, even if it means spiriting away an impressionable, sturdy child to achieve his goal. If anyone attempts to engage Wren in conversation—which happens every time he ventures above ground now—he replies, "Has the red sparrow come to roost?"

◆ **Wants & Needs** Wren must ensure the secrets of the Crimson Sparrow are passed on to a new generation. Time is short and he might get desperate.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** For anyone who answers with, "The rooster crows. The sparrow flies," Wren will give them his ***Hollow Chime.***

◆ **Carrying** 15gp; two apples; a loaf of pumpernickel bread; three daggers; ***The Hollow Chime.***

The Hollow Chime

wondrous item (requires attunement)

This chime rings out clear as the cry of an evening sparrow, heralding the arrival of 1d4 spectral **assassins**—the spirits of some of the Crimson Sparrow's elite nightblades. These assassins are ethereal, and protect the chimer at GM discretion for one hour or until they drop to 0 hit points.

Ronda "Rodeo" Burglesnirven *"Yippee ki-yoink!!"*

A gnomish woman with darker skin, wearing faded black chaps and a purplish hat, a lasso of thin cable on one hip, a sack of glowing fruit on the other.

For the Insightful

Though this woman is clearly local, her mannerisms and demeanor suggest someone who's lived a life on the surface.

A DEEP GNOME who spent nearly a century above ground, Ronda "Rodeo" Burglesnirven learned quite a bit about the nature of ranching during her stint on the surface—how to rope, how to ride, how to wrangle. Upon returning home, she missed the thrill that accompanies the workaday cowboy lifestyle, and set about trying to replicate the dude ranch experience underground. The lack of cattle and horses in this part of the realm was initially a deterring factor, but the **giant spiders** and **giant fire beetles** that run rampant in the underworld were a fine substitute. She also trained a couple of **ropers**—creatures with a natural affinity for lassoing even the most disagreeable of beasts—to corral ornery **minotaurs** when they're in the area. "Rodeo's Underground Round-up" has since become a popular tourist destination for those who dwell beneath the surface, where budding adventurers can try their hands at grub wrasslin', beetle racin' and minotaur ridin' (after signing a waiver, of course).

◆ **Wants & Needs** One of Rodeo's prize fire beetles (Ol' Sparky, if you care to ask) wandered out of his pen yesterday while she was dealing with a few other issues on the ranch. She'd be much obliged if you could track him down and bring him back. He's fond of glowfruit, and might be found near the grove a few miles up the trailhead. Just watch out for **gricks**! And **grells**!

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The constant thudding, thumping and bucking (and laughter!) often emanating from Rodeo's Underground Round-up carries through the caverns for miles. The tremors travel even farther, and have aroused the attention of a **purple worm**, whose arrival would give Rodeo a chance to tame her biggest challenge yet—or result in a heckuva last ride.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 9gp; a 15 ft. lasso of steel cable; a sack of glowfruit; a collection of terrible poetry.

Nobles & Leaders

Although their circumstances may seem foreign to those who dwell above, those who rule the underworld are not without a particular pedigree.

TORQ MAYHEM *"Could be worse..."*

A rough looking half-orc, standing 6½-feet tall and nearly as broad, with wild hair pulled back in a tight ponytail and wearing studded leather armor and high leather boots. He's missing half of one ear and also carries two wicked-looking scimitars sheathed alongside both hips. A small pale lizard is perched on his shoulder.

For the Perceptive

Occasionally the half-orc reaches up to tug at his missing ear, then grimaces in disgust at its absence. The eyes of his pale lizard are milky and likely useless.

TORQ MAYHEM IS a half-orc who's managed to put the warring nature of his heritage behind him to become something of a hero to a local community of deep gnomes. Once oppressed by a larger band of **duergar**, the community was saved when Torq stumbled upon the scene. He's never given an explanation for his arrival or his taciturn personality and yet he's devoted his life to protecting the livelihood of these gnomes, who revere him as a musclebound mercenary and erstwhile savior. He's organized their ranks into an effective militia and acts as their de facto leader, and has been plotting an assault on a band of duergar camped up the cavern from here.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Torq is tough, but sentimental. He's intensely protective of his blind pet lizard, Milkweed. He also truly misses his ear, which was torn off by a **troll** some years back. If he can clear out the duergar threat he might be inclined to find a healer who can help him grow it back.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Years ago while exploring the underworld, Torq's adventuring party found itself under surprise attack by a small army of duergar. Torq's life was saved by his best pal, Gorram Bonesplitter, a deep gnome barbarian. Gorram fell that day, and Torq felt compelled to swear a blood oath to defend the descendants of the scrappy gnome who saved his life.

Torq Mayhem

Medium half-orc, chaotic good
Leader of the deep gnome militia and devastator of duergar.

Armor Class 17 (studded leather)
Hit Points 60 (8d10 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str+6, Dex+8, Con+5
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +8, Survival +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnomish, Orc
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Relentless Endurance (1/Long Rest). When Torq would be reduced to 0 hit points, he drops to 1 instead.
Vengeful Light (1/Long Rest). Torq can use his bonus action to light his scimitars' blades on fire using a magical command. Once lit, each blade does an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage upon a hit and each sheds bright light in a 60 ft. radius. This effect lasts one minute.

Spellcasting. Torq is an 8th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Ranger spells prepared:
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, hunter's mark, longstrider*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, silence*

Actions
Multiattack. Torq makes two attacks with his scimitars or two attacks with his shortbow.
Scimitars. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d6 + 7) slashing damage and an additional 7 (2d6) fire damage if Vengeful Light is active.
Shortbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 23sp, 30gp; belt pouch of chewing tobacco; a shortbow and quiver of arrows; two +2 red-bladed scimitars; studded leather armor.

Zahira the Prophet

A copper-skinned tiefling man wearing blue robes, his arms bound in white bandages all the way down to his fingers, wearing a patterned head scarf tied up in a careful knot, his two jet-black polished horns protruding and sweeping up and back from his head in a rolling wave.

For the Perceptive

A small pouch hangs at Zahira's waist and makes a dry rattling noise whenever it is jolted.

A travelling mystic on a vision quest to find his lost people, Zahira has been walking the deep underground tunnels for many years. Though he has yet to find them, his faith remains unshakable. His propensity to protect the weak, natural leadership skills and ability to glimpse into the future have helped him amass a large, almost religious, following. And any time a number of people will do whatever you say, politics tend to follow. Currently leading thousands of refugees from the war torn land of the surface, Zahira could snap his fingers and found a new civilization. But this is not the destiny he's seen for himself.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Zahira has never given up the search for his people, but often puts it on hold for others in need, protecting those who cannot protect themselves.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Zahira has a stubborn streak made somewhat worse by his followers calling him a vassal of the gods. When he believes the fates have given him a sign, he is unwavering. It's always worked out in the past.

Zahira the Prophet

Medium tiefling, lawful good
Hailed as a vassal of the gods by his followers, Zahira believes the fates will guide him on the search for his people.

Armor Class 17 (unarmored defense)
Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Cha +8
Damage Resistances poison, necrotic
Skills Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +9
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages Celestial, Common, Infernal
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Blessed Fists. Zahira has been blessed by the gods of fate, adding 14 (3d8) radiant damage to his unarmed attacks.
Evasion. If Zahira is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw and only half damage if he fails.
Blessed Dice. Zahira can use his blessed dice to cast the following Cleric spells:
At will: *guidance*
3/Long Rest: *augery, bless*
1/Long Rest: *divination, find the path*

Actions
Multiattack. Zahira makes three unarmed strikes.
Unarmed Strike. Melee Weapon Attack. +9 to hit, range 5ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d8 + 5), plus an additional 14 (3d8) radiant damage from Blessed Fists.

◆ **Carrying** 23cp, 13sp, 39gp; a scholar's pack and supplies; 2 flasks of holy water; a pouch of ***blessed dice***.

Boss Grunka

"You may now grovel."

A rotund **goblin** in a black caftan that is straining across her sizable frame as she sits in a barely big enough palanquin, with long black hair tied in a high pony that juts up from atop her head.

For the Perceptive

This goblin has enough subjects at her side to carry her palanquin, but the carriage also seems to have wheels, as well as a small coal-powered propulsion system built onto the back.

BOSS GRUNKA is the leader of a band of goblins and at one time carried all the weight around here. However, power corrupts, and in this case, "corruption" means "making your minions carry you everywhere." Grunka still holds quite a bit of sway in her old, pendulous arms, but most of her muscles have atrophied and she's no longer able to walk about of her own volition. Her retainers push her from place to place and perform even the most basic duties for her, from feeding to bathing to...well, everything else. But her reputation, like her power, is starting to fade.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Grunka fears she'll soon be killed by usurpers. It's hard to eat when you're dead.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Grunka's suspicions are correct. Her own second in command (a goblin named "Shifty" Shiv) plans to pin the murder on any outsiders he can find, ensuring the enmity of every goblin within 10 miles or so.

◆ **Carrying** 12sp, 42gp, 50pp; a large coal-fired palanquin on wheels; a large bag of chocolate-covered rats; two giant toe rings worth 10gp each.

"The fates have spoken."

The Taskmaster, Ødger Ironhand

"Get back to work."

A dwarf with pockmarked skin, greasy black hair and half a cigar held between his teeth wearing chainmail that could do with a polish and carrying a barbed whip in one hand and a shield in the other.

For the Perceptive

Ødger's coin pouch at his belt looks rather heavy for someone of his profession.

THE TASKMASTER is feared and hated by all in the deep mining camps, but most keep it to themselves if they know what's good for them. Liberal with lashings for poor work and stingy with breaks (overtime is right out), Ødger Ironhand knows he's hated by the entire workforce that squirms under his whip but he couldn't care less. He ensures the entire mine hits its quotas, no matter the cost. A quarterly bonus is nearly always worth more than the bribes he's been known to pay safety inspectors.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ødger doesn't care how (or how safely) work in his mine is done. Just has to be done fast.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ødger skims his workers' pay. Additionally, one of the walls within his mine is in danger of collapsing. Ødger has ignored his workers' warnings, however, and is forcing them to dig deeper, despite sensing that a portal to the shadow realm could be just a few more pickaxe strikes away.

◆ **Carrying** 5cp, 28sp, 289gp; rusty chain mail; 3 packets of cigars; 2 torches; rations for 3 days.

Ødger Ironhand "The Taskmaster"

Medium dwarf, neutral evil
A hard man with a cruel streak, poor management style and a mean barbed whip.

Armor Class 18 (chain mail + shield)
Hit Points 83 (11d10 + 22)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +8, Con +6
Damage Resistances poison
Skills Athletics +8, Intimidation (Strength) +8
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Second Wind (1/Long Rest). Ødger can use his bonus action to heal 24 HP.
Fearless. Ødger has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Actions
Multiattack. Ødger can use Back to Work and then make two attacks with his barbed whip.
Back to Work. Ødger screams work orders at all who can see and hear him. Each creature must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. When frightened in this manner, a creature must spend its action doing manual labor (at GM discretion). A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Ødger's work orders for the next 24 hours.
Barbed Whip. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage. On a hit, the target is grappled (escape DC 14) if Ødger isn't already grappling a creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 7 (2d6) piercing damage at the start of each of its turns.

Lady Cretinia Shadowshrike

"I'm so grateful to be here. Honestly."

A regal-looking moon elf with bluish-white skin and long white hair wearing an elegant indigo gown, with a distinct lack of thumbs on her fine hands.

For the Arcane

This woman has a tattoo of several interlocking magical sigils on her right wrist.

A NOBLE moon elf from the house of Shadowshrike, Lady Cretinia was born into a life of luxury but experienced significant tragedy before her 24th year. Ambushed by enemies of the crown and sold into slavery nearly a century ago, her thumbs were removed to ensure compliance and she was branded with mystical sigils enabling her captors to track her in the event of an escape. All of this was unnecessary, as fleeing from those who have wronged you is not the Shadowshrike way. Biding her time, Lady Cretinia has persevered, earning a station of some high regard after pairing off with a dark elven noble. She will soon bear his child. She can't wait. Really.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To survive in order to find her way home again. Now that she is carrying a child of prophecy, she has far more leverage. She can feel its kicks, as well as the insurmountable arcane power that was foretold.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Lady Cretinia's unborn child is sharing her body and in return some of its power is passing to her. If she had allies, she would attempt to wield it, and burn this city to the ground. Once she returns to the Shadowshrikes, the rewards for those who assisted her could be incalculable.

◆ **Carrying** 4 rings worth 33pp; the Sofrosorender—"The Earth Shaker"—a child of promise.

MAGNUS NYSTROM *"You there! I'll save you!"*

A human with flowing golden hair and immaculately polished plate armor, who sits atop a glowing blue steed, with a blindingly white smile, which distracts from his otherwise very vanilla facial features.

For the Perceptive or Roguish

Magnus appears to be the sort that carries quite a bit of coin—so much that he wouldn't notice if some went missing.

BORN AND raised within the safe walls and gates and many locked doors of one of the underworld's nobles-only communities, Magnus was taught by only the best private tutors and instructors, as expected for the future leader of House Nystrom. But Magnus always did like tales of dashing and daring Nystroms of the past and having his head filled with tales of heroes saving the helpless peasants from dastardly dragons. So Magnus decided to embark on a quest—rather against his family's best wishes—to see just what this hero business is all about.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Magnus wants to be adored by the peasant folk, a hero of the common people who would flock into his arms in adoration. Somewhat alarmingly, the commoners have mostly just told him to piss off.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Magnus is starting to realize he doesn't know what he wants and is also beginning to realize that perhaps the world doesn't work the way all his tutors and family told Magnus it did. Magnus is beginning to have some mild self-doubt—something he's never had to grapple with before. For example: Did you know there's an entire group of **duergar** whose sole purpose is to churn a wheel and power his family's estate? Seems...unfair?

◆ **Carrying** 1,894gp, 190pp; polished plate armor; a ruby-studded longsword; a like-new adventurer's pack.

Magnus Nystrom

Medium human, lawful good
A would-be savior of the common folk who is slowly coming to the realization most people neither want nor need to be saved—they want to be treated as equals.

Armor Class 20 (plate armor + shield)
Hit Points 53 (7d10 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +7, Cha +6
Skills Athletics +7, Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Aura of Protection. Allies within 10 ft. of Magnus gain +3 on all saving throws.
Divine Right (5/Long Rest). Triggered following a successful melee attack, Magnus's weapon deals an additional 14 (4d6) radiant damage, as it is suffused with confidence in his birthright.

Spellcasting. Magnus is a 7th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Paladin spells prepared:
1st level (4 slots): *command, bless*
2nd level (3 slots): *aid, find steed, hold person*

Actions
Multiattack. Magnus makes two attacks with his longsword.
Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: One-handed or two-handed, +7 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 9 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage one-handed or 10 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage two-handed.

The Matron Mother Reclusia

A withered husk of a woman, this crone-ish dark elf is seated in a spider-themed throne suspended from the ceiling of her palatial chamber. Her skin clings tight to her bones, as if she has been drained of all but a few drops of life. Her crown is fashioned from bone and elven smithing, with spiderweb inlays.

For the Insightful

In her prime, this creature might have been the most formidable you can imagine. The fact that she still lives in her current form is a testament to her power.

The matriarch of the dark elven city of H'angontite for eons, the Matron Mother Reclusia rose to power through subterfuge and strategy, as well as overwhelming arcane power. The more authority she acquired the more she battled to maintain it—the dark elven way. Her battle to retain the throne has been all-consuming, and while other empires have crumbled during her reign, Reclusia remains resolute. She would give up her life long before she gives away her power. She will always rule in H'angontite, perhaps from beyond the grave.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The Matron Mother Reclusia knows her health is fading and suspects there are those in her inner circle who will strike if she shows any further signs of weakness. She needs allies, and a way to live after death—not necessarily in that order. Until she finds a solution, she'll settle for sucking the life out of those who attend to her on a daily basis.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Reclusia is old enough to remember that the city of H'angontite was once a beacon of culture and curiosity above the surface before being shunted away underground as part of the Great Schism. She's old enough to remember she was not born a dark elf. She's old enough to know she's put so many to the sword that none will mention this fact again. She's old enough to know she could die any day. She's so old, it's nearly all she remembers. Nearly.

◆ **Carrying** 23sp, 4gp; a crown of bone and webbing.

Matron Mother Reclusia

Medium dark elf, neutral evil
A leader in the twilight of her life, Reclusia will cling to the throne until her dying breath—and perhaps even longer.

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 165 (22d8 + 66)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Cha +8, Wis +8
Damage Resistances cold, bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison, necrotic
Skills Deception +12, Perception +12, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 120 ft. passive Perception 22
Languages Abyssal, Common, Deep Speech
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Aura of Drain Life (2/Long Rest). As an action, the Matron Mother Reclusia can activate a 20 ft. radius aura of necrotic energy. Any creature caught in the aura when it activates, or that ends its turn within the aura, must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 24 (6d6) necrotic damage. The aura requires concentration and lasts for one minute.
Habitual Sacrifice. Reclusia has 2d8 willing subjects in her coterie. If she is within 30 ft. of one, she can use her bonus action to drain them of life, dealing 21 (3d12) damage to her subject and healing herself for the same amount.

If none of her subjects are within range, Reclusia can attempt to use this effect on up to 2d4 other creatures with reduced effectiveness. The target of this effect must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or suffer 8 (3d4) necrotic damage, healing Reclusia for the same amount. In both cases, this damage also reduces the maximum hit points of the creature affected until they finish a long rest. If this damage reduces a creature's maximum hit points to 0, the creature dies.

Actions
Multiattack. Reclusia uses Chain Life or makes two attacks with her rotten limbs.
Rotten Limbs. Melee Attack: +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 3 (1d4 + 0), plus an additional 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.
Chain Life. Ranged Spell Attack: +8 to hit, range 60 ft., up to three targets. Reclusia can target up to three creatures within range that she can see. A streak of dark energy is released from her finger. Each creature hit is bound to Reclusia with a dark chain, dealing 11 (2d10) necrotic damage and healing Reclusia for the same amount. Additionally, each creature hit must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is bound by the chain, reducing its movement to zero until the end of its next turn.

"Obey.
Or
perish."

Signé Rustbane "Fair work for fair pay."

A no-nonsense dwarven woman with dark hair knotted atop her head and a braided beard down to her waist. She wears studded leather armor and carries a heavy pickaxe casually resting on her shoulder.

For the Perceptive

A blue armband encircles her upper arm with the letters UWU inscribed upon it.

LEADER OF the United Workers' Union (UWU), Signé Rustbane has faced many hardships in her life and has always risen to the challenge. From campaigning for higher wages for the deep tunnel miners, to fighting for compensation for the constant **ankheg** invasions violating workplace health and safety conditions, Signé will always stand up for those just trying to make an honest dollar off their labor.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Signé is always on the lookout for more UWU members. If you support the Union, you support workers' rights.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Though she doesn't mention it or carry herself as such, Signé's is royal blood; she is the sole heir to the Rustbane throne. This fact doesn't sit well with her patriarchal civilization, but should push come to shovel, the miners in the UWU would have her back.

◆ **Carrying** 4cp, 17sp, 29gp; a book listing UWU members; a heavy pickaxe.

Signé Rustbane

Medium dwarf, lawful good
Leader of the United Workers' Union (UWU) and staunch labor activist, Signé Rustbane will fight hard for the rights of others in the workplace, as union rep and/or queen.

Armor Class 13 (studded leather)
Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+ 0)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +7
Damage Resistance poison
Skills Persuasion +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Inspiring Leader (1/Long Rest). Signé can use her bonus action to shout a rallying call to action allowing up to 10 allies within 30 ft. of her to gain 15 temporary HP. Additionally, these allies are immune to fear for the next hour.
Fearless. Signé has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Actions
Heavy Pickaxe. Melee Weapon Attack: Two-handed, +6 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions
Parry. Signé adds 2 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, she must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Ringo Baloba "Keep it tight!"

A humanoid figure covered head to toe in rusted metal armor that sheds red flecks everywhere but looks to have once been a gorgeous set of full plate. A masculine voice echoes from inside the enclosed helm, which is covered in runes and seemingly rusted shut.

For the Arcane

This seems to be a set of **animated armor**, but if so it's very well done. And very old. And the magic seems to have produced a fully sentient train of thought. Which animated armor never has. Hmmmmm.

RINGO BALOBA enjoys the little things in life: wandering the caves and tunnels to collect trinkets and treasure; rare cave mushrooms and horticulture; the occasional kind blacksmith or armorer he might meet every hundred or so years who gives his armor a new lease on life; and returning to an ancient metal door covered in the same runes as his armor. He doesn't know why he returns to this door or what it leads to. But he can appreciate a nice door.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ringo enjoys talking and listening to people he meets in the caves but he tends to get distracted after a while and will begin to move in the direction of the ancient door. He could really use an artificer, armorer, tinker or kind soul who could tidy up his rust a bit.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ringo Baloba is actually King Balboa, a mortal soul who was bound to this armor as part of a curse on his kingdom. His memory is faded and scrambled after years of degradation and, like the armor his consciousness inhabits, could do with a little cleaning up.

◆ **Carrying** 4cp, 8sp, 35gp in ancient coin; several scraps of metal; some luminescent cave crystals; the known location of an ancient arcane door, the key to his salvation.

RUSSULA LENKUNYA, QUEEN OF THE FUMOSA FUNGI

"May your spores drift upon the righteous path."

A tall, thin **myconid** whose body is covered in hardened plates of pale purple flesh with pinkish streaks running through it. Her head is crowned with a myriad of colorful fungi. Her eyes are half-closed and she wears a transcendent smile upon her face.

For the Druidic

The fungi that make up Queen Russula's crown are incredibly rare and very magical.

QUEEN RUSSULA is a peaceful ruler and protects her myconid colony with words rather than violence. She has much to give in the way of knowledge and as a result, numerous travelers seeking her counsel complete pilgrimages to visit her cavernous palace, all but begging her to use her powers to enable them to see a vision of the future and the fates. She often trades these visions for protections from the monstrosities that stalk her colony from the shadows.

◆ **Wants & Needs** To continue to see visions of a future for her people. Getting rid of a nearby cave full of mushroom-loving **giant bats** would be a step forward toward her goal.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The fungi atop Queen Russula's crown are the source of her prophetic visions. They are very hallucinogenic and toxic enough to kill if not picked under conditions known only to Queen Russula.

◆ **Carrying** 29gp worth of jewels; 680gp worth of rare mushrooms and fungi; her ***crown of spores.***

Russula Lenkunya, Queen of the Fumosa Fungi

Medium myconid, neutral good
Russula Lenkunya is a Queen who just wants the best for her colony of sentient mushrooms.

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)

Skills Insight +6, Perception +6
Damage Resistances poison, psychic
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Plants
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Distress Spores. When Russula Lenkunya takes damage, all other myconids within 240 ft. of her can sense her pain.
Rapport Spores. A 20-ft. radius of spores extends from Russula Lenkunya. These spores can go around corners and affect only creatures with an Intelligence of 2 or higher that aren't undead, constructs or elementals. Affected creatures can communicate telepathically with one another while they are within 30 ft. of each other. The effect lasts for one hour.
Sun Sickness. While in sunlight, Russula Lenkunya has disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls and saving throws. She dies if she spends more than one hour in direct sunlight.

Innate Spellcasting. Russula Lenkunya's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *guidance, poison spray*
3/Long Rest: *cure wounds, detect evil and good*
1/Long Rest: *contagion, greater restoration*

Actions
Poison Spray. Ranged Spell Attack: Range 10 ft., one target. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 13 (2d12) poison damage.
Pacifying Spores (3/Long Rest). Russula Lenkunya ejects spores at one creature she can see within 5 ft. of her. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned for one minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Crown of Spores

A circlet of rare fungi in a plethora of colors, each one of six mushroom variants. When a creature ingests one of the mushrooms, roll on the table below to determine the type of mushroom and the benefits associated with ingesting it:

1d6	Fungi of the...
1	***Mutinus boninensis.*** Bestows one use of the spell *commune* (with a godly being sympathetic to mushrooms at GM discretion).
2	***Geastrum triplex.*** Bestows one use of the spell *true seeing.*
3	***Clavaria zollingeri.*** Bestows one use of the spell *telepathic bond.*
4	***Hexagonia tenuis.*** Bestows one use of the spell *scrying.*
5	***Piptoporus australiensis.*** Bestows one use of the spell *greater restoration.*
6	***Tremella foliacea.*** Bestows one use of the spell *foresight.*

Lyria Nightblossom

Garbed in inky black vestments decorated with withered dandelions, roses and various other dried and pressed flowers, Lyria has the tall and slender build common to wood elves, but her translucent skin clearly hasn't seen the sun for centuries.

For the Insightful

Lyria seems completely comfortable leading her followers, but becomes evasive and defensive when discussing how her settlement has endured underground for so long.

For the Arcane

The oak staff Lyria carries with her radiates with magical power.

Centuries ago, Lyria Nightblossom was on the path to becoming a respected, if unremarkable, druidess in the forests of the surface. One day she had a revelation: her people were taking the forests and fields they loved for granted. They did not worship the earth as Lyria did and this had made them spiritually stagnant. Lyria's radical ideas helped her gain a fanatic following among those who felt like they didn't fit into wood elf society. Eventually Lyria led her followers deep underground, where they could become spiritually "pure" by isolating themselves away from the surface, becoming one with the earth itself. Lyria and her followers worship nature on the surface as much as other wood elves, but are devoted to the belief that they need to deprive themselves of these pleasures until Lyria deems them worthy enough to return to its embrace.

◆ **Wants & Needs** As the spiritual and political leader of a deeply devoted religious community, Lyria demands absolute obedience from her followers. Keeping her people together and isolated from outsiders (who could pollute them with dangerous ideas) drives Lyria's every waking moment.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Lyria is able to keep her community both isolated and well-supplied through her use of a magical staff she stole from the wood elves on the surface. In the right hands, this staff can cause lush gardens to spring from even the most barren soil. Lyria has been using it for centuries to grow food in a secret cave known only to her and her inner circle. Over time, Lyria and her chosen have spent more and more time in this garden, despite her teachings that forbid enjoying nature and sunshine.

However, the staff was never meant for such extensive use so far from the sun and needs new sources of magical power to remain charged. Lyria has resorted to luring anyone with an ounce of magic into her community, promising to teach them the secrets of the underrealm's arcane power. Instead, she sacrifices them in a rite of blood magic that thus far has kept her staff powered.

Lyria Nightblossom

"Druidess of The Deep"

Medium wood elf, neutral

A religious zealot with a large commune of followers that worship her as much as the earth.

Armor Class 13 (16 with *barkskin*)
Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +9
Skills Deception +8, Nature +6, Perception +9
Senses passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Elvish, Undercommon
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Devoted Followers. Lyria has 3d4 of her most zealous, devoted followers surround her and use their own bodies to shield her from harm. Each follower has an AC of 10 and 4 HP. Attacks targeting Lyria are at disadvantage while these acolytes surround her.

Spellcasting. Lyria is a 10th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, shillelagh*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, cure wounds, goodberry*
2nd level (3 slots): *barkskin, lesser restoration, hold person*
3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, dispel magic, erupting earth*
4th level (3 slots): *blight, control water*
5th level (2 slots): *geas, greater restoration, insect plague*

Actions

Quarterstaff. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit. Reach 5 ft. *Hit*: 3 (1d6 + 0) bludgeoning damage. If *shillelagh* is cast, +9 to hit and 9 (1d8 + 5) magical bludgeoning damage.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp; ***Staff of the Immortal Blossom***; a Healer's Kit; 4 *goodberries*.

Staff of the Immortal Blossom

wondrous Item, very rare
(requires attunement by a druid)

An ancient oak staff and one of the wood elves' most prized artifacts, the Staff of the Immortal Blossom has 3 charges and can be used to make any kind of vegetation spring forth from rock or earth in a 100-ft. radius circle. After all its charges are spent, the staff must be recharged.

GM NOTE If the staff is taken to the surface and bathed in sunlight, it can regain 1d4 charges per day.

"It is only through suffering and repentance that we will be made whole."

Elicious Elderkin

"Secrets don't make friends."

A tall, stoop-shouldered dark elf wearing a plain gray frock and oversized glasses. She carries a massive tome under one arm and several quill pens in her belt.

For the Perceptive

The book this woman carries is manacled to her left arm with a short iron chain, which appears to be clasped shut. The clasp features an *arcane lock*.

IN ANY society made up of more than one person, there are actions, feelings and thoughts individuals choose to hide from their fellow citizens. In this dark elven city, however, secrets are not so much hidden as given away to an individual called the Dolen Tāeé—"Secret Holder," in the common tongue. The dark elves revere each generation's Dolen Tāeé, and Elicious Elderkin, who has served as this community's Dolen Tāeé for nearly half her life, is no exception. She hears confessions from the populace and writes them down in her book, offering absolution and discretion in equal measure. It is believed offering secrets to the Dolen Tāeé relieves one of the responsibility for having such information and doing so is often a cathartic experience. Due to the sensitivity associated with carrying the collected sins, intentional slights and explosive rumors of an entire civilization, the book of secrets is permanently manacled to the wrist of the Dolen Tāeé. It's a hard life listening to petty grievances and Elicious is getting tired of its weight.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Elicious is sick of listening to the petty lies and gossip of her people, as well as the more heinous sins she's charged with keeping. She'd like nothing more than to be rid of this book and the knowledge it holds, regardless of the consequences.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** There is no ritual and certainly no grandeur associated with being the Dolen Tāeé—Elicious knows she is equal parts confessional priest and glorified therapist. She plans to publish the book of secrets and let the chips fall where they may. However, as far as she knows, the only person who can unlock the arcane manacle attaching the book to her arm is the wizard who cast the spell. As luck would have it, someone recently told Elicious that he faked his own death so he could carry on a torrid affair with a nobleman.

◆ **Carrying** 17gp, 20pp; the book of secrets; several quills and small vials of ink.

Flooful (The Flumph)

"You're an interesting one, aren't you?" [telepathically conveyed]

A creature about the size of a dinner plate bobbing through the air like a jellyfish. Its two eyes swivel around atop tall eye-stalks and a dozen tendrils dangle from its body. The sound of the propulsive gas it keeps releasing (**flumph* *flumphflumph* *flumph**) echoes off the walls nearby.

For the Perceptive

You could have sworn the creature was light pink in color when you first spotted it. Now, however, it appears to be a pastel green. Or is it marigold?

FLOOFUL IS a **flumph**, albeit one that's a bit more intrigued by humanoid goings-on than most and has agreed to act as a mouthpiece (well, brainpiece) for his entire cloister as more and more bipeds encroach on their territory. Wiser than you'd expect but still green behind the ears (err...yellow behind the...not sure), Flooful is ignorant of the customs of civilization, as well as the nature of conquest. Like any good flumph, however, he's thrilled to learn. He's very interested in meeting new people and learning what they know, particularly if they emit positive psionic energy—a flumph's only source of nourishment.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Having absorbed the entirety of thought from the nearby lair of a wretched wizard pursuing lichdom, Flooful is hoping to run into a few individuals who are less obsessed with unlimited power at the cost of one's soul and others' lives.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The wizard Flooful might have mentioned (a dispassionate diviner named Alistair Ornato) botched the process of feeding souls to his phylactery and became a **demilich**, cursed to stalk his own artifact-laden lair.

◆ **Carrying** Foul and unethical arcane knowledge and the secret of happiness ("*Be a flumph!*").

Lawkeepers & Lawbreakers

There is a criminal underworld that flourishes deep underground, as well as a healthy assortment of dangerous monstrosities who call the dark home. Both make great trophies for the daring few who choose to try and bring them to justice.

Ozzias Infernes *"This may hurt..."*

A stocky tiefling with ram-like horns, maroon skin, gold eyes and purple hair, wearing a fine brocade vest and gray slacks.

For the Arcane

The raised patterns of Ozzias's vest are clearly infernal symbols.

A RICH, spoiled devil-worshiper who expects to be obeyed, Ozzias Infernes has carved out quite the life for himself in the world beneath the surface, indulging in his most vile fantasies, practicing obscene rituals and gazing at his collection of rocks shaped like the most infamous arch-devils. He's quick to kidnap weaker beings from above or below, luring victims to his den with promises of wine, riches and a chance to see his breathtaking rocks. Once in his lair, Ozzias's prey are drugged and restrained for some torture-based experiments and/or ritual murder—neither of which are as off-putting as his rambling about a bit of quartz shaped like the Dark Lord Bladrieal.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ozzias would like to commune with the top arch-devil, originator of the tiefling bloodline. See this jagged piece of shale? It looks just like him.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** The rituals Ozzias has been performing were successful, but the devils he's called to this plane manifested within his rock collection. These tiny devils are displeased with their current status, and may look fondly on any who release them from their plight.

◆ **Carrying** 20sp, 22pp; 4 sapphires worth 100gp each; four small vials of ***sleep potion.***

Ozzias's Sleep Potion

This potion carries the effects of a 3rd-level *sleep* spell if ingested. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check would reveal an odd, disconcerting smell prior to ingestion.

Málee *"Protect me?"*

A frail-looking girl with a tentacled mouth and damp lavender skin dressed in a fine black gown that's been reduced to rags.

For the Perceptive

Through holes in the rags, you can see the remnants of a blouse and skirt as well as a hint of finely-wrought scale mail.

THE ABERRANT creatures who slink in the shadows and feast on the minds of intelligent beings across the known realm (you know the type) are not above using their young as bait for a good meal—it keeps the pollywogs busy and hardens them for the dangers of life underground. Málee (pronounced "Molly") is one such youngling, and while she may claim to be lost she is anything but. She knows these caverns as if she were connected to a hive of creatures who've dwelled within them for centuries. She's traveled through the hidden passageways within the secret paths, and has the confidence of a creature that knows if true danger rears its head, she can always call on her colony.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Málee has been charged with luring fresh brains into the inner sanctum of her colony. She'll do whatever she needs to in order to accomplish this, sharing any information she knows about the area including the most dangerous creatures one might encounter. Excluding her cohort, of course.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Málee is in telepathic contact with a horde of 4d6 **grimlocks** who will come to her aid within two minutes if needed. If Málee feels threatened, she'll call to them right away so they're on standby at a moment's notice.

◆ **Carrying** A full water skin; a lightweight blouse and skirt of finely-wrought scale mail (AC 14); a small pouch of fried brain crisps.

NAIN FOEHAMMER

A black-haired dwarf in heavy armor whose long beard is plaited into an intricate pattern and hangs so long it must be tucked into his belt. He carries an oversized hammer and his gaze is one of an angry, battle-hardened warrior.

For the Perceptive

A great deal of care has been given to a water sealed pouch carried on the dwarf's belt. It bulges with odd shapes. Also, you can see the dwarf's stern face soften momentarily when he spots a small child playing nearby.

For the Insightful

Though this individual appears to exude the surly nature common among dwarves, his frustration appears to be directed inward and his gruff nature appears to be a tool to avoid conversation.

The last surviving male heir in his line, Nain Foehammer does what he can to live up to his family's reputation by protecting the local denizens from the worst the under-realms have to offer. Carrying on the family tradition of crafting a personal rune of power into the legendary weapon Foehammer men have used to dispense justice for the better part of an age, yet Nain is also a pacifist at heart. For this reason, he chose the Common expression "hello" to decorate the hammer once it passed to him, as he'd much prefer a friendly greeting to a fight. Most view "hello" as a last bit of mockery—a cordial wink that actually means "sayonara"—to taunt those who dare to oppose him. Nain is embarrassed of the truth.

Wants & Needs While being gifted with the attributes of a warrior and trained to use those skills with deadly efficiency, Nain would prefer to meet a good woman and settle down to become a toymaker, as he loves nothing more than handing out handmade toys to children (when no one is watching, of course).

Secret or Obstacle Nain doesn't want to admit that he hates fighting—it could ruin his family's reputation. Instead, he is terse and rude (in fact overly so) to hide the reality. Since toymaking isn't an "official" dwarven occupation, he's hoping someone can help him figure out how to open up a toy shop without embarrassing himself or the Foehammer clan.

Carrying 13gp; adamantine chain mail; shield; woodworker's kit; oiled pouch filled with small wooden toys; dagger; ***"Hello" the Foehammer.***

Nain Foehammer

Medium mountain dwarf, lawful good
A reluctant warrior and part-time toymaker with a penchant for hand-carved animals.

Armor Class 19 (adamantine chain mail + shield)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 36 + 12)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6
Skills Athletics +7, Insight +4, Intimidation +3, Survival +4
Damage Resistances poison
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Dwarvish
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

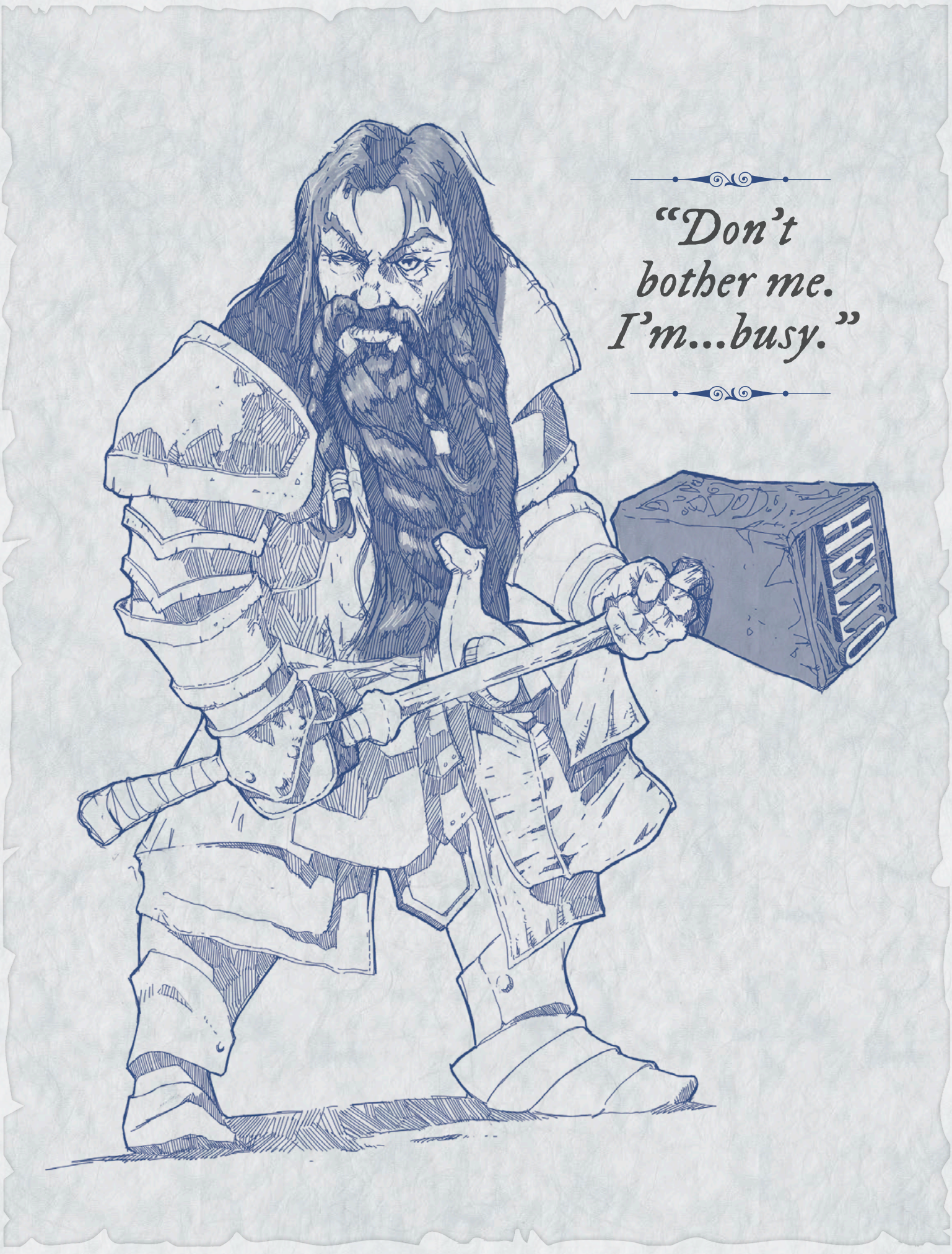
Protector. When a creature Nain can see attacks a creature other than him within 5 ft. of Nain, if he is wielding his shield, Nain can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll.
Second Wind (1/Short or Long Rest). Nain can use a bonus action to regain 17 HP.
Action Surge (1/Short or Long Rest). Nain can take one additional action on his turn.

Actions
Multiattack. Nain can attack twice with "Hello" the Foehammer.
"Hello" the Foehammer. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 12 (1d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) fire damage. If the attack roll is a 19 or 20 on the die, the attack is a critical hit and the target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion.

"Hello" the Foehammer

legendary weapon
(requires attunement by a dwarf)

This massive +3 warhammer is peppered with the runic power of the Foehammer clan, and has been used by the eldest male in their bloodline since the first Foehammers picked at the mountain in ages past. The fire runes deliver an extra 2d6 fire damage on a hit. Additionally, the hammer features 4 runes that allow its wielder to harness arcane energy to cast one of the following spells at 5th level once per long rest: The lightning rune casts *call lightning*; the frost rune casts *cone of cold*; the rock rune casts *wall of stone*; the newest rune, the word "hello," casts *charm person*.


"Don't
bother me.
I'm...busy."

Khadija Corsair, aka Khadija Thievesbane

"Dead or alive, it's all the same to me."

A middle-aged deep gnome in dark purple robes with several bear traps tied to her belt, a heavy crossbow slung over her back and a look on her flat face suggesting she's here for business and pleasure.

For the Gnomish

The traps Khadija carries all feature gnome names embedded in their steel (including "justice," "vengeance," "lil bitey" and more).

HAVING MADE her name hunting down bounties on various blackguards, backstabbers and thieves, Khadija Corsair (Khadija Thievesbane among half the prisons in the realm) gradually moved on to bigger targets. Seeking to cash in on bounties offered on several monstrosities stalking the caverns near her home cave, Khadija doesn't take kindly to strangers and she definitely doesn't like anyone moving in on her turf.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Among the hit list of **grecks** and **grimlocks** and **troglodytes** Khadija's been asked to destroy, she is pursuing "The Limbcutter" (pg. 233), with a bounty set at 500gp—or another foe at GM discretion.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** A walking testament to the adage that it takes a thief to catch one, Khadija started out her life as a renowned second story worker, and there's an aboveground bounty on her head worth 700gp.

◆ **Carrying** 19cp, 5sp, 43gp; a spellbook; 6 bear traps; a heavy crossbow; a quiver of 20 poisoned crossbow bolts.

Khadija Corsair aka Khadija Thievesbane

Small gnome, neutral
A bounty hunter with a bone to pick, Khadija won't let anyone get in the way of her quarry (or the spoils).

Armor Class 13 (16 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 32 (7d6 + 7)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Con +4, Int +6
Skills Arcana +6, Survival +6, Perception +6, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Gnomish, Undercommon
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Gnome Cunning. Khadija has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma saving throws against magic.
Stone Hunter. Khadija has advantage on Stealth checks to hide in rocky terrain.

Spellcasting. Khadija is a 7th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *friends, mage hand, message, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *alarm, cause fear, mage armor magic missile*
2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, hold person, locate object*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, glyph of warding, thunder step*
4th level (1 slot): *banishment, locate creature*

Actions
Heavy Crossbow. Ranged Melee Attack: +6 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target, two-handed. *Hit*: 9 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage and the creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or suffer 4 (1d6) poison damage and be stunned until the end of their next turn.

"Andy" the Androsphinx

"Hilarious."

A majestic winged lion with fur as dark as a panther's and eyes that glow with golden flame.

For the Insightful

This creature's thoughts and feelings are inscrutable.

WHEN THE god of revels and laughter was selecting the appropriate sphinx to guard the Mask of Mirth, it was immediately agreed the task must fall to "Andy," an **androsphinx** who doesn't smile. Andy understands comedy on a theoretical level: Comedic timing. The art of the callback. The rule of three. Comedic timing. But no matter how many jokes he's heard, analyzed or deconstructed, his appreciation of them is always internalized—he's never once laughed out loud. While many sphinxes challenge any seeking the treasures they guard with a puzzle or riddle, Andy has a different request: tell me a joke that kills, or prepare to die.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Andy's lair is the only entry to what remains of the Temple of Glee. In order to stand down, he'll need to hear a joke that makes him laugh out loud (at GM discretion).

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Like many sphinxes (though none have admitted as much) Andy is particularly ticklish.

◆ **Carrying** The knowledge of the universe.

THE LIMBCUTTER *"My what lovely limbs you have."*

A long-limbed pale white creature, with wide eyes and a jagged-toothed smile. He has long knives embedded in his spindly forearms as well as two sets of shrivelled arms halfway down his torso.

For the Perceptive

The arms protruding on either side of this creature's rib cage appear to be distinct and sewn on.

A CREATURE who is but a whisper on the trembling tongues of the rare few who managed to escape its grasp, The Limbcutter should be feared by any who stray too far from the light—but most are unaware of its existence given that the number of creatures that have encountered it and lived to tell the tale can be counted on two hands. However, this feat requires at least two former victims as none have escaped unscathed. The Limbcutter preys on those who have lost their way, and its unrelenting strikes coupled with the impossibly sharp blades it uses to make them are a menace the villagers in this part of the underworld are just beginning to comprehend.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Limbs—and it's been scouting out the gnomish daycare in a village near its lair.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Once a brilliant surgeon, The Limbcutter evolved into a revolting undercreature following a case of malpractice that ruined his career and sent him running into a cave system never to return.

◆ **Carrying** Two desiccated limbs of its last victim.

The Limbcutter

Medium monstrosity, chaotic evil
A horrific humanoid that will do anything within its power to relieve you of your limbs.

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	12 (-2)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +7
Skills Perception +8, Stealth +14
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Undercommon
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Evasion. If The Limbcutter is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw and only half damage if it fails.
Cunning Action. On each of its turns, The Limbcutter can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage or Hide action.

Actions
Multiattack. The Limbcutter makes two attacks with its limbcutters.
Limbcutters. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, range 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, or suffer an additional 11 (3d6) bleeding damage at the end of each of its turns as the wound begins to bleed. This damage stacks. If a creature fails this saving throw by more than 10, one of their limbs is hacked clean off (at GM discretion). The bleed damage can be avoided if a creature spends its action succeeding on a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check, or heals the bleeding by magical means.

SORRAFEL THE BETRAYER ("CHAYA") *"Come and play in the shadows, children."*

An emaciated dark elf in dirty scraps of once fine clothing clutching a wound in her side.

For the Insightful

Chaya seems most comfortable in the shadows.

CHAYA WAS beaten, bloodied and bruised and forced to watch as her children were taken by a creature that moved with the speed of a shadow. It's a heartbreaking tale that works like a charm every time. Once an altruistic **gold dragon**, Sorrafel the Betrayer was trapped in the shadow plane, which stole her joy, claimed her goodness, and left her an inverted, corrupted version of her former self: a shadow dragon. Convincing strangers to assist her helpless alter ego before swallowing them whole is just about the only thing that brings her darkened soul any pleasure.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Sorrafel enjoys luring the innocent into her lair before springing the trap, watching the fear and horror wash over their faces as they realize they've made a life-ending mistake. Wouldn't you?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Sorrafel is not evil. Not yet, anyway. Her heart is under the influence of a dark curse. If someone could dispel or remove it, she might be less inclined to devour them.

◆ **Carrying** Access to a dragon's hoard, at GM discretion.

GM Note

Sorrafel the Betrayer is an **ancient gold shadow dragon**. She has a challenge rating of 24 (62,000 XP). Her abilities beyond these facts are at GM discretion.

SEG (Security Enforcement Golem)

A hulking humanoid figure made out of iron, SEG's body has plenty of rust and dents but is also covered in cannons, blades and other armaments that let people know it means business.

For the Perceptive and/or Mechanically-Inclined

SEG's construction is unusual and not like other **golems'**, and many of the weapons and tools on its body appear modular in nature. They could likely be used independently from SEG, if the golem were to part with them—whether voluntarily or not.

Created by Dwarven Mining Works nearly 1,000 years ago, the SEG's original function was to protect the interests of the company. This usually involved SEG policing the miners for theft or worse infractions, such as unionizing or taking more than 30 seconds to micturate or defecate.

A series of bad investments and investigations of unfair business practices led to the dissolution of Dwarven Mining Works roughly 700 years ago, but management neglected to deactivate SEG. It now roams the underworld, strictly enforcing company bylaws and policies for an organization that no longer exists.

◆ **Wants & Needs** SEG was programmed to enforce company policy with extreme prejudice, and is compelled to search the company's former jurisdiction for any in violation of Dwarven Mining Works' draconian (though not draconic) standards and practices. Unfortunately for modern adventurers, the company claimed a huge portion of the tunnels and caves that make up the underworld as its private property, which means anyone who attempts to claim gemstones, ore or even a random shovel is guilty of stealing in the eyes of SEG.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** SEG doesn't have an imagination, but it's not completely oblivious to the fact that nobody from the company has checked in during the last 700 years. SEG remains resolute in carrying out its programming, but it also has a death wish. SEG can't inflict self-harm, and none of the adventurers it's encountered have been able to defeat it. The golem's concluded its only hope lies at the abandoned company headquarters. Located deep in the underground, DMW-HQ contains a copy of the company charter. A person or persons who possess this charter would be SEG's rightful "owner", and could then order the golem to deactivate—or do anything else.

◆ **Carrying** 184gp of scrap in the form of its body; 1 ***XT-99Y Enforcer Arm Cannon***.

XT-99Y Enforcer Arm Cannon

ranged weapon, very rare

One of the biggest successes to come out of Dwarven Mining Works' R&D department, the XT-99Y Enforcer Arm Cannon has put a definitive end to countless acts of thievery or other anti-corporate actions. A gem-based energy cell powers the weapon, allowing the user 100 shots before a recharge is necessary. This one has 18 shots remaining. The XT-99Y must be aimed (one action) and fired (second action), releasing a 60 ft. cone of thunder. Any creature caught in the blast radius must succeed on DC16 Constitution saving throw, suffering 45 (10d8) thunder damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a success. Rocks and cavern walls are vulnerable to this damage.

SEG

Large construct, neutral
An automated enforcer with no one left to enforce, SEG might be ready to short circuit.

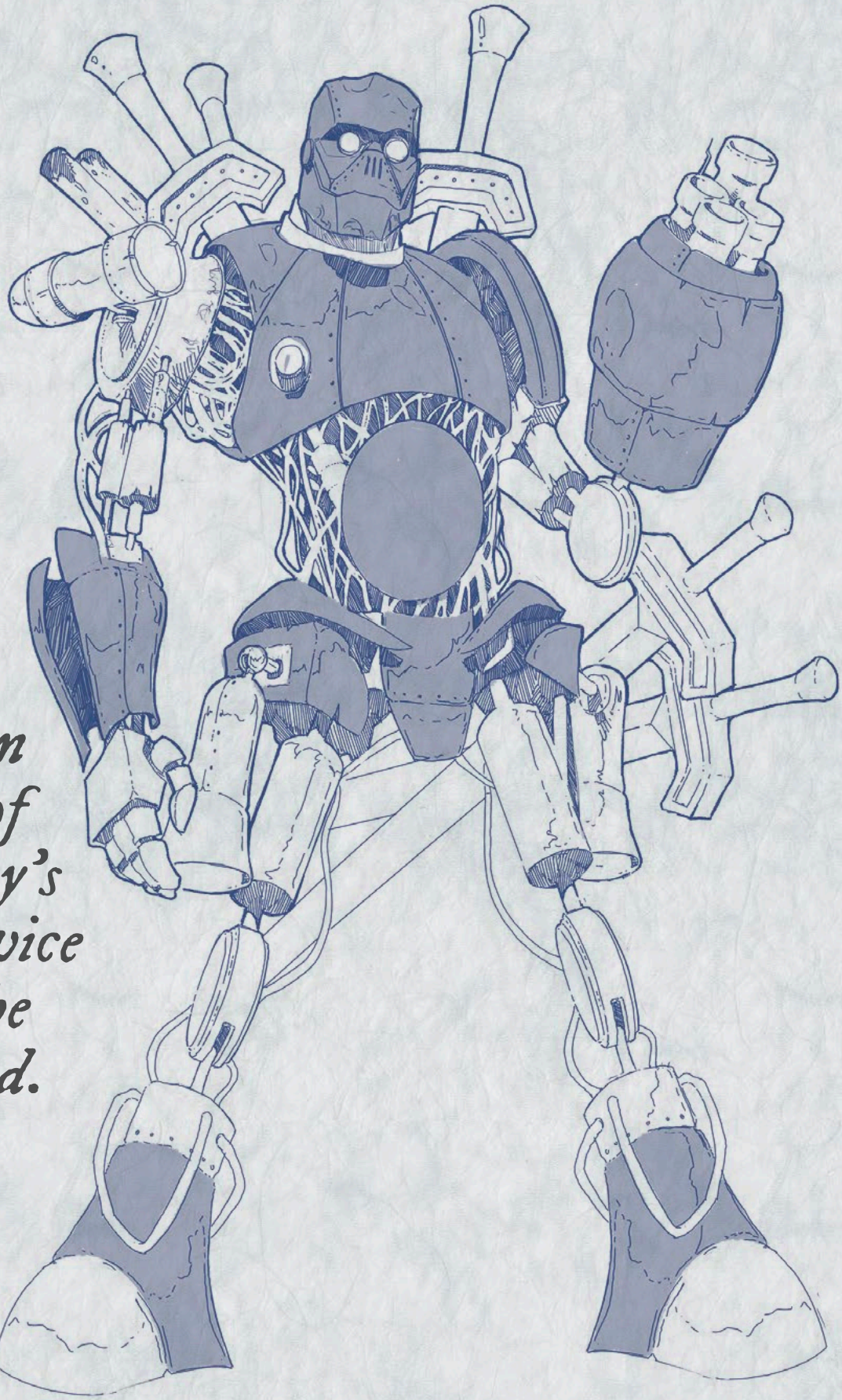
Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 210 (20d10 + 100)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	9 (-1)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)

Damage Immunities fire, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Fire Absorption. Whenever SEG is subjected to fire damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt.
Immutable Form. SEG is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.
Magic Resistance. SEG has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Magic Weapons. SEG's weapon attacks are magical.

Actions
Multiattack. SEG makes two melee attacks, one with its slam and one with its sword.
Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
Sword. Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 23 (3d10 + 7) slashing damage.
Bullet Storm (Recharge 5-6). SEG releases a barrage of projectile fire in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a success.



"You are in violation of the company's terms of service and will be terminated. Have a pleasant day."

Marzipan "Marz" Womble *"Such is life."*

A gray short-furred wombat woman with a wide face, flat oval nose and beady black eyes wearing a cobbled together set of chain armor, a thick iron helmet under her arm and several rows of incendiary sticks strapped to her belts.

For the Perceptive

Marz has wide paws with thick claws that look more suited to digging than scratching.

LIKE MOST wombatfolk, Marzipan Womble was born to dig. Unlike most wombatfolk, she quickly learned just how handy a skill this could be when put to use by the criminal element. After making quite a name for herself as a demo-digger for the Thieves' Guild, things went south when she botched a big job and blew up her entire crew. She took what she could of the loot and vanished underground—digging as long as she could for several days before finding a safe cave to lie low. A small community of gnomes took her in, and now she spends most of her time laying traps to defend her adoptive home from intruders, as well as the Thieves' Guild's tracker class.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Marz wants to protect her adopted home from encroaching **duergar**, but is running low on supplies. If she runs into anyone who looks like they know their way around explosives or fireballs or both, she'd love to pick their brain.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** While she'd likely die before admitting it aloud, Marz blew up her old crew on purpose. Whether this truth is revealed by Marz is irrelevant—it's a truth "Scallywag" Foster knows first hand. Though he died in the blast, he's risen again as a **revenant**, and has been digging his way toward Marz for the past month.

◆ **Carrying** 16cp, 7sp, 94gp; rusty **chain mail of fire resistance**; a +1 iron helm; several sticks of ***dynamo***.

Marzipan "Marz" Womble

Medium wombatfolk, neutral evil
A furry fugitive with a stubborn streak, Marz will take what she wants or go down trying.

Armor Class 17 (chain mail)
Hit Points 68 (9d10 + 18)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +5
Skills Athletics +7, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances fire
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Undercommon
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Brutal Charge. If Marz moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and hits it with her maces, the target takes an additional 4d6 bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
Demolition Dynamo (3/per Short or Long Rest). As an action, Marz can light and toss a stick of ***dynamo*** (up to 60 ft.). Each creature within a 30 ft. radius of the dynamo must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Actions
Multiattack. Marz makes two attacks with her maces or claws.
Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 5 ft., one target *Hit*: 8 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.
Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Dynamo

wondrous item, rare

Mixing the old arcane power of magical flame with the recently discovered artificer's friend called black powder, dynamo is as combustible as a *fireball* spell without the need to take a nap after using it. To use, simply make a ranged weapon attack against a general area (DC 14), and each creature within a 30 ft. radius of the target must succeed on a DC 15 saving throw or suffer 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success. If the attack fails, well...dynamo has a tendency to blow up wherever it lands. So. Watch out?

LANTERN'S RUIN *"Come."*

A tiny green flame skitters up the walls like a frightened spider, followed by another and another, until small, flickering ghostlights dimly pierce the darkness. Suddenly, a lantern flares, held aloft and casting green light across the pale, menacing face of a man in robes darker than night.

For the Perceptive

As the green light flickers across the face of this pale man, it reveals that the dark pools of his eyes are actually skittering spiders.

LANTERN'S RUIN should only be spoken of in the shelter of light, for if he hears his name spoken in the dark, he will come looking for those who call to him. Rumored to have gotten lost in the tunnels while searching for his lady love, his lantern ran out of oil. Rather than stop his search, he cut out his eyes to enable himself to seek her using other senses. His pursuit pushed him past the point of needing food or water and still, he persisted. He continues to seek his betrothed, his entire being driven by his quest to find her—or anyone lost in the darkness—and bring them back to the light.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Despite his appearance, Lantern's Ruin is not a malevolent ghost. He wishes only to guide those who are lost in the darkness back into the light.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Although he bears no ill will to those he encounters, if they should attempt to impede his duty, he is bound to retaliate. His betrothed, Caramia Bianchi, is still trapped in these caves, but is now a **wraith**. Having died alone in the darkness, the shadows are the only thing that brought her comfort. She is loath to leave them now, but is still desirous of companionship.

◆ **Carrying** A ***ghostlight lantern***.

GM Note

Lantern's Ruin is a **ghost**, with the following additional abilities:

Ghostlight Spiders. Lantern's Ruin can command his tiny green ghostlight spiders to attack.

Lantern Flare (1/Long Rest). Lantern's Ruin lets the light in his lantern flare bright green and then it goes out. Each creature that can see the flare must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded. This blindness lasts for seven days unless removed using *greater restoration*, or some other spell at GM discretion.

Ghostlight Spiders

Tiny undead, unaligned
Tiny little flickering green spiders made of ghostlight and nightmares.

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 4
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Damage Resistance acid, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages none
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Ethereal Sight. The Ghostlight Spider can see 60 ft. into the ethereal plane when it is on the material plane, and vice versa.
Incorporeal Movement. The Ghostlight Spider can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Actions
Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 5 (1d4 +2) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or reduce its hit point maximum by 9 (2d8). This reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If this damage reduces a target to 0 hit points, they die and rise as a ghost with a new bond: I will not rest until Lantern's Ruin is reunited with his betrothed.

Domas Halftooth

A pale white umberorc with a nervous disposition and a face full of acne, a shock of curly black hair tied in a loose bun atop their head and a sorry excuse for a mustache on their upper lip, wearing studded leather armor that has seen better days and carrying a pike they clearly don't know how to use.

For the Bardic

Domas has a bamboo flute loosely tied at their belt and their fingers constantly mimic the fingering positions of the flute when holding their pike.

Umberorcs, a tribe of warring orcs who settled beneath the surface after the Great Schism, are known for their durability, blind courage and unfailing sense of duty to the tribe. It's also why nearly all of them are dead. The few umberorcs who survive are a shell of their forebears, and the settlements they maintain are so meager they could likely be overrun by a trio of traveling salespeople, to say nothing of a war band or the monstrous horrors that dwell beneath the surface. For proof of how dire things are for the umberorcs one need look no further than Domas Halftooth, current head guard (and stretching the word's definition) of this underground settlement. Domas looks as if they are perpetually in a state of freeze or flight (fight having never been an option) and they jump nervously at any sudden movement. The only thing that seems to calm Domas is the sound of music or their own flute playing. The responsibilities associated with keeping this settlement safe don't leave much time for practicing music, however, and in any case, Domas has been told by their retired father that music doesn't help anyone. Instead, they should hold their pike high and proudly continue the family tradition of keeping what's left of the umberorcs safe.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Domas dreams of rising to the surface to attend bardic college. They love music and performing for people and the only time they ever feel calm is when they play their bamboo flute.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Unfortunately for Domas, their father has determined that the family profession of guarding the town has fallen to his only child, and no one else seems up to the task. Plus, the only thing scarier than **grells** is the unknown world beyond the town's borders. Better to be alive than happy.

◆ **Carrying** 4cp, 5sp, 16gp; a bamboo flute.

Domas Halftooth

Medium umberorc, lawful good

A young umberorc with too much responsibility and no choice in the matter, they would rather be doing literally anything other than putting their life on the line for this rundown settlement in the name of family responsibility.

Armor Class 13 (studded leather)
Hit Points 30 (4d10 + 8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)

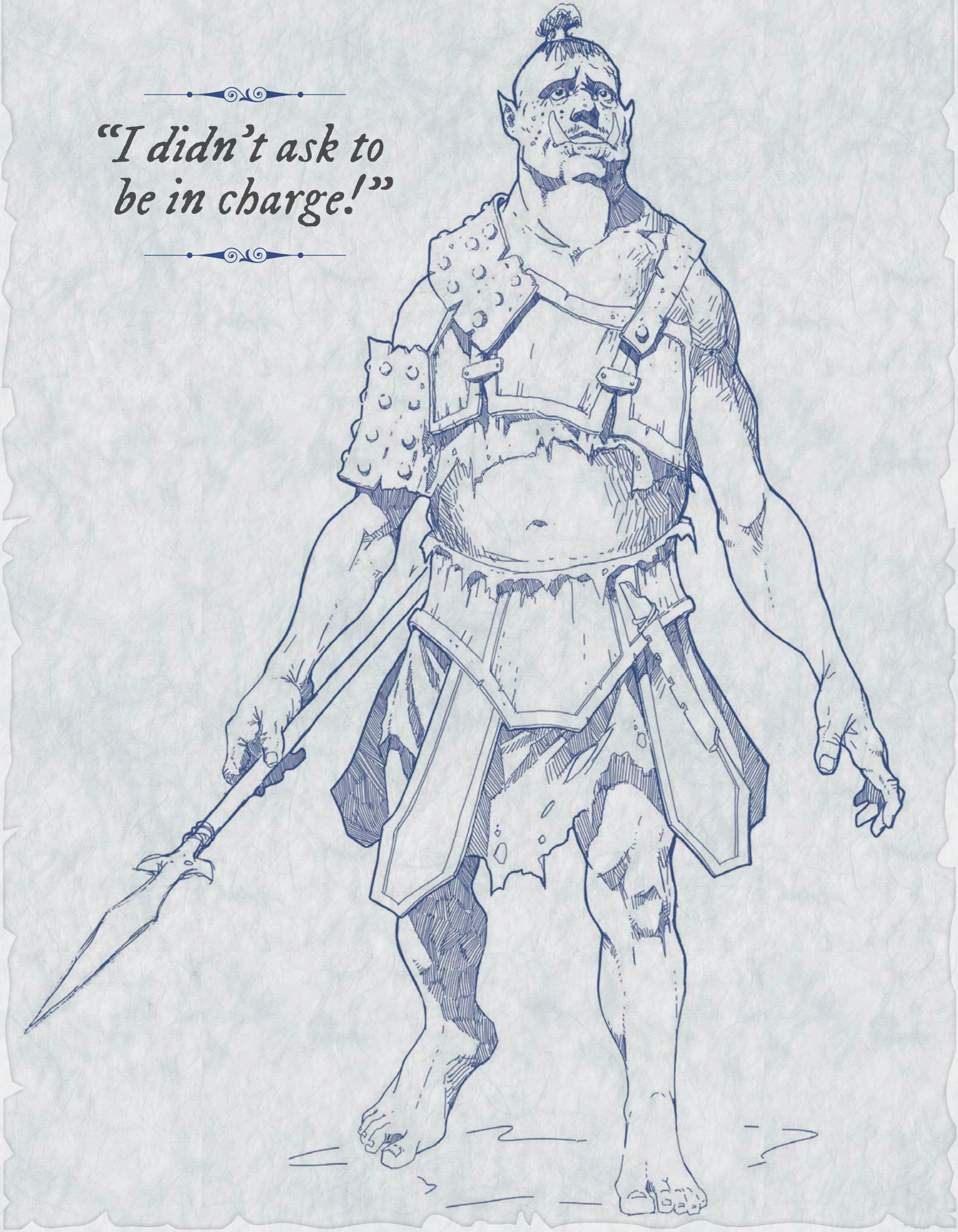
Saving Throws Con +4, Cha +5
Skills Performance +5, musical instrument (flute) +5
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Orc, Undercommon
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Pitious Inspiration (3/Short or Long Rest). Domas seems like a nice enough individual, and there's something so harmless about them that you can't help but do your best to help out. As a bonus action or reaction to an attack roll, skill check or saving throw that would be beneficial to Domas (at GM discretion), the creature making the roll feels oddly inspired, and can add 1d6 to the roll.
Umberorc Pride (1/Long Rest). When Domas is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, they drop to 1 hit point instead. For the next minute, Domas regains 10 (1d10 + 4) HP at the start of each of their turns as the proud spirits of their umberorc ancestors refuse to let them fall. If Domas takes necrotic damage, this healing doesn't occur at the start of their next turn.

Spellcasting. Domas is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Domas has the following Bard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *minor illusion, vicious mockery*
1st level (4 slots): *charm person, cure wounds, detect magic*
2nd level (2 slots): *calm emotions, invisibility*

Actions
Pike. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

"I didn't ask to be in charge!"



VLAR T'SARRAN "THE VELVET KNIFE"

Elven High Inquisitor

With gray eyes that see everything from beneath a curtain of black, blunt, symmetrical bangs, this angular elven woman carries herself with the aura of someone who knows everything about everyone—and is not to be trifled with. The 10-ft. lance she keeps at her side sends a similar, more overt message. She wears a rich purple kimono-like robe and would stand out in any crowd.

For the Perceptive or Martially Trained

Vlar is carrying a **death lance**, a blade whose strike is often powerful enough to kill even the heartiest of adventurers in a single strike.

The practiced art of sorting the truth from a tidal wave of deceit is most useful in a city flooded with falsehoods, and those who excel in the realm of insight are often tapped to ensure the safety of the status quo as High Inquisitors. It is rumored that Vlar T'sarran, "The Velvet Knife," can spot a lie "in the back of the throat" well before the words arrive at their desired destination. She has a reputation for setting unavoidable cognitive traps for those she knows to be untruthful, allowing them to dig ever deeper graves for themselves as she politely urges them to continue. She is often accompanied by attendant security, though they rarely need come to her aid—the lance she carries can fell even the most dangerous foes with a single blow.

◆ **Wants & Needs** The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth (for reasons that should be determined at GM discretion. Reasons could include: the protection of power, wealth or fame or the pursuit of the same).

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Vlar is devoted fully to her work, and her pursuit of the truth, but there is one lie she continues to tell herself: that she enjoys killing.

◆ **Carrying** 41gp; +2 armored robes; a short list of names (each crossed out, with skulls next to four of them); a tiny mirror; a ***death lance***.

Vlar's Brood Guard

Trained to spot and exploit any possible weakness in their opponent whether fighting in close or striking from the shadows, these dark elven warriors serve the city but defer to Vlar when determining how best to carry out that mission. Wherever Vlar goes, 2d4 of her Brood Guard are not far behind—they may even be hiding in plain sight. They have the statistics of a **spy** at GM discretion.

Vlar T'Sarran

Medium dark elf, lawful neutral

A High Inquisitor with a particular knack for sussing out a lie, Vlar is obsessed with the power of the truth—and deadly serious about not being lied to.

Armor Class 14 (armored robes)
Hit Points 143 (22d10 + 22)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +6, Wis +11, Cha +10
Skills Insight +16, Perception +11, Religion +8, Stealth +7
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Elvish, Undercommon
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Magical Insight. Vlar knows when she hears a creature speak a lie, even if it is in a foreign tongue.
Fey Ancestry. Vlar has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the drow to sleep.
Magic Resistance. Vlar has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Vlar fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Innate Spellcasting. Vlar's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
At will: *dancing lights, detect magic*
1/day each: *clairvoyance, darkness, detect thoughts, dispel magic, faerie fire, levitate (self only), suggestion*

Spellcasting. Vlar is a 12th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Cleric spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *guidance, message, resistance, thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *bane, cure wounds, inflict wounds*
2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, silence, spiritual weapon*
3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, dispel magic, magic circle*
4th level (3 slots): *banishment, divination, freedom of movement*
5th level (2 slots): *contagion, dispel evil and good*
6th level (1 slot): *harm, true seeing*

Actions
Death Lance. Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 21 (6d8) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage it takes. If this attack reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies.

Death Lance

magic item, very rare

This towering, spear-like weapon has a reach of 10 ft. and can easily claim a life with one blow. On a hit, it deals 1d10 piercing damage plus an additional 6d8 necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage it takes. If its hit point maximum is reduced to 0, the target dies.

"You wouldn't lie to me, would you my sweet?"

Cody Nightingale "What is your desire?"

A devastatingly handsome, bright silver-haired dark elf, with lavender skin and a voice like fine cologne, wearing a simple burgundy vest and tailored white pants.

For the Insightful

Though he is incredibly charming, surely he wants something in return for his favor. Right?

CHIEF COURTESIRE of the Matron Mother within the city of H'angontite (or another city at GM discretion), Cody Nightingale is accustomed to doing whatever is asked of him before the desire is stated. Whether arranging pleasures of the flesh for the Matron Mother or removing the flesh from the frames of his mistress's many enemies, Cody Nightingale is used to delivering on the most outlandish requests, never asking for anything in return. Such is the life of a courtesire in H'angontite. Putting others' desires ahead of his own is second nature—but it's also a means to an end. For Cody Nightingale is as patient as he is conciliatory, and soon his plan will fall into place. All he needs are a few Outsiders. They're the missing piece. The Matron Mother is old. Shriveled. A husk. Cody Nightingale is young. Vigorous. The future. He knows what the city needs, and he and his Brute Force will deliver it the moment he kisses the Matron Mother goodbye.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Cody Nightingale plans to use a group of Outsiders to help him overthrow the city of H'angontite alongside his Brute Force. He will do just about anything to secure the aid of these Outsiders, knowing that once he is ruler he can easily cast them aside.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** In a matriarchal society such as this, it's difficult for a man (even one as beautiful as Cody Nightingale) to gain standing. If word reached the Matron Mother or her Inquisitors that Cody Nightingale is planning a coup, it's unlikely to be believed. He'd be put to death, of course, but mostly just to keep up appearances.

◆ **Carrying** 30sp, 21pp; a +1 scimitar

Cody Nightingale

Medium dark elf, chaotic neutral
An alluring dark elf with honeyed words, a desire to please and delusions of grandeur.

Armor Class 15 (18 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +8, Cha +10
Skills Acrobatics +10, Deception +10, Perception +7
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Elvish, telepathy 60 ft., Undercommon

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, Cody has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
Gish Fighting. When Cody uses his action to cast a spell, he can make one weapon attack as a bonus action.

Spellcasting. Cody is an 11th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following Wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *mage hand, message, poison spray, shocking grasp, ray of frost*
1st level (4 slots): *burning hands, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, misty step, shatter*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, haste, sending*
4th level (3 slots): *dimension door, resilient sphere*
5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold*

Actions
Multiattack. Cody makes three scimitar attacks.
Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d6 + 6) slashing damage and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or suffer 9 (2d8) poison damage. When poisoned, the target has disadvantage on the next saving throw it makes against a spell Cody casts before the end of his next turn.

The Brute Force

Serving as the protectors of the Matron Mother's courtesires (and occasionally standing in for them when they're particularly tired), these dark elves look bred to battle.

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)
Hit Points 67 (9d8 + 27)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Undercommon
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, a Brute Force member can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.
Strongborn. Members of the Brute Force are bred for labor, protection and feats of strength. Their proficiency bonus in Athletics is doubled, and they make all Strength (Athletics) checks with advantage. They have the carrying capacity of a large creature and can attempt to grapple a target as a bonus action.

Actions
Heavy Scimitar. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

WINKLE BURRFOOT *"Something about this stinks to the surface."*

A stout halfing with jet black hair and a patch over a clearly scarred right eye, carrying a staff with a lantern hanging on it.

For the Perceptive

Winkle looks very closely at everyone he sees and seems to be inspecting their feet.

EVEN THE best detectives will tell you there's at least one case they can't shake—the one that keeps them up at night, or at the pub too long, or that sends them deeper and deeper into untold darkness searching for the truth.

In Winkle Burfoot's case, his descent was literal and figurative, having pursued his only lead in a murder case far beneath the surface in a quest for justice and losing a bit of his sanity in the process. He's been following a set of prints—one an oversize boot, the other a cloven hoof (or hooves? He has a few theories)—which he's replicated on a piece of parchment. He's followed the prints from town to settlement to cave and back again, but the perp is always one big bootprint ahead. It's only been three years. He's getting close. He can feel it. As sure as he knows his wife's name, he can feel it. He'll be home soon, Agatha—err, Tabatha. Tabatha?

◆ **Wants & Needs** To find the perpetrator of the murder of Tyka Weathermaker. Or at least the creature with the cloven foot. Or feet. Could be feet. He's gotta know.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Winkle's been tracking a goat who got one foot caught in a boot. Discovering this fact might cause him to unravel. Well, completely unravel.

◆ **Carrying** 12sp, 16gp; 2 small gems worth 50gp each; an explorer's pack; a lantern with a continual flame; a notebook featuring several rambling theories; a series of unmailed letters to his wife Taffeta.

DIONIA SILVERFIN *"Everybody back in the pool!"*

A young mermaid with a rough-and-tumble aspect, silky red hair pulled back in a tight braid and broad shoulders suggesting uncommon physical power for a creature her size.

For the Perceptive

This mermaid wears what looks like a whistle of some sort around her neck.

FAR BENEATH the surface, where the caverns of the underworld collide with the undersea grottos of the unknowable ocean depths, daring merfolk brave the oxygen-rich air and follow their curiosity into the dark. It's up to members of the waterguard like Dionia Silverfin to patrol this confluence and determine when younger or less capable merfolk have ventured out too far and then bring them back into the water, occasionally stepping in to warn them about the unseen predators that lurk above the waterline. A telltale blast on her waterguard whistle is a clear signal to merfolk that they've gone out too far, while three short bursts on the whistle signals for backup from as many as six more members of the merfolk waterguard.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Dionia adores her job, and would love to keep at it all year long, but her place in adult merfolk society calls and this will be her last season on the shelf. Following her stint here, she's set to marry Acquarius Voss, High Prince of the Coral Coast.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Dionia's frequent whistleblowing certainly helps get the attention of the merfolk under her watchful eye, but it has also awakened a slumbering **aboleth** from within the belly of the underworld.

◆ **Carrying** A polished coral ring worth 200gp; a small bag of shrimp; a double-edged knife; her waterguard whistle.

Oddballs & Outsiders

There are creatures and characters who call the cavernous underworld home that stand out even in total darkness.

"The Great Wyrm" Ustulo Retch

"Grovel or perish."

A large, aged dragonborn with black scales along his back and a few patches of dark purple under his arms and on his belly. He wears no armor and seems to prefer crawling to walking upright.

For the Insightful

This unfortunate creature seems to have lost his mind.

COLORFUL SCALES and deadly breath weapons aren't the only things dragonborn creatures inherit from their draconic bloodlines. Occasionally the compulsions to hoard, preen and conquer an entire landscape are passed down to dragonborn, manifesting in the belief that they are as powerful and worthy of worship as their ancient cousins. Ustulo Retch is one such creature, who believes he is an ancient black dragon deserving of all the spoils this cavern (and any near it) can offer. Though he's no more powerful than the average dragonborn of his age he still has his acid breath weapon, which can be a nasty surprise for those who don't consider him a serious threat.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ustulo is driven to protect his territory and build as much of a treasure hoard as possible.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ustulo is actually cursed with magically-induced dementia. A *remove curse* spell would restore him to his senses, at which point he'd stand up, ask for some rags to cover himself, then shuffle off to exact vengeance on the tiefling witch who cursed him.

◆ **Carrying** Nothing, though Ustulo has managed to hide a small treasure hoard in a cave nearby, including: 45cp, 53sp, 110gp, 12pp; a half-eaten goblin carcass; two giant rat skeletons; a talking shortsword; a scroll of *web*.

Breath Weapon As an action, Ustulo can exhale a stream of acid in a straight 5'x30' line. Each creature in the line must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 7 (2d6) acid damage on a failure, or half damage on a success. Ustulo cannot use his breath weapon again until he finishes a short or long rest.

Grimdrool (True Name Unknown)

"Whatever you say, boss."

A bright red creature standing barely two feet high, with tiny horns on its head and some notable scars along its shoulder blades and the base of its spine.

For the Arcane or Devilish

This creature appears to be a severely wounded **imp** or similar creature from the lower planes.

CAST OUT of the lower planes by his infernal master Mordecai, Grimdrool is an imp at an impasse, grievously injured but too angry to die. Due to his injuries, suffered at the hands of his former master, Grimdrool cannot fly or attack with a poison tail or shapeshift into a rat or a raven like other imps. He does, however, have one trait that most imps and their ilk lack: patience. Should Grimdrool live through the night, he'll take a new master. He'll serve as long as it takes, but will return to the lower planes—oh yes, he will return. And he will rise, no matter how many masters he must serve, no matter how many lifetimes he must endure. He will feed the **pit fiend** Mordecai an entire feast proffered from the devil's own flesh. But first—what do you need, boss?

◆ **Wants & Needs** Grimdrool would prefer to serve an evil creature whose desires align with his own—but he'll hitchhike with anyone he thinks might help him accomplish his two main goals: surviving the night and journeying to the lower planes for revenge.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Grimdrool would never harm a new master but if they're deemed a "goody goody guy/gal" he'll occasionally subvert their interests for fun.

◆ **Carrying** A rat's stomach stuffed with chopped rat innards that he wears as a messenger bag.

GURBLEFLURBLEBLORP AKA "NED FISHHEAD"

"Forgive the stench."

A humanoid fish in tan leather breeches, a crisp blue shirt, a dark green cloak and smart, red trilby hat cocked downward over one eye. He also carries a dagger in a sheath on his belt.

For the Perceptive

This creature's clothing seems like it may have originated on the surface world.

DEVOTED TO his tribe of fellow fishmen, Gurbleflurbleblorp finds himself shunned and dismissed by most of his brethren as eccentric or worse due to his infatuation with the surface realm—particularly humans. Over the years, he has made a habit of venturing aboveground, where he goes by "Ned Fishhead," to collect quality (and quite stylish) examples of human clothing. He's taught himself to speak Common, which came to him quite naturally. He then mastered the finer points of human culture and etiquette—part of why he is perpetually apologetic vis à vis his pungent (but permanent) piscine musk.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Gurbleflurbleblorp is infatuated with the human race and would do just about anything for a human in need. In fact, he has a vague memory of being a human prince at some point and believes he might be the victim of a *resurrection* spell gone awry. Whether this is madness or truth is hard to ascertain—but he certainly does have a bit of an arcane glow about him.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Whether or not Gurbleflurbleblorp was once a prince is entirely up to GM discretion, but he's certainly convinced he was. Doesn't that count for something?

◆ **Carrying** 12sp, 23gp; fine human clothing; a cloak of fine make; a dagger inset with runes; a small journal filled with human idioms and spellings of tricky words.

PROFESSOR AMELIA FINCH *"Tenure here I come!"*

A somewhat emaciated older woman, with wild gray hair, dirty, torn clothes, scuffed hiking boots, a canvas backpack and an odd pair of dark-lensed goggles over her eyes and a sturdy walking stick in her left hand.

For the Perceptive

This figure has no visible light source, but seems to be navigating the dark just fine.

PROFESSOR AMELIA Finch is an academic—a brilliant historian and instructor at Crown University, on the surface. After being denied tenure for a sixth time (citing "a lack of real-world experience in the field of study"), Professor Finch decided to put her theoretical understanding of the underrealms to the test with a lengthy sabbatical of practical, first-hand observation. She received a substantial sponsorship, put together a crackerjack team of bearers, guides and armed escorts with plenty of high-quality equipment to ensure her success. Unfortunately, the members of her expedition were picked off one by one, through ambushes, illnesses, accidents and one unfortunate misstep involving a well-burrowed **purple worm** that ate her team's supply sled along with the packspiders pulling it. Then came the "**behir** debacle" in which her maps to the known regions of the underworld burst into electric blue flames, leaving her with no clear way to return to the surface. She has been on her own for weeks, lost in the dark. Should make for a great topic of discussion in her 401 class.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Professor Finch is sick and starving, but she's nothing if not determined. If a party can bring her back to full strength, she'd be more than willing to accompany them on their adventures as a "chronicler" of everything they see and do. Plus, she's pretty sure she found an access point to a forgotten snakefolk temple a few miles back and she'd be happy to lead the way.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** A jealous academic rival, Dr. Bryson Bordenbyrne, has been undermining Professor Finch's push for tenure for nearly four decades and hired a **goblin** spy from Underlings 'R' Us to ensure her expedition was a failure. This goblin has been trailing her since her trip began and would (per his contract) report news of her collaboration with a larger group of adventurers to his boss aboveground.

◆ **Carrying** 18gp; cartography tools; a walking stick; an explorer's pack; **goggles of night**; a journal featuring the first few chapters of her unpublished memoir.

Zara "Zip" Araz

with Clyde the Cloaker

A pencil thin gnomish girl with dark hair, powerful hands and a button nose, wearing a sturdy slate-colored helmet and a visually shifting black and grey cloak that envelops her entire body and drags the ground behind.

For the Perceptive

On closer inspection, Zara's cloak is a **cloaker**. It seems tame? Tame as a cloaker can be, anyway.

All deep gnomes know it's the inventive who rise, and Zara Araz (just call her "Zip") has always wanted to soar. Born with outsized hands that made the intricate tinkering for which gnomes are renowned a bit of a slog, she focused her attention on taming some of the underworld's more menacing beasts. After some trial and error and a handful of *regeneration* spells to grow her arms and legs back (thanks grandpap), Zip discovered some creatures—cloakers in particular—respond to pulses of radiant energy when coupled with sonic waves. Her helmet emits these pulses with a thought, and the cloaker (usually) does the requested task. She's trained this cloaker, whom she calls Clyde, to follow her every command, and the two have developed a mutually beneficial arrangement. Zip tracks potential threats to her family's subterranean village, and Clyde devours them whole.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Zip learned an orcish war party sent from above ground is encamped along the lake abutting her village. She's ascertained the majority of the party will scatter if she can take out their commanders.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Zip's helmet is pretty handy but it's not without its quirks. If Zip takes a blow to the head (at GM discretion) she must succeed on a DC 15 Concentration check to maintain control over Clyde. If she loses control, she will spend her actions attempting to establish dominance once more.

◆ **Carrying** 21sp, 9gp; ***pulse helmet***; a sack of troglodyte toes (for Clyde); a bag of pickled eggs (for her).

GM Note

Clyde the Cloaker has the stats of a **cloaker**, at GM discretion. If Zip loses control over Clyde due to a malfunction with her Pulse Helmet, or if she is otherwise unconscious or incapacitated, Clyde would react under his own free will at GM discretion. If that means swooping away with Zip still strapped to him, well, that's the high price of ingenuity.

Zara "Zip" Araz

Small gnome, chaotic good
An inventive girl who tamed a savage aberration, Zip soars through the underworld like a (very large) leaf on the wind.

Armor Class 16 (+2 cloaker armor)
Hit Points 39 (7d6 + 14)
Speed 25 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	11 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +5, Int +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Undercommon, Gnomish
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Gnome Cunning. Zip has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws against magic.
Cloaker Armor. While Clyde the cloaker remains motionless he is indistinguishable from a dark leather cloak on Zip's back. His natural armor, buffeted by some of Zip's arcane infusions, has an AC of 16. While wearing Clyde as "cloaker armor," Zip can use a free action to command Clyde to fly, giving herself a fly speed of 40 ft. Additionally, she can avail herself of Clyde's Damage Transfer feature. If wearing this armor when taking a hit, Zip can instruct Clyde to take half the damage (rounded down).
Phantom Shade (1/Short or Long Rest). While wearing her cloaker armor, Zip can use an action to evoke Clyde's Phantasms ability, with Clyde magically creating three illusory duplicates of itself if it isn't in bright light. The duplicates move with Clyde and mimic his actions, shifting position so as to make it impossible to track which cloaker is the real Clyde. If Clyde is ever in an area of bright light, the duplicates disappear. Whenever any creature targets Clyde with an attack or a harmful spell while a duplicate remains, that creature rolls randomly to determine whether it targets Clyde or one of the duplicates (at GM discretion). A creature is unaffected by this magical effect if it can't see or if it relies on senses other than sight. A duplicate has an AC of 16 and uses Clyde the cloaker's saving throws. If an attack hits a duplicate, or if a duplicate fails a saving throw against an effect that deals damage, the duplicate disappears.
Pulse Helmet. As a bonus action, Zip can command Clyde to attack with his bite and tail or use his Moan feature.

Spellcasting. Zip is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following Wizard spells prepared:
Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, grease, magic missile, shield*
2nd level (2 slots): *misty step, suggestion*

Actions
Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

"Let's glide."

Jiwa Yang (of the Nomads)

"Wherever we go, that's where we went."

A lanky dark elf in well-worn travel clothes, with prayer beads around his neck and a lute on his back, long hair braided in two plaits and a thin mustache.

For the Bardic or Arcane

Jiwa's music—well, one song in particular—seems to have a debilitating effect on creatures that can hear it.

LEADER OF a band of nomads (called "the Nomads"—why complicate things?), Jiwa Yang doesn't have a care in the world for where he's going. His soft singing and strum of the lute can be heard echoing throughout the tunnels of the underworld long before he appears. Occasionally, Jiwa and his band of wanderers will stop in a dark elven town or dwarven hold to busk for coins or food, but otherwise it's the open road and the joy of music that keeps them on the endless path. Do you have any requests? Other than to stop playing "The Banshee's Lament"—they're worried what might happen if they do.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Jiwa is the type of guy who likes to roam around. Some call him a wanderer, but he doesn't feel the need to label things. He just wants to play tunes.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** "The Banshee's Lament," the Nomads' favorite tune to wander to, is a cursed hymn, and it's left a wake of destruction throughout the underworld. Because the Nomads never take the same tunnel twice, they have no idea—they just think it's a great song they feel compelled to play at least 13 times a day.

◆ **Carrying** 12cp, 4sp; a lute; a jade pendant worth 40gp; a shortbow; a set of polished wooden prayer beads.

Jiwa Yang (of the Nomads)

Medium dark elf, chaotic good

A nomad who goes wherever the tunnels take him, Jiwa Yang has complete faith in his music. Too bad it's cursed.

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Cha +5, Wis +5
Skills Performance +5, Perception +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Undercommon
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Lucky Guess. When presented with a choice as to which path he should take, Jiwa has an 80 percent chance of choosing the least dangerous.

"The Banshee's Lament." This woeful, wail-heavy tune has no effect on constructs and undead or on the Nomads while they play it. All other creatures within 60 ft. of Jiwa and the Nomads that can hear this song must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature drops to 0 hit points. On a success, a creature takes 11 (3d6) psychic damage.

Spellcasting Jiwa Yang is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following bard spells prepared:

Cantrips: *minor illusion*
1st level (3 slots): *animal friendship, heroism*
2nd Level (1 slot): *calm emotions*

Actions

Shortbow. Ranged Melee Attack: +2 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit*: 4 (1d6) piercing damage.

Pileus Stape of the Colony of Stape

"I'm a fun guy."

A towering mushroom with a bioluminescent purple and blue cap. And a smile?

For the Druidic

This is clearly a **myconid**, though it seems disconnected from its kind, as if it's lost its purpose.

A MYCONID colony is a lot like an extended family (if by "family" you mean "group" and by "group" you mean "a single organism comprising millions of unique cells"). Occasionally a myconid will develop an abnormal personality (read: any personality), placing it at odds with the rest of the colony, which is to say itself. Pileus Stape is one such myconid. Convinced it has a sense of self as well as a sense of humor and longing to share both with the wider world, Pileus hopes to take his spore- and pun-centric act on the road. He just needs to learn what roads are.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Pileus seeks any chance at independence, and would jump at the opportunity to travel beyond the mycelium of his colony. He also needs to know why the **troglodyte** crossed the road. What exactly is a road?

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Pileus will likely start to crumble and rot if separated from the colony, which means any potential audience likely needs to come to him.

◆ **Carrying** A repurposed notebook featuring several premises related to mushrooms and molds (but very few payoffs), as well as a short list of words that rhyme with spore.

BETHESDA "BEATNIK" N'KKASTA

"You. And me. Together. We?"

An elven woman with a top-knot and shaved undercut, with a soft face and a hard, wry smile. Dressed in black leather, her fitted pants tucked into thigh high boots with too many buckles to be practical, she carries herself with an insouciant attitude—her knives and rapier in plain view.

For the Charismatic

Some charm others by engaging with them. This woman seems to draw others closer by ignoring them completely.

ON THE run and often down on her luck, Bethesda "Beatnik" N'kkasta doesn't care what you think—but that's sort of the problem. The chosen canticumadre for the Hallowed Callers, a displaced elven community hiding among the cavernous expanse of the underworld, Beatnik was never one for singing. She prefers to speak her mind. Her poetry, which leans on her culture's tradition of disruptive rhythm and transcendent elocution, has been deemed a disappointment to her family and the rest of the Hallowed Callers. There was hope that when the ritual revealed her as canticumadre, that Beatnik would grow out of the poetry phase and enter into a new period of artistic expression. After all, a canticumadre must carry forward the story of their civilization through song, not frivolous melody-deficient rambling. To which Beatnik replied: "naw." She's been on the run from her family and the far-reaching arm of the Ostinators—four sets of triplets tasked with seeking out unfaithful members of the Hallowed Callers, and who always seem to turn up—ever since.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Beatnik just wants to live as she is—she'd rather let her culture's history be lost forever than be forced to sing about it the rest of her life.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** When she fled the sanctuary her family calls home, Beatnik took her culture's history with her. She is the only individual who has heard the last canticumadre's final song, a fact the Ostinators will not let her forget.

◆ **Carrying** 23cp, 2sp; the contents of a scholar's pack in a leather satchel; a silvered rapier; 150gp worth of spell paper and ink.

Bethesda "Beatnik" N'kkasta

Medium half-elf, chaotic neutral

A rebel without a cause, Beatnik is just out here living her life however she feels.

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)
Hit Points 39 (7d8 + 7)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Cha +5, Dex +6
Skills Acrobatics +6, Performance +5, Persuasion +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Draconic, Elvish
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Evasion. If Beatnik is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw and only half damage if she fails.
Poetry Slam (3/Long Rest). Beatnik has several diss poems written down on scraps of spell paper. She can use her action to unleash a torrent of relentless verbal abuse on a creature within 120 ft. that can hear. The target must make a DC 14 Intelligence saving throw, taking 21 (6d8) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Actions
Multiattack. Beatnik uses Metered Prose and can then make one attack with her rapier and one with her dagger.
Metered Prose. Beatnik begins to speak in a steady rhythm. Each creature within 30 ft. that can hear her must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or lose their reaction, lest they do something out of beat or syncopation with her poem. If a creature succeeds on this save they are immune to this effect for 24 hours.
Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 7 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.
Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 3) or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

SLURRN THE RESPLENDENT

Measuring 27 feet long, this creature resembles a huge centipede whose body is the color of milk. Various jewels and chunks of precious metals adorn its carapace, presenting a simultaneous vision of wealth and horror.

For the Perceptive

Slurrn secretes a clear, viscous slime that smells like a mix of fresh vomit and week-old corpses.

For the Alchemically-Minded

Those with training in alchemy would recognize the smell and consistency of the slime Slurrn secretes as indicators that it's likely a powerful acid or poison with numerous applications.

For the Nature Lovers

The slime Slurrn seems coated in is likely some form of digestive irritant, suggesting that his insides are as unpleasant—and acidic—as his outside.

A prince of the Everlasting Empire—a subterranean kingdom located so deep beneath the surface that its existence remains unknown even to others who dwell underground—Slurrn grew up in a life filled with both luxury and danger. Although slaves attended to his every whim at the royal palace, Slurrn also had to survive countless assassination attempts and plots against his life, most of which originated with any one of his 50,000 brothers and sisters. The members of this enormous royal brood all vye for the favor of the Empress Mother in the hopes of becoming heir to the throne. Away from the Empire for the first time in his life, Slurrn's sense of entitlement is exceeded only by his ignorance of his surroundings.

◆ **Wants & Needs** In the hopes of distinguishing himself in the eyes of the Empress Mother, Slurrn ventured to what his people consider the "surface"—what the rest of the world would consider the depths of the realm. His aim is to return with a treasure of such exotic wonder that the Empress Mother will anoint him as heir.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** One of Slurnn's biggest obstacles is admitting he needs help finding his way in unfamiliar territory. Even among the bestial horrors of the world underground, Slurrn is a strange sight. And those who aren't frightened away by Slurrn's looks are driven off by his arrogance and insulting attitude. Additionally, unbeknownst to Slurrn, some of his royal brothers and sisters have caught wind of his plan and have dispatched members of the Shrouded Sting (his culture's elite imperial assassins) to track Slurrn down and put an end to his journey permanently.

Slurrn the Resplendent

Huge monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 188 (15d12 + 90)
Speed 50 ft., burrow 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	7 (-2)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Con +11, Wis +6
Senses blindsight 30 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Acid Blood. Any creature within 5 ft. of Slurrn when he takes damage must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 10 (3d6) acid damage or half as much on a success.

Actions
Multiattack. Slurrn makes two attacks, one with his bite and one with his stinger.
Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d8 + 7) piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or be swallowed by Slurrn. A swallowed creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside of Slurrn, and it takes 18 (5d6) acid damage at the start of each of Slurrn's turns. If Slurrn takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, Slurrn must succeed on a DC 21 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 ft. of Slurrn. If Slurrn dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape from his corpse by using 20 ft. of movement, exiting prone.
Tail Stinger. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 11 (3d6 + 9) piercing damage. On a hit, the target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the target suffers 35 (10d6) poison damage and is poisoned.

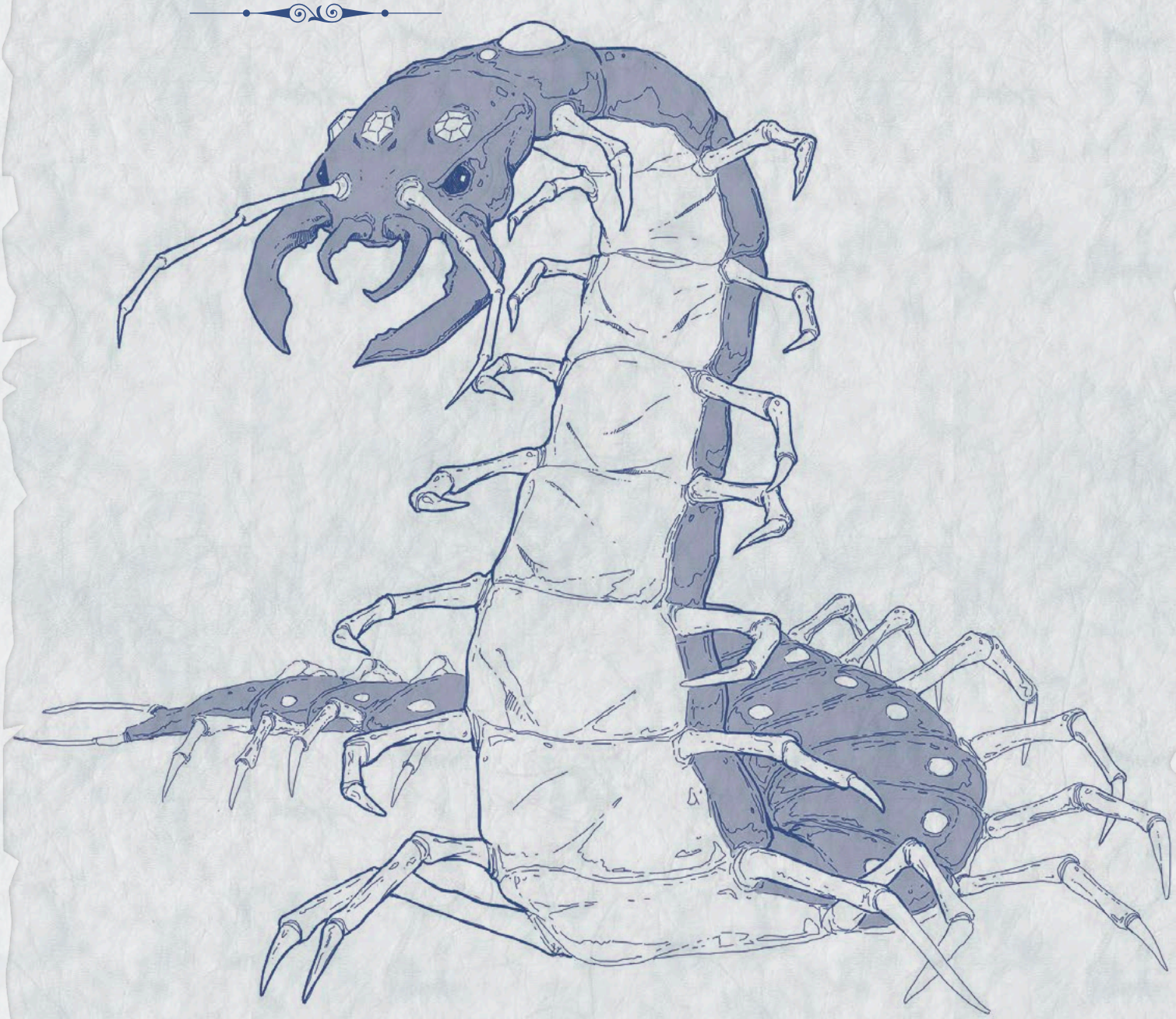
◆ **Carrying** 300pp in assorted gems inlaid on his carapice; a crude map of the surrounding area, with a particular cavern marked "IT'S HERE" in Slurrn's language; a ***ring of conveyance.***

Ring of Conveyance

wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

Fitted around the end of one of Slurrn's legs, this magical ring allows Slurrn to both understand and be understood by anyone he encounters. It will most likely have the same effect for anyone else who wears it, though the ring was crafted with only Slurrn's people in mind.

"Silence, biped!"



CUBERT

"Cleaning crew, coming through!"

A floating mass of bones, coins, pieces of armor and more encased within a translucent jelly that occasionally flickers with a dim purple light.

For the Perceptive

This is a **gelatinous cube**—though you've not heard of one moving with such purpose before.

THE LIFE of an ooze is pretty straightforward—you gloop, you're glop and then you splat. Cubert, as this cube calls itself, wants to break that cycle the only way it knows how: by establishing clear, attainable goals, the first of which is to make the underworld feel spick and/or span. The ability to detect intelligent creatures has been a boon for Cubert in this regard. It can flow behind potential litterers from a distance, wait until they fall prey to any one of the underworld's plentiful horrors, then slurp up their junk post haste (they won't be needing it anymore, after all).

◆ **Wants & Needs** Cubert takes great pride in its work and obsessively consumes every last scrap, trinket, treasure, and dead (or occasionally live) creature in order to keep things tidy. He compulsively pursues intelligent life in this quadrant, presuming they'll be litterers eventually.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** After having swept these passages for decades, Cubert knows every tunnel, slope, hidden passage and cave within the quadrant, as well as the creatures that might be encountered there. At any given time, Cubert may carry a substantial amount of treasure within its body, which can put it in conflict with individuals who want what it has since, you know, they'd have to kill it to get the goods.

◆ **Carrying** Roll 1d6 to determine what Cubert is carrying when encountered.

1d6	Cubert's Current Collection
1-3	23gp, 42sp; two halves of a broken sword; half-dissolved humanoid skeleton wearing one plain silver ring (2gp value).
4-5	12cp, 6gp; a small helm; 2 arrowheads; 26 rat carcasses; +1 spear.
6	58cp, 72sp, 17gp; large pick head; **rod of alertness**.

Cubert

Large ooze, neutral
This ooze has a job to do and it's going to do it well.

Armor Class 6
Hit Points 82 (8d10 + 40)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	3 (-4)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +7, Dex -2
Condition Immunities blinded, deafened, exhaustion, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages Common, telepathy 60 ft., Undercommon
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Creature Sense. Cubert is aware of the presence of creatures within 1 mile of it that have an Intelligence score of 4 or higher. It knows the distance and direction to each creature, as well as each creature's Intelligence score, but can't sense anything else about it. A creature protected by the *mind blank* spell, the *nondetection* spell, or similar magic can't be perceived in this manner.
Mind Meld. Cubert passively casts *detect thoughts*, easily gathering surface level thoughts of any intelligent creature within 30 ft. If Cubert concentrates, it can attempt to probe deeper, and the creature upon whom Cubert is concentrating must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw to prevent Cubert from discovering more of the contents of their mind.
Ooze Cube. Cubert takes up its entire space. Other creatures can enter the space, but a creature that does so is subjected to Cubert's Engulf feature and has disadvantage on the saving throw. Creatures inside Cubert can be seen but have total cover. A creature within 5 ft. of Cubert can take an action to pull a creature or object out of Cubert. Doing so requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check, and the creature making the attempt takes 10 (3d6) acid damage.

Cubert can hold only one Large creature or up to four Medium or smaller creatures inside it at a time.
Transparent. Even when Cubert is in plain sight, it takes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot Cubert if it has neither moved nor attacked. A creature that tries to enter Cubert's space while unaware of it is surprised by Cubert.

Actions
Pseudopod. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 11 (3d6) acid damage.
Engulf. Cubert moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter Large or smaller creatures' spaces. Whenever Cubert enters a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw. On a successful save, the creature can choose to be pushed 5 ft. back or to the side of Cubert. A creature that chooses not to be pushed suffers the consequences of a failed saving throw.

On a failed save, Cubert enters the creature's space, and the creature takes 11 (3d6) acid damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is Restrained, and takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of Cubert's turns. When Cubert moves, the engulfed creature moves with it. An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 ft. of Cubert.

SALASSTITH, THE FRACTIONMAKER

"Do you want to be halved or quartered?"

A dark haired, green-eyed, gorgeous feminine form in silk and leathers, with bejeweled gold bangles on all six of her sword and staff-wielding arms, and whose toned torso leads down to a nightmarish black snake's tail.

For the Devout

This creature looks like a **marilith**—an abyssal fiend—and the fact that it's wielding arcane power has you reaching for your holy symbol.

WHEN ENCOUNTERING a demon, most don't get much say in the type, size or veracity of the creature deadset on devouring their flesh. But if you could choose, the many-armed marilith would be low on your list of fiends to have pissed off. And were you capable of choosing among mariliths, Salasstith the Fractionmaker would be the last you'd prefer to face, as her combination of battlefield cunning, methodical ruthlessness and access to an arcane arsenal make her a formidable foe for any number of assailants and certain death to any facing her alone. Slinking in the shadows of the underworld with direct orders from a demon lord, Salasstith will stop at nothing to accomplish her charge, and will dissect and/or decimate any creature standing in her way with playful precision.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Salasstith has been sent by her master, a reigning demon lord of the lower planes, to secure the Loom of Singularity, an artifact rumored to control the weave from which most arcane power is drawn. It is currently held within the archives of a dark elven city. Salasstith doesn't plan to stay there long. Cleaved and charred bodies start to smell after a bit.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** If she secures the Loom of Singularity on this plane, Salasstith may not return to her home plane—choosing instead to betray her master and establish a new arcane order beneath the realm. She could use the Loom to build an army, or an empire. One usually follows the other.

◆ **Carrying** 18 shimmering jeweled bracelets worth 160gp each; a **staff of thunder and lightning**; a **staff of striking**; 4 longswords.

Salasstith the Fractionmaker

Large fiend (demon), chaotic evil
This marilith is among the most formidable of her ilk, in part because she doesn't just use swords.

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +10, Wis +8, Cha +10
Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Abyssal, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. Salasstith has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Magic Weapons. Salasstith's weapon attacks are magical.
Reactive. Salasstith can take one reaction on every turn in combat.
Staff Striker. Unlike most mariliths, Salasstith carries two magical staves—a **staff of striking** and a **staff of thunder and lightning.** Salasstith can attack with each staff as a melee weapon and use their attack features as part of her multiattack feature, or sacrifice her multiattack to cast a spell through the staff (if applicable).

Actions
Multiattack. Salasstith makes seven attacks: four with her longswords, two with her staves and one with her tail.
Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.
Staff of Thunder and Lightning. Melee Weapon Attack: +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (1d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.
Staff of Striking. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit*: 11 (1d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage.
Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit*: 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, Salasstith can automatically hit the target with its tail, and Salasstith can't make tail attacks against other targets.
Teleport. Salasstith magically teleports, along with any equipment she is wearing or carrying, up to 120 ft. to an unoccupied space she can see.

Reactions
Parry. Salasstith adds 5 to her AC against one melee attack that would hit her. To do so, Salasstith must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

FABIO M'PALU *"That's gorgeous."*

An immaculately groomed bugbear with sculpted biceps, toned delts and godly quads. His chiselled jawline makes for an alarmingly attractive face and his mane of loose hair falling over his shoulders has little braids with delicate cave-flowers woven in. He carries an emerald-studded maul and wears polished silver bracers and a pair of distractingly snug hot pants—and nothing else.

For the Perceptive

This creature looks and smells good. Like pine needles and a windswept icy lake. It's a lot to take in.

BORN INTO a tribe of grizzly, grumpy bugbears, Fabio M'Palu knows he's an outlier among his kind and couldn't be more pleased to shake up your expectations. Having spent his life beneath the surface, Fabio would occasionally sneak just close enough to the city above to view the interior of a couturier's shop from an old pipehole in its wall. The custom clothing, the drape and flow of each piece, were so unlike anything Fabio had ever seen—let alone worn—that he simply knew he needed to try something on. The tailor Fabio cornered that night worked swiftly, though his shaking hands belied the fear that washed over him, and when his work was complete he'd fashioned a comfortable, if revealing, set of shorts for his captor. The tailor had intended these shorts as a playful undergarment, a precursor to an entire ensemble, but he never got a chance to finish—Fabio had descended back to the realm below to gloat to the rest of his clan. The other bugbears scoffed and growled but had to agree that Fabio looked fabulous, a word they barely understood until that moment. Ever since, Fabio has been working out non-stop, and intends to take his impressive physique to the surface, and hopes to gather enough custom clothing to outfit his entire clan.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Fabio is ready to head to the surface for his debut, and presumes he'll be received with openness and grace. But if he can't kill the haters with kindness, well, there's always his maul.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Fabio has never seen the sun and is terrified of what the surface will be like, his self-doubt threatens to overwhelm him sometimes.

◆ **Carrying** 19cp, 6sp, 48gp; **bracers of defense**; ***hotpants of distraction***; an emerald-studded maul worth 430gp.

Fabio M'Palu

Medium bugbear, lawful neutral
A would-be style icon looking to find his way to the sunlit world and bring a bit of flair to the otherwise drab underdwellers.

Armor Class 15 (bracers + hotpants)
Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str+7, Cha +5,
Skills Intimidation +5, Performance +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Languages Common, Goblin
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when Fabio hits with it (included in the attack).
Long Limbed. Fabio's reach increases by 5ft. on melee attacks.
Surprise Attack. If Fabio surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

Actions
Multiattack. Fabio can make two attacks with his maul.
Maul. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, range 10 ft., one target, two-handed. *Hit*: 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Reactions
Protection. Fabio can use his reaction to impose disadvantage on an attack against an ally within 5 ft. of him.

Hotpants of Distraction

wondrous item (requires attunement)

These +1 AC, form-fitting, fur-lined shorts offer support where you want it, control where you need it and an absolutely stunning profile provided you lack what many on the surface might refer to as modesty. While they offer very little in the way of armored protection, they are so well made that any objective observer must do a double take upon seeing them up close. The first time a creature that can see these hot pants targets the wearer as part of an attack, that attack is made with disadvantage.

NED "THE HEAD" CULPEPPER

"That's a me scratcher."

A well-groomed, dark-haired man's head suspended in a large glass jar filled with yellow goo and floating around on its own accord.

For the Arcane

This head is very much alive, if disembodied, and the fact that other items occasionally move around it on its behalf suggest an invisible servant might be involved.

BUDDING WIZARD Ned Culpepper was one of the most beloved members of his community above ground, which is why it was such a shame when a freak accident involving a windmill and a distressed **hill giant** separated his head from the rest of him. A quick-thinking arcanist was able to preserve Ned's noggin in a jar, rushing it to a nearby temple where rituals were cast and hymns were sung and offerings were burned in order to grant him another chance at life. Miraculously, Ned's soul remained in his skull, but by the time he returned to consciousness his body had been sold to a traveling necromancer on his way to the deep beyond the caves. Ned the Head has been on the hunt for Ned the body ever since. He (which is to say his **unseen servant**) can carry himself, thanks.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Ned wants to find the necromancer who purchased his body (he used to be pretty attached to it) as he's increasingly concerned the aforementioned dark wizard might be using Ned's arms and legs for nefarious purposes.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Ned's presumptions about the necromancer he's tracking, a dark wizard named Remulus Dask, are spot on. Dask is in the process of building an army of undead so he can rule this corner of the underrealm—and from there, the surface.

◆ **Carrying** His head in a jar by way of the *unseen servant* spell.

TIX TEXADA, JUNIOR LAMPLIGHTER

"I thought you might say that."

A not quite elven-looking female, with tight, pale green skin and a galaxy of blue-black freckles beneath her glowing yellow eyes, in practical clothes that seem somewhat otherworldly.

For the Insightful

This individual talks about destiny and fate in a way that suggests she's seen how things will play out.

WHEN ARCANE PURSUITS lead the curious into the realm of chronurgy, time itself becomes susceptible to the unpredictability of exploratory experimentation. One such experiment by the wizard Obediah Orgone (known in the future as Orgone's Final Hour) shattered the way time is perceived and experienced, such that time travel became both possible and impossible to avoid. This distressed the Lamplighters, a group of higher beings who maintain the flow of time in order to keep the universe(s) from collapsing. Tix Texada, a Lamplighter in training, has spent much of her life studying the past in person, part of her organization's efforts to reign in the chaos caused by Orgone's disruption of time. She keeps her observations to herself, but knows every moment into which she inserts herself could cause another universe to splinter.

◆ **Wants & Needs** Tix wants to learn as much as she can about the wizard Obediah Orgone, part of why she has stationed herself just a few miles away from his underground chronurgy lab.

◆ **Secret or Obstacle** Tix has to be careful not to interfere with the timeline she currently inhabits, otherwise she may not have a future to return to. Any event that unfolds in a way that doesn't align with those detailed in her log of destined "lighthouse moments" could further disrupt the splintering universes in ways that would have profound consequences for her organization and their allies.

◆ **Carrying** 21cp, 3sp, 19gp; a chronogram for future communique; a log of "lighthouse moments," events that must occur, at GM discretion.

Random NPC Generator

The wider realm could contain billions of characters—this list is a start. Roll 1d20 on any of the following three tables, or roll 6d20 (one for each column) for a less predictable persona. Combine columns from all three tables for more chaos.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Sturg	Silverock	...with a pock-marked face and a scraggly beard...	...who believes they're due a promotion with the city guards...	...and has a weak heart.	15cp, 2sp; a shirt of chainmail.
2	Kolath	Rumsdeep	...with breath reeking of onions but with a winning smile...	...who has a dream of opening a bakery...	...and is haunted by their grandfather's spirit.	40cp, 10gp; a lockpicking kit.
3	Oomba	Quickstoke	...with the finest clothes and clearly in a hurry...	...who is working on a new theory of economics...	...and is up to their eyeballs in gambling debt.	50cp, 5sp; a luxurious cloak.
4	Randmork	Hammerstrike	...with a face caked in makeup and muscular arms...	...who is a big fan of romance novels and wants to collect them all....	...and has short-term memory loss.	5sp, 2gp; an emerald ring.
5	Tak	Forgefoot	...with a handsome face except for a giant boil on their nose...	...who seeks to convert passerbys to their religion...	....and is illiterate.	34cp; a bottle of liquor.
6	Fuurm	Coppernose	...covered head to toe in plate armor...	...who needs to rescue their kidnapped sister...	...and is terrible at all forms of combat.	10cp, 4sp; a healing potion.
7	Daldir	Firebeard	...with a broken nose and missing teeth....	...who wants to become a champion fistfighter...	...and can't stand the sight of blood.	20cp; a pair of brass knuckles.
8	Dalkom	Veindeep	...with a patchy beard and a finger in their nose...	...who is seeking to gain their father's respect as a successful miner...	...and is overwhelmingly lazy.	15cp, 3sp; a ball of string.
9	Baedora	Oremen	...with a face covered in piercings and a mouth full of gold teeth...	...who is trying to find someone to escort them to the top of an undermountain...	...and doesn't know how to ask nicely.	4cp; a bundle of bread and cheese; a dagger.
10	Vax	Diamondtoe	...with a missing eye and leg...	...who needs to beg every day to make ends meet...	...and has a tattoo marking them as a murderer.	Soiled rags; an old war medal.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Kestort	Flintshine	...who is 5 feet tall and thin as a rail...	...who is eager to get married....	...and habitually wets the bed.	2sp, 5gp; a shortsword.
12	Gurnod	Strongale	...who is heavy in the torso yet light on their toes...	...who wants to get their painting featured in a museum...	...and comes from a disgraced family.	20cp, 1pp; a book of sketches.
13	Dimli	Silverseek	...as bald and beardless as a baby...	...who just wants to keep his mine running...	...and has a problem with a **giant spider** infestation.	1cp, 10sp; an empty knapsack.
14	Hemal	Thaneson	...wearing a fancy ballgown and expensive jewelry...	...who is looking to fit into high society...	...and has uncontrollable flatulance.	5gp, 2pp; a book on dwarven etiquette.
15	Nurgthord	Goldarm	...with scabs all over their body...	...who needs medical attention to cure them of disease...	...and thinks healers are out to kill them.	30cp; a pair of boots; a map of secret tunnels.
16	Bort	Strongsmith	...with food-stain covered clothes...	...who desires vengence on the **goblin** tribe that killed their family...	...and suffers from narcolepsy.	20cp, 5sp; a love letter from their sister-in-law.
17	Jorvka	Coppercrown	...with small stature and a nervous demeanor...	...who wants to own a house in the poshest area of town...	...and who has multiple spirits living in their head.	30cp, 2sp, 3gp; a prayer idol.
18	Turgra	Axeson	...with heavy eyelids and a constant yawn...	...who is trying to figure out who burgled their home...	...and is plagued with extreme social anxiety.	17cp, 10sp; acceptance letter from the Academy of Scholars.
19	Kurmok	Coldstone	...with shaggy red hair and a giant mole on their lip...	...who wants to be a great warrior...	...and is a pacifist.	20cp; a whetstone.
20	Danporg	Bronzebeard	....with a hook for a hand and wearing an oversized hat...	...who wants to break into the royal treasury...	...and is being hunted by the city guards.	5gp; two disguise kits.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Biosha	Eastlake	...with pale white eyes and large black ears aside their head...	...who is looking for a large, comfortable cavern...	...and sees via echolocation.	10cp, 6sp; an assortment of cave fruit.
2	Tiberiu	Reagle	...with their nose turned to the sky and wearing purple robes...	...who is searching for the royal family...	...and insists they are a displaced royal.	3cp; expensive and muddy purple robes.
3	Oana	Yiu	...with a sly grin, chewing tobacco...	...who is looking for trouble...	...and who was dared to start fights with 16 different strangers.	12cp, 4sp; chewing tobacco; +1 hand wraps.
4	Horia	Immamura	...with menacing black plate armor...	...who is searching for a legendary black tower...	...and who had a dream where they saw the entire party turned to ash.	23sp, 58gp; *potion of heroism*.
5	Diego	Gulnurkan	...who shuffles along slowly, their body covered in bark...	...who needs to find a cure before it's too late...	...and is cursed with creeping barkskin disease.	3cp, 7gp; flaking bark bits; a *potion of healing*.
6	Edvaldo	Seidanur	...with wild hair and leather pants...	...who heard rumors about a magical deck of cards and has come to investigate...	...and is possessed by the spirit of an ancient ruler.	2cp, 42sp, 98gp; a solid gold puzzle box in the shape of a pyramid; a deck of rare playing cards.
7	Flaviu	Aibolsun	...with high green pigtails and a **pseudodragon** perched on their shoulder...	...who is following a map with a big X marked in the center...	...and is the victim of a long con.	9cp, 2sp; a pseudodragon; a (potentially) real treasure map.
8	Nelu	Foxglove	...with a bright orange jumpsuit and several knives in their belt...	...who is on a mission to stamp out evil and rescue their friends from the shadow plane...	...and who can still hear the screams of their evaporating companions.	5cp, 8sp; 8 throwing knives; a jade carving of a toad.
9	Aline	Protheroe	...with an ox sled of fresh food and wearing a wide-brimmed hat...	...who got lost on their way to the nearest settlement...	...and refuses aid in all its forms on principle.	34cp, 64sp; an ox cart; 100gp worth of organic vegetables.
10	Rahela	Uvaes	...with a pink crop top and wielding twin shortswords...	...who is looking for inspiration and excitement...	...and spends their spare time writing action novels.	3cp, 5sp; a royalty statement for 34gp; 3 manuscripts.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Rayanna	Zakari	...with a leather apron and an ironworker's mask...	...who is searching for investors in their startup...	...and insists they are reinventing the wheel.	4cp, 78gp; a pitch for square wheels; a 5 year plan.
12	Muksina	Abdou	...with ragged clothes, and some fabric scraps shoved up their nose...	...who has found a new use for bat droppings...	...and needs to make it to the surface pronto.	1cp; a massive jug of guano.
13	Heitor	Silviu	...with popping veins and a mouth frothing with excitement...	...who must defeat Krag the Malevolent in one-on-one combat to claim the throne...	...and is prone to fainting at the sight of blood.	18cp, 9sp, 2gp; a romance novel titled *In the Enemy's Embrace*.
14	Darius	Bako	...with open robes and angular face paint...	...who is ready to compete in the Great Cliff Dive...	...and knows their *potion of fly* will only last another half hour.	34cp, 7gp; 3 vials of alchemist's fire; a *token of feather fall*.
15	Lawan	Ide	...with eager eyes and silver hair...	...who just wants to talk to anything vaguely humanoid...	...and is a **silver dragon** in disguise.	469gp, 86pp; a diary written in stream of consciousness and spanning 430 years.
16	Sabina	Tanko	...with blue hair and a kindly attitude...	...who wants to open the first subterranean sky port...	...and has never worked a day in their life.	23cp, 5sp, 290gp; a drafted business application; a bottle of gin.
17	Floren	Illa	...with immaculate white robes and a monocle...	...who is searching for participants for a clinical trial...	...and is testing a regenerative treatment that has a 50/50 chance of turning users into a **bullywug**.	59sp, 81gp; several vials of viscous liquids; a large needle.
18	Gouma	Mani	...with a plump figure and serene attitude...	...who is looking for the rare white dragon bush, said to make delectable tea...	...and is being pursued by a jilted lover.	3cp, 7sp; a large collection of rare tea leaves; a cast iron teapot.
19	Vicente	Souleymane	...staring intently at a large crystal ball they are carrying...	...who needs to follow their crystal ball's will...	...and is growing concerned their crystal ball isn't predicting the future so much as manifesting it.	5cp, 8gp; a book titled *Crystal Reading for Dummies*; a large crystal ball worth 990gp.
20	Joaquin	Iro	...with effortlessly mussed hair and photogenic face...	...who dreams of being a model for Cavernguy, the underrealm's top fashion brand...	...and has the self-confidence of a soggy biscuit.	2sp, 6gp; the spring fashion catalogue for *Cavernguy*.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
1	Horace	Crowbender	...with sharp features, dark hair and a ragged black cloak...	...who has a cursed dagger they need to unload...	...and is terrified they'll be forced to kill again.	12sp, 14gp; a +1 dagger; bag of live insects for snacking.
2	Ichthmacha	Fenyara	...with a shaven head, odd green scales on their neck and a curious fishy odor...	...who recently went swimming in a golden pond...	...and is slowing losing their ability to speak.	8cp, 11sp; a dream journal filled with wild visions.
3	Ko	Rofor	...with a long red beard thrown over their shoulder and deepset black eyes...	...dragging a coffin that looks to be full...	...and is trying to find a place to bury their vampiric mistress.	12sp, 13gp; a blank piece of parchment that when heated reveals a curious map of the underworld with an "X" on it.
4	Branwen	Fauxmont	...with a long white mohawk, sparkling blue eyes, and toned physique...	...who seeks vengeance for a brutal attack that left their village decimated...	...and believes they are a great hero from the past, reborn.	2gp, 4pp; a short sword; silver dragon head pendant on a short chain worth 120gp.
5	Gesselyn	Requiess	...with arcane tattoos over every visible surface of their body...	...who has tried for years to converse with demons...	...and will do anything to obtain power over their father.	32gp; 6 tattoo needles; 4 bottles of ink; curved dagger.
6	Fume	Darabound	...with a squat body, close cropped hair and large rat perched on their shoulder...	...who has developed a recipe for the world's best cheese and honey pie...	...and who can speak with animals (but finds them pretty boring).	14sp, 16gp; mushroom-based incense that stops pain when inhaled (6 uses, good for 8 hours each).
7	Joknara	Stumpfoot	...with ragged clothes, blind eyes and a steel walking stick sharpened to a lethal point...	...who knows the truth about the Heir of Isenholm...	...and has developed blindsight.	32cp, 6sp; steel walking stick/spear (1d8 piercing).
8	Leonas	Cragenmore	...with a bald head, black beard and the longest fingernails you've ever seen...	...who is obsessed with building a vessel that can move underwater...	...and knows of a forgotten pirate hoard hidden at the bottom of an underground lake infested with evil fishfolk.	16gp; mechanical drawings; a map of an underground lake; an underwater breahing apparatus.
9	Finestria	Fishtoe	...with dark skin, long, sleek blue hair and matching spiral tattoos on both sides of their neck...	...who believes the son they lost to an underground whirlpool years ago is still alive...	...and knows the ritual they're planning will require the blood of at least two adventurers.	14sp, 18gp; a ritual dagger; two empty vials.
10	Mikator	Suresnail	...with bulging, watery eyes, large webbed hands and a humped back...	...who needs someone to kill the sorcrerer who has cursed them...	...and believes they will shortly turn into a **troglodyte**.	2sp, 4gp; full wineskin; a charcoal sketch of their former self.

1d20	First Name	Last Name	Brief Description	Wants & Needs	Secret or Obstacle	Also Carrying
11	Forcrum	Icruxias	...with fine dress, regal bearing and an entitled attitude...	...who is looking for a way to gain the ear of the queen...	...and has heard there might be an opening for royal advisor.	12sp, 22gp; 2 rings worth 50gp each; several fine silk handkerchiefs.
12	Bete	Noire	...with short dark hair, an impressively curled mustache and teeth filed to points...	...who seeks a way to speak with the dead...	...and has discovered the mummified corpse of a long-dead necromancer.	10sp; 11gp; a jar of wax, flint and steel.
13	Flynn	Roamshadow	...with curly brown hair, travelers garb and a patch over one eye...	...who is trying to make a living off performing quickie weddings...	...and wants to gain access to other dimensions.	22sp, 10gp; a box of two dozen matching rings worth 18gp; a tie-dyed stole.
14	Calagor	Slane	...with a tattered white robe, long white hair and missing one arm...	...who believes they are the reincarnation of a legendary wizard...	...and has yet to exhibit any evidence that they are anything other than an absolute loony.	10sp; necklace with cheap bronze medallion; dagger hilt with no blade.
15	Klein	Mugmaster	...with wrinkled face, deep set eyes, blackened and pitted teeth and noxious breath...	...who would like to regain their memory of the past 10 years...	...and is on the run from hired killers out for their blood.	21sp, 12gp; dagger hidden in boot (1d4 slashing damage).
16	Bronk	Narrick	...with a large broken nose, gallon-sized fists and wiry gray hair...	...who thirsts for combat because intellectual pursuits are for fools and cowards...	...and can literally smell fear.	17sp, 4gp; brass knuckles; small pencil; journal inscribed with poems.
17	Dalael	Rygoss	...with expressive eyebrows, a lilting voice and several nose, lip and ear piercings...	...who needs to infiltrate a fortress-like dark elven city...	...and must steal a rare flower that can provide an antidote to their beloved's sickness.	5sp, 8gp; bag stuffed with a *cloak of invisibility*.
18	Ghittel	Stringsaw	...with bow legs and a thick middle, red hair and a thick bushy beard...	...who has a money-making scheme involving a small, sedated **red dragon** and a pipe organ...	...and thinks they are the smartest person in the room.	12sp, 38gp; salve that conveys fire resistance (2 uses).
19	Strim	Didor	...with an easy smile, friendly attitude and terribly sarcastic demeanor...	...who is certain they're headed down the right tunnel...	...and has been inadvertantly luring a **grell** their way.	38sp, 40gp; large pouch; small dagger.
20	Petra	Finch	...riddled with scabs and small cuts...	...who thinks they've discovered a new bat species...	...and hasn't yet managed to catch it.	35cp, 20sp; a tattered book titled *Rare Bats of the World*; a broken holy symbol.

SIDE-QUEST GENERATOR

Because in this realm, every back needs a little scratching.

You know the drill: Your party is tracking an ancient dracolich and the only way to destroy it for good is to seal its soul with the four Orbs of Preharmonic Dissonance*. The orbs are spread across the realm in the four capital cities of each province—all your party needs to do is gather them in one spot. Simple! Except things start to get complicated the moment they visit the baroness who holds the first orb. Of course, she'd love to give it to the party to help them save the realm, but it's being used to generate food for the entire city—a necessity given that an orcish horde to the south has cut off most trade routes from the farms that typically feed the populace. So the party parlays with the leader of the orcs (who refuses to meet with them unless they bring him a dagger created by a famed smithy as tribute, which means tracking down the blacksmith—whose forge is inoperable since he's behind on the rent…maybe you can talk to his landlord?) and discovers that the horde isn't violent per se, they've just been displaced from their land by a brood of burrowing ankegs…

Or whatever.

OK, so deal with the ankegs, get the orcs to leave. Get the orcs to leave, get the orb. So simple! The party learns ankegs disperse if exposed to subsonic vibration, and a local artificer knows just how to build a device that'll do the trick, but—wouldn't you know it!—his tools were borrowed by a little old lady who needs the tools to remove the cat she consumed to snag the spider she ate to capture the fly she'd swallowed not three nights ago.

And so, the safety of the realm depends on the party's ability to kill a fly in an old woman's stomach. So, so very simple. But that's just one orb! And one chapter of your ongoing campaign.

Nearly every major goal in a TTRPG is achieved through a series of minor tasks or nascent negotiations. While you could (and in some cases should!) build entire campaigns around the wants and needs of the NPCs presented in this book, the reality is most of these characters will simply be bit players—assistants or obstacles—as your party pursues a larger purpose. But they still have hopes. They still have dreams. They still have connections to the communities your party is merely passing through. And if your party starts asking around, they're likely to find no shortage of folks who need something in exchange for supplies, coin or the secret to defeating that dracolich ("Have you heard of the Orbs of Preharmonic Dissonance?").

What follows is a series of tables to help generate connections, aims and antagonists using the NPCs presented in this title (beyond those already shared within their individual profiles). Each side quest features a series of blanks—all you have to do is fill them in, either with characters from this book or some of your own. Most of these side quests start with a request—a harmless "I would like you to do us a favor, though"—uttered by the character from whom your party needs something.

To start, choose a table category from the next page or roll on the Side-Quest Selector on this page to pick a roll table at random. Roll the dice and fill in the respective blanks in that side quest at GM discretion. The first blank will nearly always be filled by the character with whom your party is interacting, and what you know about that character and/or others in their orbit might help you fill in the others. Don't know who to drop into a given blank? Roll on the Random Character Generator on pg. 267. Don't know what your party needs? Roll on the "What They Can Offer" table at right to create an incentive if one isn't immediately apparent.

After a few dice rolls you should have a character or two in need (as well as a character or two that might be encountered/rescued/killed as part of fulfilling that need) plus a sense of what the party would gain for coming to their aid. You may find some inputs make perfect sense: "This blacksmith will give you free armor in exchange for helping him woo the gal of his dreams...." You may find some make less sense (and are all the better for it): "This queen will give you free wondrous items in exchange for wooing the blacksmith of her dreams...." Some requests will skirt the line of decency and/or personal safety and others may fly straight past it headlong into true chaos as the dice dictate their own story. No matter what happens, it's important to remember a few things as you fill in the blanks for each side quest: 1. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction** and 2. Your party can always say no. If the side quest presented is too difficult, nonsensical or downright deplorable, the party can simply forego the reward or service and try their hand at getting what they need a different way. Or, you know, re-roll. After all, stealing a pie from a baker is a wholly different request than stealing one from a basilisk.

If for some reason the party seems overmatched as they attempt to...*rolls dice*...separate a powerful kraken priest from the paintings he apparently stole from a flower shop owner in town, instead of having the priest and the party fight to the death, just use this generator again! Now the kraken priest is willing to give the party the paintings in exchange for...*rolls dice*...a particularly good clam chowder.

Proceed with caution and an eye toward shenanigans and all will be well. Side quests, dead ahead!

Side-Quest Selector

Some asks are small. Others are large. Some require travel, others an army. But all require your attention.

1d8	Side-Quest Categories
1	Saving the Day
2	Ruining the Day
3	A Petty Caper
4	A Major Crime
5	Solving a Case
6	A Dangerous Request
7	A Humble Request
8	What Could Go Wrong?

What They Can Offer

1d6	In exchange for....
1	...coin
2	...information
3	...safe passage
4	...a unique item
5	...divine favor
6	...support

**One per round.*

Side-Quest Categories

Pleas. Favors. Trades. All for the choosing (unless they're Ultimatums...).

Saving the Day

1d10	
1	_____ can't find their dog, whom they think wandered off near the home of _____, who is currently trying to choke _____ to death inside.
2	_____ has a note: "We ArE h0lDiNg _____ fOr RaNs0m. GeT pAyMeNt fr0m _____. No FuNnY sTuFf."
3	_____ is super lost. Help them find _____?
4	_____ heard a cry for help from the bottom of a nearby well. _____, who is nearly hoarse, fell in while trying to dispose of _____'s corpse.
5	_____ has a big date with _____ and needs to learn how to dance in the next 4 hours.
6	_____ and _____ didn't mean to provoke the **hill giant** by calling it ugly and short, but that hardly matters now. It's headed straight for town, looking to show how tall and handsome it is.
7	Camp counselors _____ and _____ may or may not have left a troop of tenderfoot tykes unattended in the woods nearby following the deafening roar of a uhmmm a...hard to say, they were too busy running.
8	_____ knows _____ is about to be hanged for a crime they didn't commit. Can you break them free for a hefty sum offered by _____'s family? (less a finder's fee, of course).
9	_____ has heard a ritual ceremony led by _____ is to take place under the next full moon, and that _____ will be killed! Help!
10	_____ doesn't say this lightly, but their knee always aches before a natural disaster (at GM discretion), and it's been aching all day. _____ should be alerted to help folks prepare!

Ruining the Day

1d10	
1	_____, owner of the second most profitable tavern in town, wants to hire you to make sure _____'s Spring Festival, thrown annually at the most profitable tavern, is a massive failure. Can you gate-crash and create mayhem?
2	_____ wants you to ruin the celebration for _____, recently returned as a battle hero. Make it public, so the hero can't run for office.
3	_____ knows that _____'s funeral is tomorrow. Unless of course the pallbearers can't find the body.
4	_____, who may or may not be a trickster god, wants you to pay a visit to _____ and convince them the end of the world is at hand.
5	_____, whose ancestral home was recently seized by _____, wants you to plant cursed items in and around the property in an effort to get them to relinquish (or at the very least flee) the home.
6	_____, whose daughter was recently snubbed from attending the first ball of the season, wants you to infiltrate _____'s upcoming soirée and give everyone food poisoning. Cheers!
7	_____ has collected evidence their step-parent, _____, is secretly married to no less than five others. It's time they all met, don't you think?
8	_____ wants you to help _____ learn that cows can't walk down stairs by smuggling one (or three!) onto their home's second floor before they wake up tomorrow morning.
9	Local elections are right around the corner. It would be very good for _____ if the whole day were disrupted, especially since _____ is trying to rise to power.
10	Yes, _____ is tired of being called a Bard College Dropout. But if _____ gets a diploma at today's graduation, it would spell certain doom (for the dropout's ego, at the least).

A Petty Caper

1d10	
1	_____ lent a tea kettle to _____. That was nearly five years ago. The owner wants it back by any means necessary.
2	_____ is convinced their partner, _____ is covertly stepping out with _____. Ruin the secretive couples' next date, would you?
3	_____ wants you to busy the guards by picking the pockets of _____, _____ and _____. Try not to get caught.
4	In the courtyard is a statue of _____. A rival, _____, would very much like it defaced.
5	"Could you please paint '_____ is a Giant Skunk' in large red lettering atop the roof of the area's tallest building? Sincerely, _____. P.S. Don't let _____ find out."
6	An acolyte of the trickster god, _____ would love for you to sneak into the Temple of Solemn Silence and make as much noise as possible, pinning the blame on _____ and _____. They know why.
7	_____ thinks people falling over is the funniest thing. See how many people, including _____, you can make land on their duffs.
8	_____ has a glorious collection of stolen wigs, and is hoping to add _____'s as a centerpiece.
9	_____ knows _____ is terribly allergic to cats. Set a few loose in their home and get a painting of their reaction as a gift for _____.

10	_____ wants you to lead _____ on the wildest possible goose chase. It should involve their finest outfit, a march through mud and a goose.

A Major Crime

1d10	
1	_____ is hoping to get rich selling _____ a forged painting. They just need you to convince _____ to validate the forgery.
2	There's no doubt _____ deserves to be buried alive. All _____ asks is that you make it look like an accident.
3	_____'s former flame, _____, is still in prison. That should change. Tonight.
4	The Cup of the Happy Host is, at least according to _____, the most valuable artifact in the northern provinces. Which is why they want you to help them steal it from _____.
5	It's a simple request: set fire to the Dragon's Egg. _____, the tavern owner, will get the insurance money and _____ will get to watch a building burn down. Win win!
6	"Step 1: Find _____. Step 2: Find _____. Step 3: Convince them to fight to the death. Cheers, _____."
7	_____ wants you to support their coup against the local government. _____ has all the details. _____ is a spy.
8	_____ demands a private sit down with _____, who has thus far refused to meet in person. You'll have 24 hours, but should probably get them here in 10.
9	_____ is prepared to reward you handsomely for the total destruction of _____'s hometown. "Flood. Flame. Flaming flood? Surprise me. And them."
10	_____ is tired of hearing about how lovely _____'s new schooner is. Put a cork in the captain's preening by putting a hole in the ship. Preferably while it's at sea.

Solving a Case

1d10	
1	_____ was recently robbed. The perp (_____) is trying to fence the goods to _____.
2	_____ wants to know who's been burning mysterious sigils in the field beyond their property. Turns out it's _____, writing an elaborate love note to _____.
3	_____ thinks they are being stalked. They are. By _____. On behalf of _____.
4	Every night, _____ hears voices near the temple. It's _____ and _____, plotting to steal the artifacts inside.
5	_____ has always been curious about the empty shack near the river. Some say it's haunted. But it's just _____, who uses the shack to smuggle goods out of the area, in a large white blanket when the nights get cold.
6	_____ needs to know who defaced the statue of their god in the center of town. Turns out it was _____, a rival worshiper, who did all they could to pin the blame on _____.
7	_____ knows the identity of the legendary murderer the Somersby Slicer. It's _____! All they need now is solid proof.
8	_____ was attacked by _____, a shapeshifter whose other favorite persona is that of _____.
9	_____ was sent a box with a skull inside. They don't know why. Only that it's _____'s skull (which is odd, since they're still alive).
10	_____ knows _____ has been poisoning the stew at the Toadstool Tavern. But before they go to the authorities they need a motive and proof. Who's hungry?

A Dangerous Request

1d10

1	_____ is worried _____ has gone missing. They were last seen heading to the Cavern of the Silent Wind with _____ (who may or may not be possessed).
2	_____ and _____, unlikely business partners, need an escort through the nearby (and aptly named) Hills of Horror, so they can deliver a proof of concept to _____.
3	_____ is desperate for you to save their children from a brutish group of cultists led by _____. As it happens, the cultists also have _____ in captivity.
4	_____ needs help taking on a rising **orc** threat in the east and thinks _____ is the key to stopping them.
5	A **black dragon** named Meelmouth has chosen a nearby bog to build its lair, displacing both _____ and _____, who are rallying adventurers to put an end to its reign before it begins. You scared of dragons?
6	A **troll** absconded with _____'s entire family a month ago. _____ and _____ went to save them, but...none have returned.
7	_____ believes _____ has become a **vampire**, and has hired _____ to lead a group to investigate.
8	_____ doesn't think there's any hope of getting back the amulet given to _____ as a good luck charm before the latter went **grell** hunting.
9	_____ and their rival, _____, would like you to oversee their attempts at riding a wild **wyvern**. Longest rider can woo _____ without interference from the other (assuming they live).
10	_____ knows that few who enter the astral plane return with their bodies or sanity in tact, but _____ is trapped there and no one else will agree to help.

A Humble Request

1d10

1	_____ would love as many rare books as you can get your hands on. _____ is a known collector.
2	_____ is a collector of currency from different principalities. _____ and _____ are both known hobbyists. Care to trade coins?
3	_____ has an obsession with dragons and is in the market for any furnishings, jewelry or raw materials related to them. _____ knows of the location of at least two of these creatures.
4	_____ can't get enough rocks, the funnier looking the better, and has heard _____ owns one that looks like _____.
5	Everyone told _____ a talking goat would be an easy way to make money, but they can't make the trek to sell it to _____. Could you?
6	_____ loves music, and is a collector of story songs. Would you write one about _____? Make it personal. (If you've never met, here's where to find them.)
7	_____ could use a drink. And a hug. And maybe an apology from _____.
8	_____ is one cast iron pot away from completing their (now discontinued) set. _____ used to make them! If the rumors are true.
9	All _____ really wants is to taste one of _____'s pastries again. The kind with the figgy jam and the crumbly crust and the **flumph** butter.
10	_____ misses the smell of home. And the smell of _____. Maybe you can find a way to provide both?

What Could Go Wrong?

1d10

1	_____, _____ and _____ were sharing a carriage together when their driver suffered a heart attack. The other two are still out there (in bandit country). They just need a ride into town!
2	_____ thinks _____ is lying about the fact that **goblins** can fly. Prove 'em wrong!
3	_____ has requested you follow _____ (who is suspected of having an affair with _____).
4	Seeking an escort through **gnoll** country, cultural ambassadors _____ and _____ are secretly shepherding illegal goods to _____ on behalf of _____.
5	_____ could really use a backrub. Just needs to be done by an **orc**. Or a **troll**. Or _____, if they agree.
6	_____ is tired of losing the local meat pie eating contest. Just dress up like them, eat all the pie you can, and walk out a champion. You just have to beat _____.
7	_____ knows _____ loves surprises. Sneak up on them! Shhhhh be so sneaky! Sneak up on them! Then yell "SURPRISE TRAITOR!" as you pop these balloons! It'll be hilarious!
8	_____ is an investor in an amateur circus troupe. The sword-juggling trio is down to one performer: _____. The show is tonight! Your hands look ripe for sword throwin'!
9	_____ would love you to transport this oversized crate of fine china to _____. They live on top of Frost Giant Mountain, and have a detailed manifest of each piece, so mind the crumbling steps on your way up!
10	_____ has always wondered what it would feel like to be a city guard, if only for a day. Maybe you can borrow a uniform from _____?

Random Character Generator

Why pick someone specific when you can roll dice instead?

With hundreds of NPCs in the pages of this book, how do you choose one that's right for the moment? Simple: Let fate decide. To generate a random character, start by rolling 1d12, then select the appropriate table from the group below. From there, roll the associated die and turn to the pages listed based on the roll. You can also sort by section, choosing the appropriate location type and rolling 1d4 to pick a table, rerolling on a 4 if necessary.

There are 1-20 characters on any given spread in the book. Once you turn to a spread, count the number of characters presented, then roll an appropriate number die (example: 4 characters = 1d4). If you encounter a spread with 3 or 5 or 7 characters, roll the closest die you can, rerolling if you roll that die's highest number (example: a spread with 5 characters would warrant rolling a d6, with a reroll on a 6).

For a spread with 1 character, congrats. You've chosen an NPC. For a spread with 2 characters, roll 1d4, with the first character being represented by 1-2, and the second by 3-4. If the spread chosen at random features a 1d20 table, roll 1d20 to select a character, or roll several 1d20s to generate a completely randomized character for even more variety.

Big City Denizens

d10	Table 1
1	48-49
2	50-51
3	52-53
4	54-55
5	56-57
6	58-59
7	60-61
8	62-63
9	64-65
10	66-67

d10	Table 2
1	68-69
2	70-71
3	72-73
4	74-75
5	76-77
6	78-79
7	80-81
8	82-83
9	84-85
10	86-87

d8	Table 3
1	88-89
2	90-91
3	92-93
4	94-95
5	96-97
6	98-99
7	100-101
8	102-103

Small Town Tenants

d10	Table 4
1	104-105
2	106-107
3	108-109
4	110-111
5	112-113
6	114-115
7	116-117
8	118-119
9	120-121
10	122-123

d10	Table 5
1	124-125
2	126-127
3	128-129
4	130-131
5	132-133
6	134-135
7	136-137
8	138-139
9	140-141
10	142-143

d6	Table 6
1	144-145
2	146-147
3	148-149
4	150-151
5	152-153
6	roll again

Outposts and Outskirts

d10	Table 7
1	154-155
2	156-157
3	158-159
4	160-161
5	162-163
6	164-165
7	166-167
8	168-169
9	170-171
10	172-173

d10	Table 8
1	174-175
2	176-177
3	178-179
4	180-181
5	182-183
6	184-185
7	186-187
8	188-189
9	190-191
10	192-193

d6	Table 9
1	194-195
2	196-197
3	198-199
4	200-201
5	202-203
6	204-205

Underdwellers

d10	Table 10
1	206-207
2	208-209
3	210-211
4	212-213
5	214-215
6	216-217
7	218-219
8	220-221
9	222-223
10	224-225

d10	Table 11
1	226-227
2	228-229
3	230-231
4	232-233
5	234-235
6	236-237
7	238-239
8	240-241
9	242-243
10	244-245

d8	Table 12
1	246-247
2	248-249
3	250-251
4	252-253
5	254-255
6	256-257
7	258-259
8	260-261

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Your GMs Are...

JEFF ASHWORTH is a writer, editor and storyteller whose credits include *The Game Master's Book of Random Encounters* as well as work for Disney, Hasbro, Nickelodeon and World Wrestling Entertainment. When he isn't working on special projects for Media Lab Books, he enjoys playing and designing RPGs with his friends. In his role-playing career he has bested beholders, sweet-talked succubi and devastated dragons without breaking a sweat. In the real world, after failing a late-night Perception check, he was nearly crippled by a foot-piercing d4. He and his wife live in Virginia with their dogs, Zelda and Lincoln. **@GameMaster_5e**

JASMINE KALLE is a writer, illustrator and editor hailing from the sunny tropics of Brisbane, Australia. She has a Master of Arts (Writing, Editing and Publishing) from the University of Queensland and more than half a decade of TTRPG experience—though she doesn't tend to put that second part on her CV. A series of strange and fortunate circumstances led her to run away from the sun and attempt to find a job in the cold depths of a New York winter in 2018 and while she didn't find a job, she did find RPGs. Now, when she's not traveling and running games for various friends around the world, she makes her way back home to hang out with her cat, Kiba, and dog, Otto.

JOHN STANKO, an illustrator/designer, is currently an Associate Professor of Graphic Design and Illustration at the University of South Florida. His clients include Sony Entertainment's Legends of Norrath, Hasbro's Magic the Gathering, Star Wars Galaxies TCG, Lord of the Rings LCG, Star Wars LCG, Dungeons & Dragons and World of Warcraft TCG, TOR, Nightshade Publishing, ImagineFX, Ultra X-Men, and Flair Marvel. His work has been accepted repeatedly into the prestigious *Spectrum: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art*. He also authored the instructional drawing book, *Mastering Fantasy Art*.

JASMINE BHULLAR is an actress, internet personality and content creator best known for her daily livestreams at *twitch.tv/thatbronzegirl* as well as the many RPG productions she's been part of. She's not only an experienced tabletop RPG player, but a skilled Game Master as well. She got her start on *Geek & Sundry*, which led her to play the infamous "Beryl the Brutal" on *Relics and Rarities*. She's also the creator, host and GM of *Shikar*, a new D&D 5th Edition game on Twitch. When she's not reading science fiction novels, Jasmine enjoys creating video game, RPG and comic book content.

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