

TRAVELLERS ON THE ROAD

Adventurers spend much of their time wandering the land. They might be travelling to a distant city to sell their loot, on their way to seek the council of a sagacious sage or on the way to their next adventure. Whatever the reason for their journey, the road is unlikely to be abandoned. Other folk will be going about their business and the PCs will encounter many such people on their journeys.

Use the NPCs herein to add depth and flavour to the PCs' journey.

CREDITS

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Welcome to the third Patreon exclusive Daily NPC book: *Travellers on the Road*. In previous releases, we've covered townsfolk and adventurers-about-town; this time we focus on NPCs the PCs could meet on the road. Some are nothing but travellers, while others could help or hinder the party. A few could even present a hook that leads to the PCs' next adventure!

When designing the NPCs herein I quickly realised this book couldn't follow the exact format of previous books. Prior entries in the line focused on individual NPCs, but it seemed odd to think the PCs might repeatedly only meet a single traveller on the road.

After all, people tend to travel in groups for safety. Thus, this book grew rather rapidly. That's okay, though, as many of the NPCs and encounters herein will be appearing (or already have appeared by the time you read this) in my *Adventures in Shadow* campaign. (I do like to kill two orcs with one cleave whenever possible!)

Because this is essentially a book of random encounters, I've also included a random encounter page for ease of use. If you fancy letting the dice dictate who the PCs bump into on the road, give it a whirl!

UPCOMING MONTHLY THEMES

By the time you read this, I'll probably already be almost halfway through April's Daily NPCs. In April, I'm detailing the Folk of Dulwich—a town in the south of the duchy "dangerously" (or perhaps "excitingly") close to the Forest of Gary Spires as well as the Shunned Valley of the Three Tombs, the ruins of Valentin's Folly and the fallen dwarven hold of Vongyth.

If you've got any suggestions as to what you'd like me to focus on in subsequent months feel free to drop me a line using the email address below.

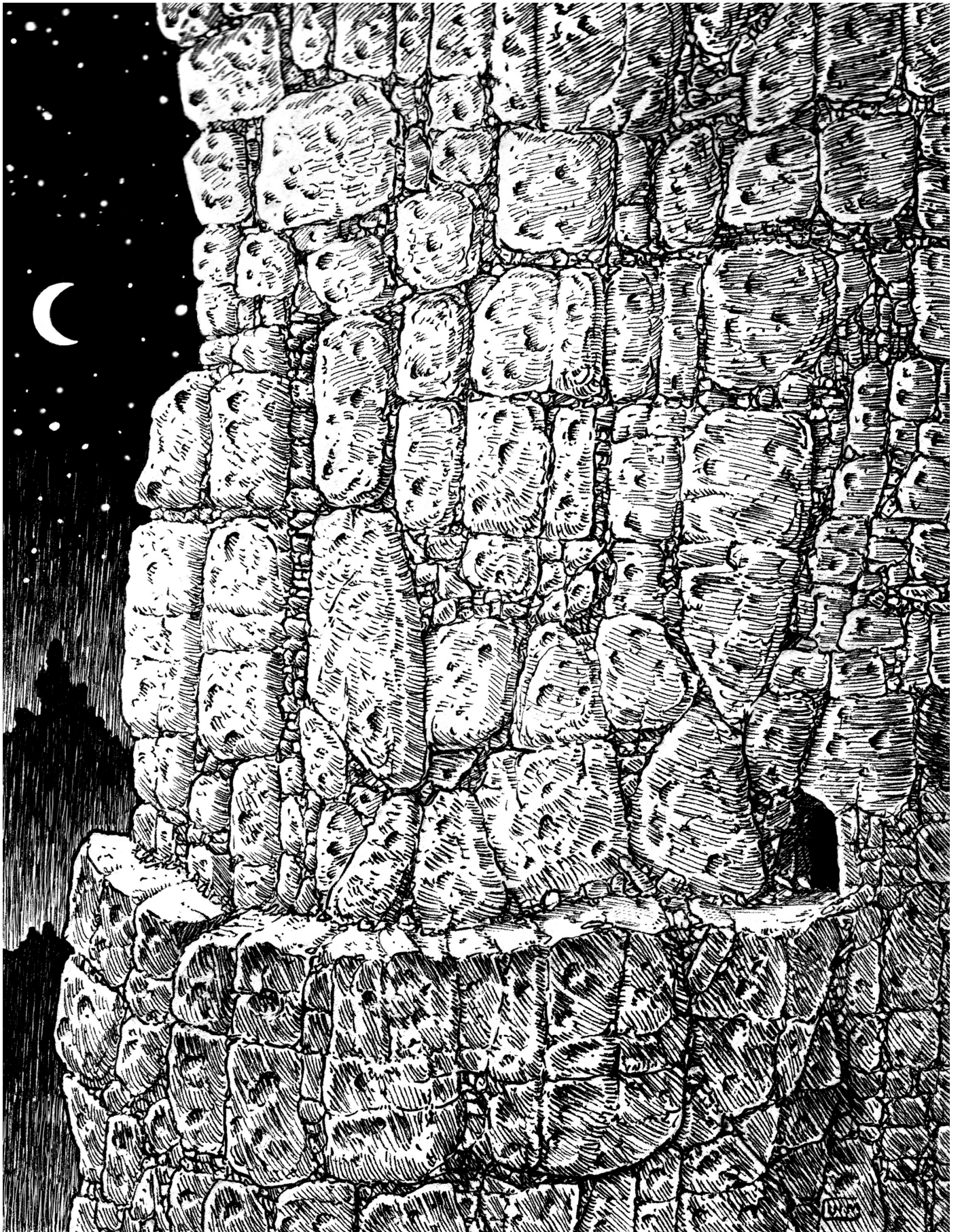
THANK YOU

Thank you for your epic support. Raging Swan's Patreon campaign enables us to do incredible things and I'm tremendously grateful you choose to be a part of it.

The NPCs herein provide you with the tools to bring them to life quickly and easily in your players' mind. However you use these NPCs, I hope this book makes running your campaign easier and less stressful. Good luck!

If you've got a questions, comments or suggestions about Raging Swan Press, drop me a line at creighton@ragingswan.com.





RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

	#	ENCOUNTER NAME	SUMMARY
01-03	1	Arumric and Lunderee	The halfling pedlars Arumric (N male halfling) and Lunderee Isskep (NG female halfling) are in the midst of a good-natured argument, when they encounter the PCs. Meet Arumric and Lunderee.
04-06	2	Home of the Ihalempi	Just visible from the trail, the moss-covered shingle roof of a dilapidated old building peaks over a stand of thickly growing trees filling a small dell. A thin wisp of smoke drifts from the building's chimney, betraying the presence of inhabitants. Once the home of a charcoal burner, the current occupiers, the Ihalempi family, make a living as hunters and trappers. The family earns a little extra coin letting travellers sleeping their barn; some of the travellers never leave the farmstead again.
07-09	3	Patrolling Men-at-Arms	The local lord sends patrols of soldiers up and down the road to keep it safe for travelling merchants and the like. (Robbed or murdered merchants tend to pay fewer taxes than unmolested ones).
10-12	4	Timo Hopea	Timo Hopea (N middle-aged male human cleric [Behron] 3) wanders the trails of Ashlar communing with his god and spreading word of the Farwanderer.
13-15	5	Family Ehatro	Matias Ehtaro is a master stonemason, much in demand among the nobility and the wealthy. Matias goes where the work is, and when the PCs encounter him, he is on the way to another job.
16-18	6	Wandering Mercenaries	A quartet of mercenaries seeks work in a nearby town. Recently having finished an easy job with a local merchant they want another such post.
19-21	7	Wandering Sellswords	Ostensibly sellswords in search of an employer these two warriors are in reality scouts for a local bandit gang watching for easy pickings on the road.
22-24	8	Riderless Horse	Chestnut (N female horse) trots down the road having just escaped a nasty encounter; her rider was not so fortunate.
25-27	9	Iisak Vartia	Iisak Vartia (CG male human ranger 1) has nowhere to go and all day to get there.
28-30	10	Joosef Kupias	Joosef Kupias (N male human fighter 2) pitifully begs by the side of the road. His deeply cowed hood and the bell hanging around his neck alerts all nearby that Joosef is a leper.
31-33	11	Heta Tapo	Heta Tapo (LN female human fighter 1) hurtles down the road on a fleet horse, intent on delivering the message with which she has been entrusted.
34-36	12	Esteri Sotijalo	Esteri Sotijalo (N female human) loves her dog—Patch—who is the only family she has left.
37-39	13	Ambro Tiera	Ambro Tiera (N middle-aged male human) travels to live with his brother after being kicked out of the family home by his wife who has found a younger, more dynamic, partner.
40-42	14	Feradul Aralivar	Feradul Aralivar (N male half-elf bard 2) claims to be related to the legendary bard and pirate captain Vilimzair Aralivar and constantly tells tales of his heroic progenitor's exploits.
43-45	15	Albin Ihamuoto	Albin Ihamuoto (NE middle-aged male human rogue 1/wizard 1) works as a rag and bone man, wandering between Ashlar's settlements collecting broken, unwanted things—rags, broken furniture, bones and the like.
46-48	16	Aleksi Kuutamo and his Angels	Aleksi Kuutamo (N old male human cleric 3) makes what many consider to be mad prophesies which are little more the ravings of a lunatic.
49-51	17	Ambro Hellikki	Ambro Hellikki (CE male human fighter 2) flees just punishment for murder by getting as far away from his home as possible.
52-54	18	Aake Hämäläinen	Aake Hämäläinen (LN middle-aged male human) runs a small haulage business. For a fee, he'll transport you or your goods to any settlement in Ashlar.
55-57	19	Ruin of Adventure:	These two warriors have served the Company of the Spear for the last month. A week ago, the company ventured into an old barrow mound hidden deep in the woods; they have not been seen since.

#	ENCOUNTER NAME	SUMMARY
58-60	20 Eufrosyne Airikka	Eufrosyne Airikka (N middle-aged female human druid 2) wanders the land communing with nature and the animals she encounters.
61-63	21 Lucia Seppo	Lucia Seppo (LN female human cleric [Conn] 1) walks Ashlar's roads and trail on a pilgrimage to visit every temple of the Father in the duchy.
64-66	22 Henrikki Ehtaro	Henrikki Ehtaro (N young male human) travels to the Black Tower in search of a master to teach him the arcane arts.
67-69	23 Hannes Ilakka	Hannes Ilakka (N middle-aged male human expert 2) works hard to expand his humble business; Hannes deals in the buying and selling of beer, wine and spirits.
70-72	24 Drunkards Three	It seemed like a good idea at the time—and it still seems a good idea; however, disaster looms—these three drunkards are getting to the end of their last bottle.
73-75	25 Inga Ahti	Inga Ahti (NG female human ranger 2) drives a small flock of sheep to market with the help of her faithful hound Nem.
76-78	26 Aatami Airikka	Aatami Airikka (LG male human paladin 5) doesn't look like a questing knight, but that doesn't change the fact he is strong and powerful defender of the common folk.
79-81	27 Aatto Kostia	Aatto Kostia (LN male half-elf wizard 5) collects taxes on behalf of Duke Nenonen of Ashlar.
82-84	28 Stray Dog	This dog (N male dog) barks loudly when he sees (or smells) the party, and approaches cautiously.
85-90		Roll twice on this table, ignoring results of XX - 100 and combine the resulting NPCs into one encounter. The various NPCs could be travelling together or passing each other when the PCs encounter them.
91-93		Roll again on this table, ignoring results of XX - 100. Something horrible has happened—or is happening to the NPC generated by the second roll.
94-100		The road is busy. Roll three encounters on this table—ignoring results of XX - 100 and combine them into one large encounter. The various NPCs could be travelling together or passing each other when the PCs encounter them.



TRAVELLERS ON THE ROAD

1: ARUMRIC AND LUNDEREE

The halfling pedlars Arumric (N male halfling) and Lunderree Isskep (NG female halfling) are in the midst of a good-natured argument, when they encounter the PCs. The two are brother and sister and love to while away the hours on the road with spirited discussions about such matters as who scrambles the best eggs, the name of the best inn they ever stayed in and so on. When they encounter the PCs, they are trying to decide what was the worst thing about the dreary village of Coldwater (which they have recently visited). Arumric believes it was the people while Lunderree things the whole place unreasonably gloomy. They try to draw the PCs into their argument—both are sure they are right!

- **Arumric Isskep** (N male halfling) believes the pair will make their fortune in Languard; all they need are the right customers and the right products. He is a friendly fellow, with a nose for a bargain. He eagerly trades with anyone he meets. Arumric wears his black hair loose and wears fine, but muddy, clothes.
- **Lunderree Isskep** (NG female halfling) hated the gloom and general sense of misery and squalor hanging over Coldwater. She never wants to go back there. Lunderree has long brown hair and brown eyes that sparkle with humour.

The two each lead a donkey piled high with boxes and sacks containing their trade goods. Mainly the donkeys carry mundane items such as sacks of grain, pots, pans and so on. However, they also have a few notable items which might interest wandering adventurers; these items include:

- **Bag of Salt:** Double bagged in two hemp sacks, this 2 lb. of sea salt is worth 10 gp.
- **Red Silk:** This bolt of red silk is carefully folded in a small sack. It is worth 50 gp, and enough to make one dress or two doublets (or similar).
- **Fine Blank Spellbook:** Picked up months ago, this 100-page spellbook was prepared by the fledgling wizard Eevi Kontio. She scribed *read magic* into the book but lost the book in a badly-made wager. The halflings grow tired of dragging it around; they'll sell it for 20 gp.
- **Brandy:** This dusty bottle of fine brandy has an unreadable label. It is worth 10 gp.
- **Owl's Feathers:** These five feathers come from a tawny owl and are suitable for use as quills or as a material component for *identify*. They cost 1 sp each.

The two are more than happy to travel with the adventurers.

2: HOME OF THE IHALEMPI

Just visible from the trail, the moss-covered shingle roof of a dilapidated old building peaks over a stand of thickly growing trees filling a small dell. A thin wisp of smoke drifts from the building's chimney, betraying the presence of inhabitants. Once

the home of a charcoal burner, the current occupiers, the Ihalempi family, make a living as hunters and trappers. The family earns a little extra coin letting travellers sleeping their barn; some of the travellers never leave the farmstead again.

A thin path leads from the main trail through the copse, passed several overgrown charcoal piles to the house which stands amid a small kitchen garden. Sometimes young Issu Ihalempi lounges in the shade of a large oak tree at the head of the trail and invites travellers to rest overnight in the family barn.

The Ihalempi are well-used to travellers knocking at their door to either buy provisions or to ask for a place to sleep. The family comprises:

- **Äijö Ihalempi** (NE middle-aged male human ranger 2) is a skilled hunter who revels in the pain and the suffering of the animals he hunts. He is often away during the day checking his traps or hunting.
- **Maalin Ihalempi** (NE female human cleric [Baal] 1) appears to be nothing more than a kindly peasant woman. In fact, she enjoys preying on lone travellers. She has corrupted Äijö (who was always an unpleasant character) and is the guiding force behind the families activities.
- **Issu Ihalempi** (NE young male human) is barely a teenager, but already he is already emulating some of his father's less civilised characteristics. A dreamer, he is also intelligent and Maalin will soon start inducting him into Baal's priesthood. All she needs is a suitable sacrifice...
- **Dorotea Ihalempi** (CN young female human) is wild and capricious, but not evil. She knows travellers sometimes disappear from the barn, but hasn't realised her parents' depravity as yet.
- **Lyyti Ihalempi** (NE young female human) is a psychopath who enjoys catching and tormenting small creatures such as birds, rats and the like. Perceptive guests at the farmstead find a great many such skeletons scattered about the surrounds.

Outwardly, the family are pleasant and welcoming. They let large or obviously powerful groups pass without incident; lone travellers are their preferred prey.

3: PATROLLING MEN-AT-ARMS

The local lord sends patrols of soldiers up and down the road to keep it safe for travelling merchants and the like. (Robbed or murdered merchants tend to pay fewer taxes than unmolested ones). The party encounter one such patrol of six men-at-arms led by a mounted sergeant:

- **Sergeant Aatami Hopea** (LN middle-aged male human fighter 2) is friendly but inquisitive of armed groups wandering the road. Grizzled and unshaven, Aatami is a veteran of many bandit skirmishes and is a skilled leader of men. He is respectful—he doesn't want any trouble—but is determined to carry out his lord's orders.

- **Men-at-arms** (LN male human fighter 1) are bored and tired. They wear chainmail and carry steel shields. In battle, they wield longswords or spears. Loyal to their lord, they are not suicidal and retreat from an obviously superior force.

The patrol is heading in the opposite direction to the party, and after a brief conversation—assuming the PCs answer Aatami's questions—the soldiers continue on their way.

4: TIMO HOPEA

Wearing worn traveller's clothes and carrying a bulging pack on his back, this bearded middle-aged man saunters down the road whistling a jaunty tune.

Timo Hopea (N middle-aged male human cleric [Behron] 3) wanders the trails of Ashlar communing with his god and spreading word of the Farwanderer. Unsurprisingly, Timo is well-travelled and has been everywhere of note in the duchy. He also hears many interesting rumours and tidbits on the road and happily exchanges news with all he meets (preferably over an ale or two).

Personality: Timo is friendly and loves being outside—he hates being cooped up for more than a day or two and has a restless spirit. He believes in live and let live, but is inquisitive. A wanderer he has nowhere to really be most of the time, and happily attaches himself to other groups of travellers—all the better to preach the Farwanderer's message.

Mannerisms: Timo often whistles popular tunes softly to himself. He prefers jaunty, upbeat songs. He loves learning new songs which he practises obsessively until he gets them right).

Hook: The PCs encounter Timo on the road, and he asks to join them for a short while. Shortly thereafter, he begins preaching the Farwanderer's message.

5: FAMILY EHTARO

Matias Ehtaro is a master stonemason, much in demand among the nobility and the wealthy. Matias goes where the work is, and when the PCs encounter him, he is on the way to another job. His family travel with him along with all their worldly possessions piled high in a small cart.

- **Matias Ehtaro** (NG middle-aged male human) frets he is running late. He is friendly, but in a rush; he's keen to know the state of the trail ahead and if the party have encountered any difficulties on their journey.
- **Hedvig Ehtaro** (N middle-aged female human) sits in the cart trying—and mostly failing because of the bumpy trail—to darn a pair of socks. Hedvig dreams of the day the family can settle down for more than a year or so—preferably while Hedvig works on some massive project such as a new bridge, church or the like.
- **Alpo Ehtaro** (CN young male human) runs by the cart playing with the family's dog—a playful mongrel given to barking and rushing about in hunt for the sticks Alpo throws. The teenager

is brash and full of energy. The presence of any non-hideous female among the party renders him uncharacteristically mute.

The family's cart contains many mundane items—cooking pots, a small chest of clothes and so on—along with Matias's stoneworking tools and a small store of gold hidden in a compartment under the wagon's floor.

6: WANDERING MERCENARIES

A quartet of mercenaries seeks work in a nearby town. Recently having finished an easy job with a local merchant they want another such post. The band comprises:

- **Eskeli Mielo** (LN middle-aged male human fighter 2) serves as the group's spokesperson but isn't actually in charge. Of the four, he is the most experienced having soldiered for almost two decades. Bald and burly with a thick beard he holds himself with confidence. Eskeli wears scale mail and carries a steel shield, longsword and spear.
- **Eeva Laso** (LN female human fighter 1) carries a shortbow, a full quiver of arrows and is a skilled shot. She wears studded leather armour, is clearly nimble and agile and carries a handaxe for personal defence. Perceptive and alert, she makes an excellent guard.
- **Filpus Asikka** (N male human fighter 1) looms over this friends, standing almost seven-foot tall. A huge, muscular man he carries a gigantic two-handed axe which he wields with ease. He wears old, but well-maintained chainmail. Filpus has black hair and thick, bushy eyebrows that make it look like he is perpetually frowning.
- **Kulta Himottu** (NG female human fighter 1) lurks behind her companions and is shy of new people. Quiet and unassuming, she is the group's conscience. Intelligent, she often thinks of things her companions miss, and thus her word carries great weight with them. She wears scale mail and carries a steel shield, longsword and spear

The four could conceivably sign on with the PCs, if the offer is good enough (at least 2 gp a week each along with all living expenses) but won't do any actual adventuring. They are happy to guard the PCs' camp and property, however, and are a trustworthy band. The four are loyal to one another and do all they can to keep each other safe.

7: WANDERING SELLSWORDS

Ostensibly sellswords in search of an employer these two warriors are in reality scouts for a local bandit gang watching for easy pickings on the road.

AHTI KULTIMO

Ahti Kultimo (NE male human fighter 1) wears a dirty, travel-stained cloak and looks a little disreputable. He wears battered chainmail and carries two short swords.

Personality: Bluff and hearty, Ahti tries to ingratiate himself with other travellers and in casual conversation attempts to learn

as much about their destination and business as possible. Black of heart and utterly fixated on himself, Ahti is a deeply unpleasant person.

Mannerisms: Ahti speaks in an animated fashion, using over-the-top hand gestures and the like.

Hook: Ahti is not good at hiding his intentions; perceptive PCs may realise there is something not quite right about the dishevelled warrior.

ELJAS MONTAJA

Eljas Montaja (NE male human rogue 1) prefers silence to constant chatter, and does not like Ahti as a result.

Personality: As irredeemably evil as the foulest cultist, Eljas craves wealth and power. He hates living in the wilds and dreams of moving away somewhere he is not known. He needs money to do that, though.

Mannerisms: Eljas has a constant, unblinking stare; some find it disconcerting.

Hook: Eljas would love to see Ahti get his just desserts. If combat breaks out between the PCs and the bandits, Eljas immediately abandons his companion. Alternatively, Eljas may offer to serve the PCs as a guard in a bid to escape the life of a bandit. He deserts as soon as the group reach a large town or city.

8: RIDERLESS MARE

This riderless, clearly tired, brown mare trots toward you. Incongruously, a single high leather boot yet fills one of her stirrups. Deep, bloody claw marks on the horse's rump speak of violence and flight.

Chestnut (N female horse) trots down the road having just escaped a nasty encounter; her rider was not so fortunate. Full saddlebags contain mundane travel equipment—a bedroll, several waterskins and three days of trail rations along with various other sundries suggesting whoever rode her was well-prepared for the road.

Personality: Frightened by her close brush with death, Chestnut is skittish. Usually a friendly, placid mare she can be placated with calm, kind words—perhaps an apple or two—and some healing.

Mannerisms: Overly affectionate, Chestnut is always nuzzling or nudging her owner. If given the chance, she steals any apples in the vicinity—even plucking them from people's hands.

Hook: A *Speak with animals* spell enables the PCs to learn more about Chestnut's close brush with death. Depending on the GM's campaign Chestnut and her owner could have been attacked by wolves, an owlbear or something much worse.

9: IISAK VARTIA

Frazzled and be-stubbed this man snoozes by a smouldering campfire set back from the road under the branches of a gnarled tree. Two skinned rabbits are slowly roasting over the campfire. A wolfhound snoozes by the man's side.

Iisak Vartia (CG male human ranger 1) has nowhere to go and all day to get there. A wanderer, he has no set home. Everything he owns—and everything he needs—is stuffed into his backpack.

Skilled in self-reliance and woodcraft, he is the quintessential woodsmen.

Personality: Content with life, Iisak projects an aura of contentment and serenity. He is friendly to newcomers—he has many friends scattered throughout the duchy—and helps those he can. Not particularly brave, he is no coward and fights if he must.

Mannerisms: Iisak speaks slow and considers his words carefully. His hound, Tang, is friendly and nudges newcomers with his massive head until he gets a stroke.

Hook: Iisak has been here all day, and can tell the PCs who has passed him while he rests. He has no interest in joining the party but could be a veritable font of knowledge about wherever the PCs are going.

10: JOOSEF KUPIAS

Wearing a dirty cloak with a heavy cowl hiding his face in deep shadow this pitiful figure kneels by the side of the road his hands clasped as if in prayer. A bell hangs around his neck.

Joosef Kupias (N male human fighter 2) pitifully begs by the side of the road. His deeply cowed hood and the bell hanging around his neck alerts all nearby that Joosef is a leper, and they should not get too close. The living death has consumed much of Joosef's face; his nose is all but gone, and pieces of his left cheek and right ear are missing.

Personality: Joosef was once a proud warrior, but his lord abandoned him when it became evident he had become infected with the living death. Joosef plots revenge against his old lord and his once-friends who left him to his fate. He is in a pitiful state—barely surviving in a small cave hidden in a dell about half a mile from the road.

Mannerisms: With a strange, nasally voice and a bad case of the shakes, Joosef keeps his cowl up to hide the horrendous disfigurement caused by the disease which slowly consumes him.

Hook: Joosef begs for coins of food from the PCs. If they take pity on him and treat his disease, Joosef is surprised and suspicious. If the PCs cure him, they have a friend—and perhaps a man-at-arms for life.

11: HETA TAPO

A rider, clad in mud-splattered chainmail, gallops down the trail. As she approaches, she whips the horse and brusquely gestures for you to get out of the way.

Heta Tapo (LN female human fighter 1) hurtles down the road on a fleet horse, intent on delivering the message with which she has been entrusted. A servant of a local lord, she carries a missive to her master's neighbour. She is on important business and brooks no delay.

Personality: Brusque, and filled with a sense of her own importance, Heta has little time to stop and talk. She threatens those who delay her with her master's displeasure. Heta is brave, but not insane. She avoids combat wherever possible and is a diligent, if unimaginative, warrior.

Mannerisms: Heta speaks quickly and with force. If she doesn't get her way, she resorts to shouting—loudly—to make her point.

Hook: Unless she has a pressing need to stop, Heta spurs her horse passed the party while shouting for them to get out of the way. Heedless to the mud her horse's hooves throw up she assumes whoever is on the road will get out of his way.

12: ESTERI SOTIJALO

Short and weighed down by an over-sized bulging backpack and pushing a handcart this lone woman trudges down the trail. A mongrel dog dances about her ankles, its tail wagging enthusiastically.

Esteri Sotijalo (N female human) loves her dog—Patch—who is the only family she has left. As well as being weighed-down with her pack and barrow, which contain all her worldly possessions, she is also wreathed in sorrow for recently her entire family succumbed to plague. With nothing left for her in her home village of Ashford, she is seeking a fresh start elsewhere; the where and the how of it remain—as yet—unresolved.

Personality: Numbed by sorrow, and exhausted by her burden, Esteri skirts the very edge of depression. She has taken the brave decision to make a fresh start but doesn't know what to do beyond that. Esteri is hardworking and possesses an inner core of strength—she just has to remember that.

Mannerisms: Esteri speaks halting and often seems on the edge of tears.

Hook: Something is clearly wrong with Esteri, and even the dimmest PC can see she is distraught. Kindness takes her by surprise somewhat, but once she is comfortable with the PCs her whole, sorry tale comes out. She reserves her special ire for Ashford's lord—Aelfgar Stannard—who fled to his hunting lodge when the plague struck and did nothing to help the villagers.

13: AMBRO TIERA

Balding, with a grey moustache, this stout man has red cheeks and wears the clothes of a well-off peasant (or perhaps a poor merchant). He wears a heavy pack and leads a laden donkey.

Ambro Tiera (N middle-aged male human) travels to live with his brother after being kicked out of the family home by his wife who has found a younger, more dynamic, partner.

Personality: Filled with bravado and—perhaps—a little overly friendly, Ambro hides his sadness and loneliness well. Ambro is stunned at how his life has fallen apart so quickly and is bitter. He wants his revenge on his wife and her younger lover and, if drunk, becomes vindictive and mean. Ambro is not a nice drunk.

Mannerisms: Ambro's smiles and laughs are mostly forced; they are only genuine when he plots his ex-wife's downfall and disgrace.

Hook: If the PCs seem sympathetic to his plight, they quickly find it almost impossible to shut him up. Oblivious to social niceties, his anger pours out in a stream of bile and hate.

Ambro is a potter and dreams of being engaged by a rich patron. His search for a patron is not subtle—if the PCs seem

wealthy he drops many unobvious hints about his need for employment.

14: FERADUL ARALIVAR

Wearing threadbare studded leather armour this tall slender, black-haired half-elf whistles a jaunty tune to himself.

Feradul Aralivar (N male half-elf bard 2) claims to be related to the legendary bard and pirate captain Vilimzair Aralivar and constantly tells tales of his heroic progenitor's exploits. Feradul is lonely and craves the attention and adulation of others—what luck he has encountered the PCs!

Personality: Feradul is loud, boastful and a little arrogant; much of his confidence is miss-placed, and he subconsciously trades on his (alleged) heroic progenitor's name and deeds. For all that, he is desperate to be liked and to make a name for himself. Thus he is also brave and prone to acting without thinking things through.

Mannerisms: Feradul speaks loudly and long. He is prone to burst into song—normally at less than ideal moments.

Hook: If he realises the party are adventurers, he asks to travel with them so he might write songs of their deeds. If they agree, he behaves himself for a bit, but before long finds it impossible to not regale his new friends with tales of derring-do.

15: ALBIN IHAMUOTO

Pulling a handcart piled high with bags, broken bits of furniture and more bric-a-brac this muscular man makes slow progress down the road.

Albin Ihamuoto (NE middle-aged male human rogue 1/wizard 1) works as a rag and bone man, wandering between Ashlar's settlements collecting broken, unwanted things—rags, broken furniture, bones and the like. Sometimes, he steals a little bit extra for himself and sometimes he uses the minor magics at his disposal to fix the broken items he collects, so he can sell them at a profit.

Personality: Albin loves his job—partly because he loves being out and about and partly because he sometimes manages to steal odds and ends from those with which he deals.

Mannerisms: Jolly and friendly, Albin is a shrewd judge of character and appraises all those he meets; perceptive PCs meeting Albin may get the sense they are being weighed and measured by the man.

Hook: Albin is happy to stop and chat with the party, and to trade with them if they have things they want to sell. He marks them well, though, and seeks them out in the future if they appear gullible or too trusting.

16: ALEKSI KUUTAMO AND HIS ANGELS

An old man, clad in ragged clothes leans heavily on a staff as he shuffles down the road. Behind him, dance two young women dressed in dirty white shifts.

Aleksi Kuutamo (N old male human cleric 3) makes what many consider to be mad prophecies which are little more the ravings of

a lunatic. However, the man has gathered a coterie of followers who believe his words are divinely inspired. He wanders Ashlar's roads and trails with his angels making prophecies and taking food and shelter from gullible peasants.

Personality: Mad as a stick, but cunning with it, Aleksi believes his words are guided by a mysterious spirit which is yet to reveal itself to him.

Mannerisms: Aleksi capers about when making his prophecies and often screeches them aloud for all to hear.

Hook: A shrewd judge of character, Aleksi singles out the most gullible of the PCs and starts capering about and screeching about the "wings of destiny," a "great task" and the "shadow in your past". He is angling for food, drink and coin. Aleksi carries with him a holy object of great value (or so he says) a large (now dirty and ragged) white feather. Certainly, the feather is too large to have come from any known species of bird, but its divine provenance is anything but clear

THE ANGELS

Dorotea and Eeva (N female human) wear dirty, white shifts and have garlands of dying flowers woven into their hair. They are Aleksi's angels and have good singing voices. When he prophesies they sing a wordless tune and sway as if in some kind of religious fervour (which they are). Both believe Aleksi is a messenger of the divine and are fiercely loyal to the mad old fool.

17: AMBRO HELLIKKI

Clad in a thin and dirty red cloak and carrying a seemingly near empty pack this chain-clad warrior trudges down the road. He seems on the edge of destitution.

Ambro Helliikki (CE male human fighter 2) flees just punishment for murder by getting as far away from his home as possible. Ambro Helliikki is not his real name; it is, in fact, the name of the man he killed given in haste and panic when the PCs asked. Forced to flee with little more than what he was carrying at the time he is manifestly not prepared for a long journey. Ambro has a chip on his shoulder and is quick to take offence at any comment about his appearance or situation.

Personality: Angry and desperate, Ambro is looking for someone else to blame for his predicament. He doesn't see he's done anything wrong and feels hard done by

Mannerisms: Ambro struggles to contain his anger and frustration and speaks forcefully. If angered, he shouts and gesticulates wildly.

Hook: Desperate for food and shelter, Ambro offers to serve the party as a man-at-arms but is deliberately vague on his circumstances and the reasons why he seeks employment.

18: AAKE HÄMÄLÄINEN

A small wagon—empty but for its driver—rattles down the road.

Aake Hämäläinen (LN middle-aged male human) runs a small haulage business. For a fee, he'll transport you or your goods to any settlement in Ashlar. Returning from a recent job delivering wooden planks his cart is empty.

Personality: Amiable and chatty, Aake is a friendly chap keen to earn extra coin. While not overly avaricious, he owes money—borrowed to pay for repairs to his wagon—and he is growing anxious about how he'll pay back the 9 gp he owes. A family man, he doesn't enjoy being away from home for extended periods.

Mannerisms: Aake has a ready laugh, but this can be somewhat forced when dealing with (potential or actual) customers. He has a firm handshake and is exceedingly polite.

Hook: If the PCs seem tired or overburdened, Aake offers to travel with them and carry their excess baggage and possessions. He absolutely will not go adventuring; he has a family and would like to see them again—adventuring is too dangerous!

19: RUIN OF ADVENTURE

Two warriors leading a pair of overburdened donkeys slowly plod down the road.

These two warriors have served the Company of the Spear for the last month. A week ago, the company ventured into an old barrow mound hidden deep in the woods; they have not been seen since.

With food running low, Vänni and Auni have given up on ever seeing the company again. They've taken the adventurers' camping gear and so on instead of pay and are returning home.

AUNI HIMOTTU

Wearing chainmail and carrying a large crossbow this warrior woman has red-rimmed eyes and dishevelled blond hair.

Auni Himottu (N female human fighter 1) quietly mourns the company; she was falling in love with the group's mage and feels his loss keenly.

Personality: Auni laughs often and loudly—she is outgoing and welcoming—but is nowhere near as naive as she might seem. She loves her brother and sees it as her job to look after him. She loves the outdoor life, and would go travelling but feels obligated to stay with Vänni.

Mannerisms: Auni has a strong, confident stare and is quick to laugh.

VÄNNI HIMOTTU

This burly, brown-haired warrior has arms as thick as a normal man's legs, wears scale mail and carries a huge two-handed sword.

Vänni Himottu (LN male human fighter 1) lets his sister do much of the talking—she's better at that kind of thing.

Personality: Quiet and thoughtful, Vänni serves as a warrior because his prodigious strength made such a job almost inevitable. He dreams of learning a blacksmith's trade and escaping the mercenary lifestyle.

Mannerisms: Vänni likes showing off his figure and strength. He's always standing in slightly odd poses or lifting heavy things that don't really need lifting.

Hook: If offered employment and wages—at least 3 sp a day each—the pair are willing to guide the PCs back to the barrow mound

into which their previous employers disappeared. The pair are not adventurers; they'll guard camp and the like, but that's about it.

20: EUFROSYNE AIRIKKA

Without warning, a woman clad in dirty leathers emerges from the bushes growing by the side of the road. She carries a stout walking stick and wears a small pack on her back.

Eufrosyne Airikka (N middle-aged female human druid 2) wanders the land communing with nature and the animals she encounters. She loves the wilderness and can only imagine the horror of living in a town or city.

Personality: Friendly, calm and content Eufrosyne has time for almost everyone she meets—after all she is normally precisely where she wants to be. She has no job or other commitments and so pleases herself—wandering where the wind blows her (as she puts it).

Mannerisms: Eufrosyne speaks softly and in a singsong fashion totally devoid of haste. To people in a hurry, this could rapidly become irritating.

Hook: Eufrosyne is searching for an injured bear cub. Yesterday, she discovered the corpse of a female bear. Tracks leading away from the body indicated the bear's cub escaped whatever killed her mother. Eufrosyne asks the PCs if they've seen any bear cubs—or signs one might be in the area.

21: LUCIA SEPPO

Wearing stout boots and an ample cloak this woman also wears the white vestments of a priest of Conn. She smiles wearily at the sight of you and raises one hand in greeting.

Lucia Seppo (LN female human cleric [Conn] 1) walks Ashlar's roads and trail on a pilgrimage to visit every temple of the Father in the duchy. She is footsore and weary.

Personality: Welcoming and friendly, Lucia is particularly happy to meet a fellow worshipper on the road. Lucia's pilgrimage hides an underlying malaise: while she is steadfast in her beliefs, she has yet to find her place in the world and worries Conn has not yet revealed his plan for her. Perceptive PC speaking with Lucia may detect a hint of worry or doubt in her words.

Mannerisms: Lucia laces her conversation with phrases such as, "Blessed be the Father" and the like, at every eventuality.

Hook: Particularly keen to talk with other clerics, Lucia questions them extensively about their calling and how they decided on their path in life. She's fascinated by any tales of omens, divine messages and the like.

22: HENRIKKI EHTARO

With a shock of long black hair and dirty, travel-stained clothes this peasant boy appears disheveled. He carries a stuffed pack on his back, but seems to be carrying the weight easily.

Henrikki Ehtaro (N young male human) travels to the Black Tower in search of a master to teach him the arcane arts. His parents deeply disapprove of his decision, and forbade him to go.

Believing he has talent (he does) and that magic was his destiny he stole a decent chunk of his family's life savings before escaping into the night.

Personality: Headstrong and certain of the right of his actions, Henrikki can be a little intense. Normally well behaved and pleasant, he knows magic is his destiny and is totally focused on achieving his goal.

Mannerisms: Henrikki rarely takes no for an answer. He simply repeatedly restates the question until he gets the answer he wants.

Hook: Keen to learn magic through whatever means possible, Henrikki latches onto any obvious wizards in the group and begins to pester them about taking him on as an apprentice. If his request is turned down, he might follow the group in the hopes of changing the wizard's mind.

23: HANNES ILAKKA

Thickly bearded and stoutly built this black-haired man sits atop a wagon crammed full with barrels.

Hannes Ilakka (N middle-aged male human expert 2) works hard to expand his humble business; Hannes deals in the buying and selling of beer, wine and spirits. He travels the duchy in pursuit of good deals and is well known in many inns and taverns.

Personality: Friendly and welcoming, Hannes is seemingly everyone's friend. In truth, he's always looking for an angle and loves making something extra on the side. Hannes loves sampling his stock and is rarely sober once the sun has set.

Mannerisms: Hannes broke his leg several years ago when he crashed his cart while drunk. Consequently, he walks with a pronounced limp.

Hook: Hannes is always happy to have the company of adventurers—or extra guards, as he thinks of them—on the road. With that goal in mind, he is generous with his stock. Hannes is popular with many inn- and tavern-keepers in the duchy; a bad (or good) word from him about the adventurers carries much weight.

Hannes always travels with guards. He could be currently attended by Vänni Himottu and Auni Himottu (see 19) or the mercenaries detailed in #6 Wandering Mercenaries.

24: DRUNKARDS THREE

Three men stagger down the road singing and laughing. They pass a bottle between one another and seem oblivious of their surrounds.

It seemed like a good idea at the time—and it still seems a good idea; however, disaster looms—these three drunkards are getting to the end of their last bottle. Drunk and bored these three ruffians have decided to go for a walk to see what they will see. They are looking for mischief.

- **Eero Lalli** (N male human fighter 1) staggers along with his friends. Much shorter than they he has to half run to keep up with them. Bald, fat and wearing a tightly-stretched tunic which

has seen much better days. Eero is boisterous and has a chip on his shoulder about his height.

- **Filppu Aikio** (NE male human fighter 2) wears his hair closely cropped and has a bony, prominent forehead. Filppu may have orcish blood in his veins—certainly he is a mean, violent drunk given to furious rages. Filppu views himself as the leader of this group. His clothes are dirty, and do little to hide his muscular frame.
- **Albin Ihalempi** (CN male human fighter 1) thinks more than his friends. He's noticed the bottle is running dry and also knows how angry Filppu can get. He doesn't want to back down in front of his friends, but he knows the PCs' appearance could cause trouble. A scraggy moustache surmounts Albin's thin, twisted mouth.

25: INGA AHTI

A small flock of a half-dozen sheep, expertly tended by a barking, ever-moving hound of surprising size and speed and a tall, rangy-looking woman carrying an unstrung longbow.

Inga Ahti (NG female human ranger 2) drives a small flock of sheep to market with the help of her faithful hound Nem. Inga is a shepherd-for-hire specialising in watching flocks grazing in remote places or which are menaced by wolves and the like. She is also a skilled sheep-shearer, and carries large shears in her pack.

Personality: Inga is a strong, independent woman who loves the outdoor life. She is devoted to Nem (and vice versa), and the two are inseparable. Inga is unflappable and confident in her own considerable abilities. She is also honourable and will do everything she can to keep her charges safe.

Mannerisms: When anxious or confused, Ing chews her nails—a habit she hates, but is powerless to defeat.

Hook: After driving this flock to its destination, Inga is without employment. She asks the PCs if they know of anyone looking for a skilled shepherd or animal handler.

26: AATAMI AIRIKKA

Handsome, but melancholy, this warrior ambles down the road seemingly deep in thought. He leads a powerful warhorse by its reins and wears old threadbare studded leather armour. His only weapon is a longsword belted at his hip.

Aatami Airikka (LG male human paladin 5) doesn't look like a questing knight, but that doesn't change the fact he is strong and powerful defender of the common folk. Aatami is a hero. However, that doesn't change the fact that Aatami recently discovered an enemy—famine—he could not defeat with prayer or his trusty sword. Thus was he forced to sell most of his possessions to secure the necessary fund to save a whole village from starvation.

Personality: Virtuous, merciful and kind, Aatami is in many ways the perfect knight. However, he also sometimes acts impulsively, which is part of the reason for his current predicament and station.

Mannerisms: And aura of resignation and sorrow hangs over Aatami. His speech is redolent with sorrow.

Hook: Perceptive PCs will note something out of place about Aatami. If pressed, he reluctantly—and modestly—tells his story. If any lawful good priests are present, he seeks reassurance that he acted correctly for he is worried he no longer has the tools to defeat evil.

27: AATTO THE TAX COLLECTOR

Flanked by almost a dozen grim-faced mounted guards, an armoured and enclosed wagon rumbles down the trail.

Aatto Kostia (LN male half-elf wizard 5) collects taxes on behalf of Duke Nenonen of Ashlar. He is returning from collecting the taxes owed by a nearby lord. The wagon contains hundreds of gold coins and the guards are alert for trouble. Aatto dresses like a nobleman, not a wizard; the only hint at his abilities are several well-stuffed pouches hanging from his belt.

Personality: A stickler for details and virtually incorruptible, Aatto makes a perfect tax collector. In his mind, Aatto doesn't care that much about taxes, but he is ambitious; he sees this job as a means to advance himself at court.

Mannerisms: Aatto likes to ponder things; as he does so, he strikes his jet black beard.

Hook: Aatto is nervous; he suspects bandits will be unable to resist the wagon and its contents. Initially, he suspects the PCs may be brigands, but if they can convince him otherwise he suggests they travel together for a while. If the PCs help Aatto beat off a bandit attack, they make a powerful friend.

A dozen mounted veteran men-at-arms (LN male or female human fighter 2) clad in half-plate and carrying longswords, shields and spears protect Aatto and the wagon's contents.

28: STRAY DOG

A bedraggled black and white mongrel emerges from a thicket by the side of the road and begins to bark while cautiously wagging its tail.

This dog (N male dog) barks loudly when he sees (or smells) the party, and approaches cautiously. He has been alone on the road for a few days and is hungry, cold and tired.

Personality: The dog is hungry and tired. He is a loyal dog and loves his master.

Mannerisms: Approaching strangers, he is hesitant and wags his tail low down. If fed and petted he cheers right up.

Hook: The dog is clearly shaken by something. Characters using *speak with animals* can learn he was out walking with his master when they found a big hole in the ground. The hole smelled funny, but his master went in. He didn't come out. He can lead the party to the hole...and perhaps their next adventure.

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