

# a Dozen CITIZENS OF THE CITY

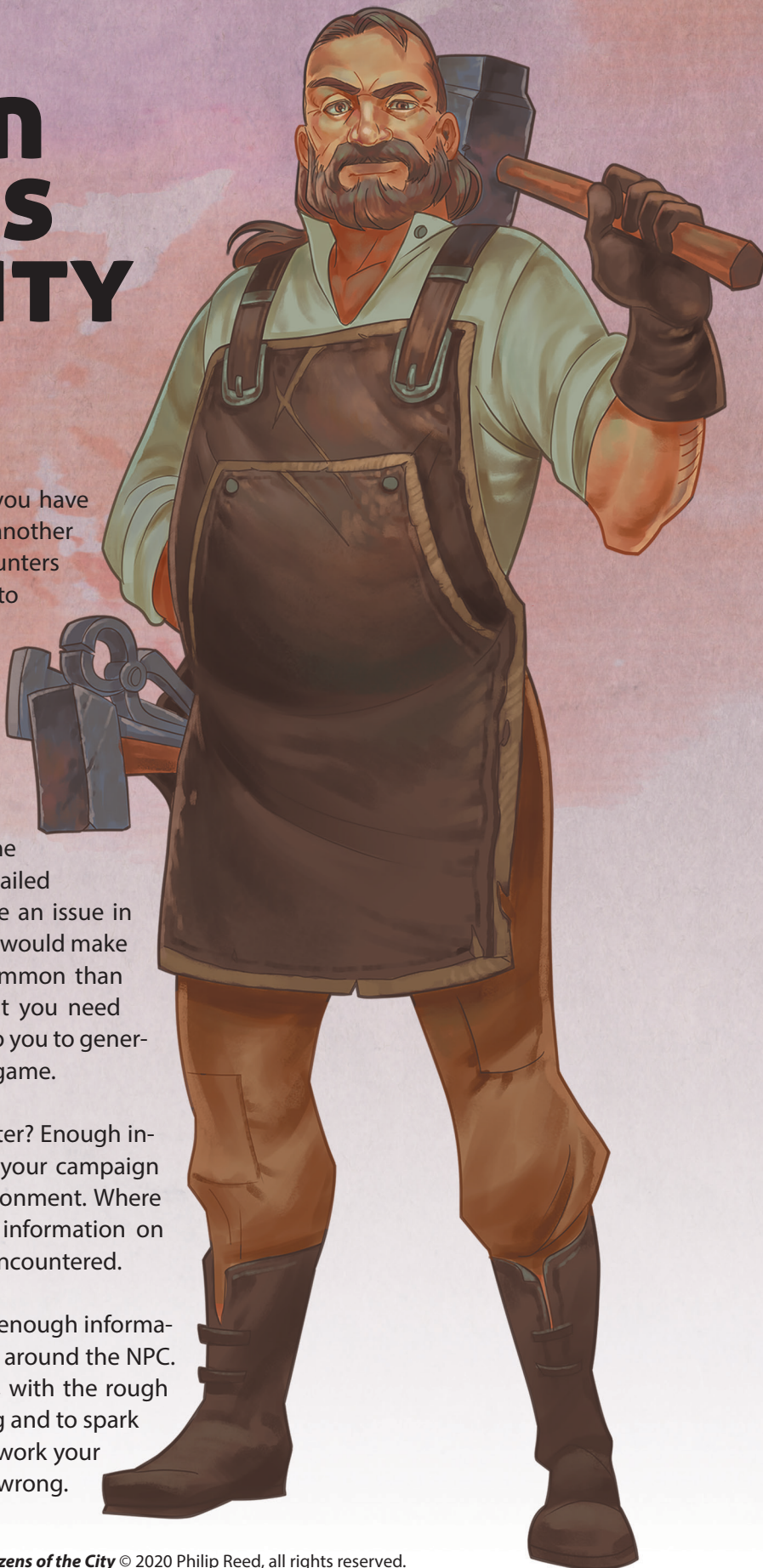
BY PHILIP REED

Regardless of how many game sessions you have under your belt, you can always use another non-player character to toss into encounters and continue adding layers of depth to your campaign. Continuing background characters can make a game world feel more alive to the players, and as all of us already know, using one city as a base of operations for the party can lead to a need for more and more NPCs.

As a systemless work, I've not offered game statistics for the twelve NPCs that are detailed on the following pages. That shouldn't be an issue in many situations in which these characters would make an appearance; city fights are far less common than dungeon battles, yes? If you do find that you need stats for any of these characters, I leave it to you to generate the statistics that best fit your chosen game.

Exactly what is included with each character? Enough information to place them within a city of your campaign world and make them a part of the environment. Where appropriate, the characters also include information on city locations where they are most often encountered.


Additionally, each character also includes enough information for the GM to construct an encounter around the NPC. These encounter ideas are only concepts, with the rough hooks a GM will need to get the ball rolling and to spark their own creativity. As always, make this work your own and change anything that you feel is wrong.



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# anatomy OF a CITIZEN

1. The character's name.
2. Descriptive text, offering a bit of an introduction to the character. As always, the gamemaster should modify this text to best fit the campaign.
3. Each citizen includes a single illustration.
4. Encounter idea/suggestion on how the character may be used in your game sessions. If you do use the character, be sure to make a record of the events so that you can bring the character back in future game sessions.



**1** **MAGY DORINA**

*Dorina lives in a small house in the city's park district, well within the city's protective walls, but far enough from the city center so that she can enjoy a little peace and quiet during the day. Dorina offers her services to those with enough coin to hire her, though she rarely accepts jobs that take her out of the city.*

**2**

Nagy Dorina is an elven sorceress, far older than she looks. The woman was cursed six centuries ago with eternal life, meaning that she has seen so many friends die over the decades that she no longer even tries to get close to people. Every few decades, she moves to another part of the city and uses magicks to change her hair and appearance so that others don't start to ask why she doesn't age.

To pay for her household and needs, Dorina works for those in need of a spellcaster's touch. She has taken tasks as a chill-mistress (keeping a wealthy home's food cold without need of ice), a guard (using her spells to watch a particular building or person), as an expert in the identification of magic items, and any number of other jobs that an arcane spellcaster could perform within the walls of the city.

Each time she moves homes and changes her appearance, Dorina makes sure to leave a few years between her previous life and taking on new wizardly assignments. She would rather others not grow suspicious and has found that the break is often enough for her clients to not ask about the newcomer who just happens to perform the same services as their last mage.

**Hiring the sorceress.**

The player characters may need help in identifying a found item and, while at a tavern, are directed to the home of Nagy Dorina. Her rates are fair, the party is told, and she is quite capable of identifying any magical trinket or weapon.

A player character wizard may hear of Dorina when seeking out new spells. Perhaps one of the magic shops suggests the woman, stating that she has an extensive library of spells and will allow heroes access to her books and scrolls so long as they are willing to pay. In such instances, Dorina remains in the study and keeps a watchful eye on the PC spellcaster.

**4**

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## USING THE CITIZENS

The twelve non-player characters that follow are all people who may live in any city within your campaign. It will be easiest if everyone within this PDF is kept to the same city, but there's no reason that you cannot simply turn to a character and grab it for use regardless of which city the player characters happen to be visiting at that time.

As the number of entries in the **A Dozen . . .** series continues to grow, the opportunity to cross-link characters, locations, and events also grows. Where I have made such connections – including to other works such as **Fantasy City Sites and Scenes** – these exist solely to help the GM to stitch together a larger world. If a particular connection doesn't fit your vision, shatter the ties and chart your own course forward!

These characters exist to inspire the gamemaster, and none of them are deep or fully detailed. As you read through this work, you'll find that the characters are little more than story hooks, plot and encounter ideas rather than characters with involved backstories.

This is on purpose.

For even more characters to turn to when you need ideas, please see such PDFs as **A Dozen Adventurous Rivals**, **A Dozen Dangerous Foes**, **A Dozen Guild Leaders**, **A Dozen Wanted Criminals**, and **A Dozen Warriors For Hire**. While none are presented exactly the same as this PDF, each does offer more characters that the gamemaster can twist, warp, adapt, and modify to suit the campaign.



# OLOTORN HETHAN

*Owner of Hethan's Meat Market and part-time adventurer, Olotorn Hethan is considered one of the more influential and powerful men in the city. When not on the road, Hethan spends a majority of his time either in his private study or at his place of business, and he always makes time for the city elders when they need his advice.*

Hethan is an elderly human male, almost sixty winters of age. Over the years, he has advanced in experience and knowledge, expanding his understanding of arcane secrets and spellmastery to levels that make him a recognized master wizard. Every few months, Hethan must turn away another wishful lad who wants nothing more than to apprentice to the master mage.

Hethan travels far less than he once did, setting off only on those adventures that demand a wizard of his caliber. Many of his former companions have died, most in dark dungeons, and the wizard prefers to end his existence in the comfort of his own bed rather than in a long-forgotten tomb or damp cave. When Hethan does join a group, though, you can be sure their purpose is just, the situation dire, and the expected treasures far more valuable than those of a common delve.

## ***Meeting the master mage.***

One of the PCs has heard of Hethan, but is unaware that he lives in the city. While walking, one of the heroes will notice the sign on the shop. Slip one of the players a brief note that reads:

*"Hethan's Meat Market catches your eye, the small shop nothing special, but that name. Could this be a relative of Olotorn Hethan, the master mage you've heard rumors of since you were an apprentice?"*

If the PC investigates, the group discovers that Olotorn himself owns the shop . . . and is here now! Do they take advantage of this opportunity to ask the great wizard deep questions? If they are respectful, he invites them to have a drink and shares stories of his adventures and asks them of their own journeys.

# zac cole

*Cole is one of many clerics living in the city, though he is one of the few who does not belong to a single temple. Cole, a follower of the God of Generosity, instead donates his time and service to many different temples. Each day, the man visits a different temple and does his best to help.*

Living in the park district of the city, in a small boarding house where he has taken a single room for himself, Cole is a familiar sight for many on the city streets who see him helping others every day of the week.

Cole has an excellent memory and remembers those he passes daily, and it is the lack of a friendly face over several days that triggers his curiosity and sends him in search of assistance.

## **The missing cobbler.**

For months, each morning, Cole has stopped for a kind talk with Walther Brauner, a shoe cobbler who owns a small shoe repair shop at the intersection of the park and merchant districts of the city. Brauner was shy at first, unsure of the cleric's motivation, but the two soon became friends and both enjoyed dice games and hot chocolate, taking at least one day each week to share drinks over a few games before they started their respective days.

After five days of finding the shop shuttered and the cobbler missing, Cole sets out to find adventurers willing to investigate the matter. He had considered going to the town watch, but Cole remembered Brauner's insistence that the taxers were demanding coin that was not due them, which has made Cole suspect foul play and distrustful of any connected to the city.

If the player characters offer to help the cleric – he has no money, but he is willing to heal and aid them in any way that he can – their first stop should be the cobbler's home and business. They find the doors locked, but any competent thief will have no trouble picking the locks and gaining access to the home.

Once inside, the heroes are surprised to find that a deep pit in the center of the main room leads to tunnels beneath the home. Something powerful has ripped its way from forgotten, blocked off sewer tunnels and it is clear that wherever Brauner has gone, it is not a happier place.

Cole thanks the PCs for investigating, and encourages them to avoid exploring the tunnels beneath the shop. As heroes, though, it is certain that they will ignore the man's words. There's a dungeon to raid!



# KARA MATTHEWS

*Devoted to the Goddess of Fortune, Kara Matthews spends many of her days at the temple where she cures the sick, prays for the salvation of those who have fallen to evil, and assists her fellow clerics in seeking ways to continue feeding and caring for the poor who need the temple's help.*

Kara Matthews has spent the last seven years in the city, living in a small home not far from the temple where she works each day. The woman tried her hand at adventuring, but soon found that the "thrill" of battle and life on the road did not appeal to her.

Matthews is a kind soul, willing to sacrifice her safety and health in her desire to help others. She has, at times, slept in the temple courtyard and given her home to those in need, and she often spends her coins to feed the hungry she meets on the city streets.

Unfortunately for the cleric, though, her life is changing and she doesn't know what has gone wrong. Last week, Matthews felt the urge to strike a man who was asking for food. She fought off the temptation, but since then she finds that her thoughts turn to violence far too often.

## **What is happening?**

Matthews has been cursed, and she has not noticed that an aura of evil is slowly consuming her soul. An evil spellcaster, in an attempt to spread pain, has cast a spell on Matthews and it is slowly transforming her into an agent of fear and death. Her friends at the temple are starting to notice that something is wrong with the woman, and one of them goes in search of adventurers to help deal with the growing threat of the changing woman.

The cleric, when he finds the party, cannot tell them exactly what has gone wrong, but does recall that things started to get weird after they were visited by Salla Anianus, a wizard who was asking the temple for help in identifying an item.

If the party seeks out Anianus, the wizard fears he has been caught and attacks immediately. Can they defeat him, and force him to free the woman from his vile spell?





# nagy dorina

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her previous life and taking on new wizardly assignments. She would rather others not grow suspicious and has found that the break is often enough for her clients to not ask about the newcomer who just happens to perform the same services as their last mage.

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# JEAN-PHILIPPE GAUBERT



*Gaubert is a Knight of the Watch, one of the warriors the watch calls on when powerful evil threatens the city. He rarely patrols the streets, but, when he does, criminals run to the shadows.*

Those who meet Gaubert are surprised to learn that he is a member of the watch, rather than one of the city guards. What is the difference, you may ask? There are more members of the watch, and they are equipped for police and patrol actions in the city. Watchfolk wear lighter armors, walk the streets, and are (almost) always there.

Guards, though, are the city's shock force. Heavily armed and armored, guardsmen and women are brought in to deal with the larger threats that would overwhelm the watch.

Gaubert joined the city watch several years ago as one of only three Knights of the Watch and has worked alongside watchfolk and the guard in many assignments. There is a bit of a rivalry between the watch and the guards, but members of both organizations look up to and respect Gaubert and his skills.

## **Meeting Gaubert.**

When exploring one of the labyrinths beneath the city, either a part of the sewer network or another dungeon, the party hears the sounds of battle ahead. Entering the next dungeon chamber, they see an armored knight in combat against two trolls, the beasts looking as if they will soon overpower and defeat the warrior.

If the group joins in the battle and helps to defeat the trolls, the man introduces himself as a member of the watch; Jean-Philippe Gaubert thanks them for their aid and explains that he is in search of a watch patrol that vanished down here six days ago. *"Will you aid me in my search?"*

If the PCs join in the search, the party soon finds the patrol . . . each of the watchfolk are dead and have been stripped of their gear. *"I shall find the monsters who did this and punish them. Will you help me?"*

# DOLF STOLLMEIJER

*Independent operator and messenger-for-hire, Stollmeijer operates out of The Enchanted Scabbard tavern where he has made a deal with the owner, Vana Granic, so that a percentage of every job he accepts flows into her purse. Granic often takes messages for Stollmeijer when he is on an errand, at times acting as an agent of sorts for the man.*

If you need messages delivered throughout the city, you need only visit The Enchanted Scabbard (see ***Fantasy City Sites and Scenes***, pp. 24-25) and ask for Dolf Stollmeijer. Always running from shop to shop, home to home, and any other location in the city, Stollmeijer knows the streets, alleys, and people well, and is constantly watching for his next job and more coins to add to his growing hoard.

## ***A source of rumors.***

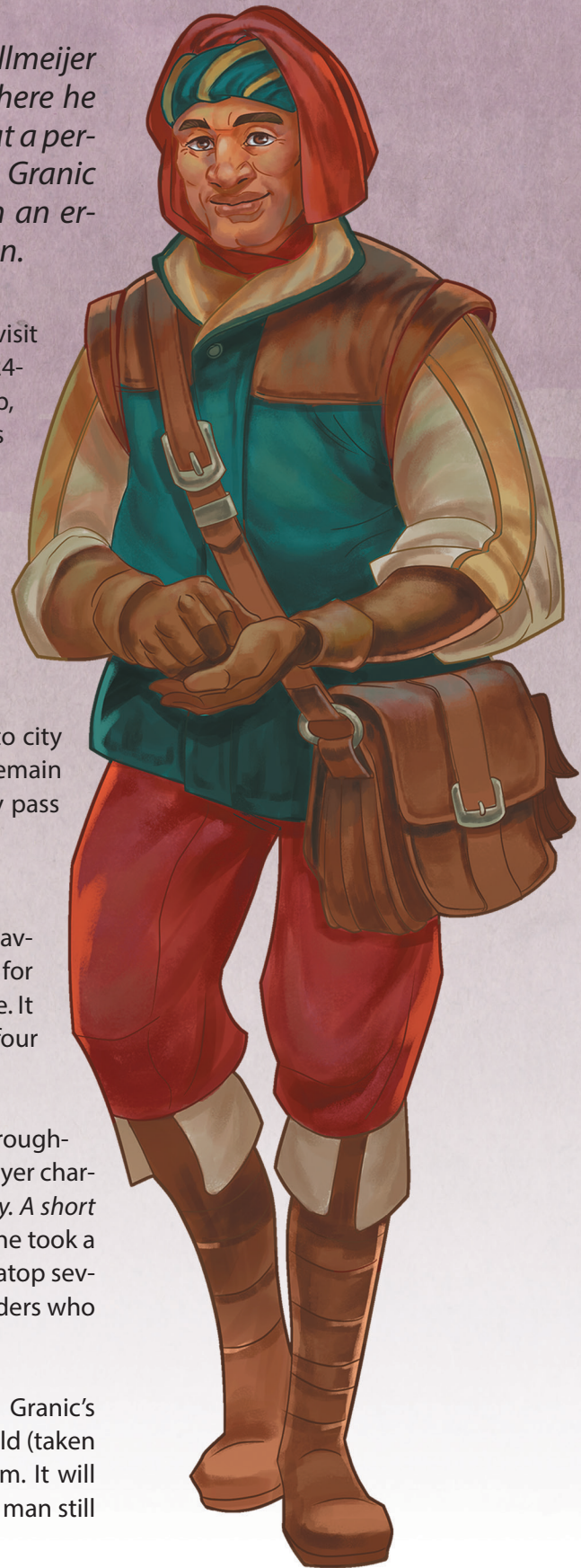
Spending so much time traveling throughout the city, it is no surprise that Stollmeijer is as much a source of information as he is a reliable messenger. There's a 50% chance that almost any rumor that is being shared throughout the city has already reached the man's ears, and he makes a little coin on the side by selling these secrets to city officials, some merchants, a few thieves, and even adventurers who remain in close contact with the man. As gamemaster, if you wish, you may pass almost any rumor of note to the party through Stollmeijer's lips.

## ***The lost messenger.***

Visiting the "Scabbard" one evening, the party is approached by the tavern's owner, Vana Granic, who offers them five gold and free drinks for the night if they will seek out Stollmeijer and bring her news of his fate. It turns out that the messenger has gone missing, and it has now been four days since he last visited the tavern. Granic fears the worst.

Unfortunately, it will take hours of walking and talking with people throughout the city to learn what happened to Stollmeijer. Eventually, the player characters are directed to one of the sewer entrances; *"He set off that way. A short cut, he called it."* It is in the sewers that the adventurers find the man; he took a wrong turn and has become lost. When they find him, he is perched atop several shattered stones and discarded chests, fighting off two giant spiders who have decided that the messenger looks like a very tasty treat.

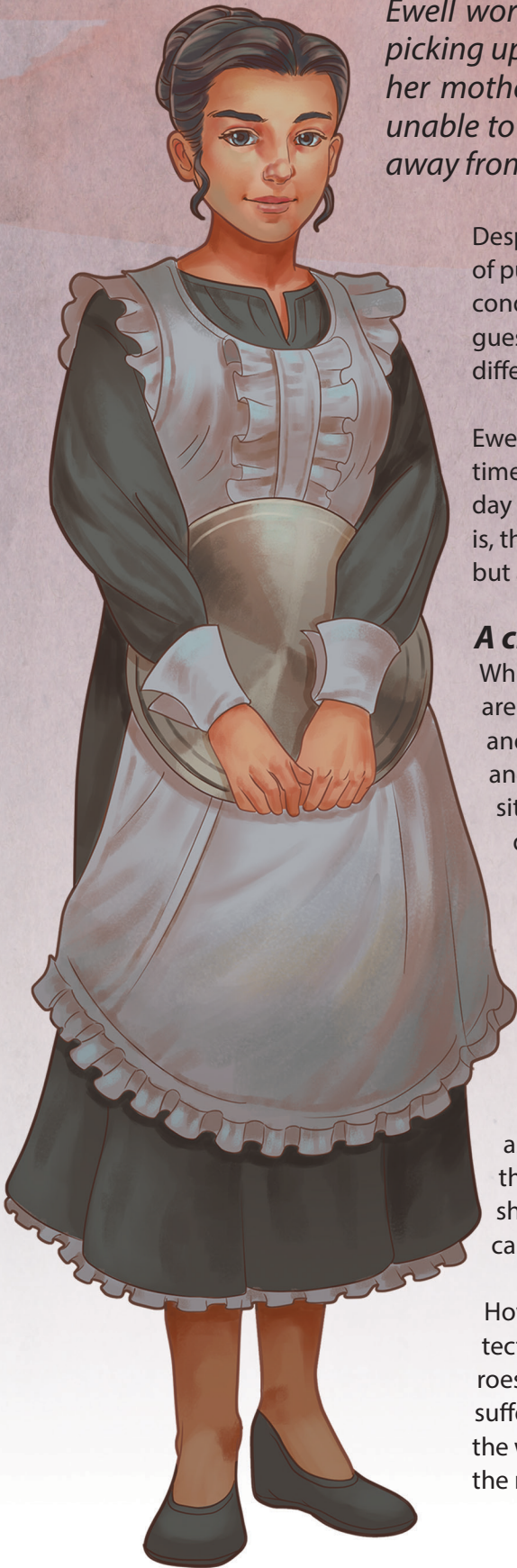
Stollmeijer thanks the heroes for rescuing him, and in addition to Granic's promised drinks and five gold, the messenger pays them each ten gold (taken from his private hoard) and thanks them repeatedly for rescuing him. It will take weeks to earn back what he has given the party, but at least the man still has his life and limbs.





# MARGUERITE EWELL

*Ewell works as a server at a few different taverns in the city, picking up what jobs she can to make enough to keep her and her mother in room and board. The elder Ewell is weak and unable to work, and Marguerite worries every hour that she is away from her mother.*



Despite the stress of her home life, Marguerite Ewell does a remarkable job of putting on a brave, friendly front. She rarely shows signs of her mother's condition causing her grief, and those she works with closely would never guess that Ewell is caring for her mother while also working at two or three different taverns each day.

Ewell is a private woman, keeping her thoughts to herself at almost all times, so the regulars of any one of the taverns she works at notice the day she is muttering, mumbling, and obviously distracted. The question is, though, do her actions become so extreme that others not only notice, but also take action to learn what may have changed in the woman's life?

## **A cry for help.**

While enjoying a meal at one of the city's taverns, the player characters are taken by surprise when their server, Marguerite Ewell, starts crying and runs from the room. If they move to investigate and ask the woman what is upsetting her, Ewell breaks down and starts explaining the situation, telling the party of her dying mother and how the woman doesn't have long to live. Ewell has heard other adventurers speak of magical potions that can heal, and she has been saving copper and silver coins to purchase one of these miraculous elixirs. Only hours ago, though, when she tried to buy a potion from a magic shop, the owner laughed at her and told her that a common server such as her could never afford such a potion. He slapped her, took her coin purse, and threw her to the street.

Ewell will show the party to the shop where she was abused. If they ask to meet the man who abused her, though, she begs them not to tell the man that she told them of the incident. It turns out that the magic shop owner, Theo Frisk, is one of the tavern owner's friends and Ewell cannot afford to lose this work.

How will the player characters both punish Frisk for his actions and protect Ewell's job at the tavern? It's a tightrope act, to be sure, but the heroes are unlikely to turn away from the situation and leave the woman to suffer. If confronted, Frisk denies the accusations and threatens to punish the woman for her lies. Who will the heroes believe and, if they act against the magic shop owner, will they be prepared for the man's bodyguards?



# KRIS MARTIN

*This kind, trustworthy ranger moved into the city a few years ago and has not yet secured a permanent residence. The man moves from boarding house to boarding house, for reasons many do not understand.*

Martin is no stranger to the city, though some of his behaviors are considered strange by those who follow his actions in the city. Every few weeks, the man packs his belongings and moves to a new boarding house, even returning to places he has stayed before from time to time. If asked about his inability to settle down, Martin has all manner of reasons for moving – others in the place were too loud, the bedding was too coarse and uncomfortable, the supplied meals were cheap and bland – but, not surprisingly, all of these excuses are lies and cover his true reasoning for moving about the city.

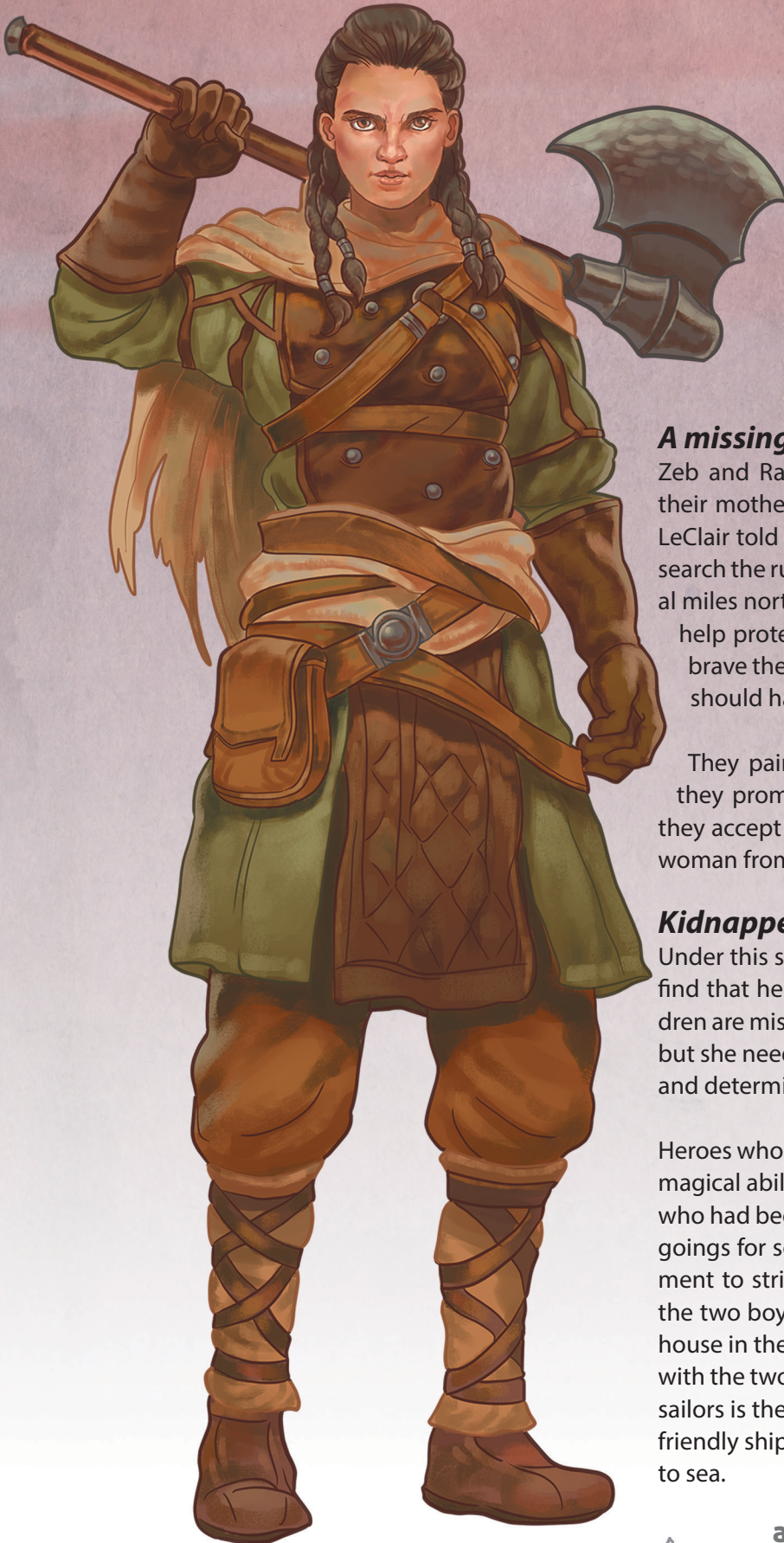
Kris Martin was a ranger, once, but any who know of his past know that the man was expelled from the recognized orders of rangers for one reason: he has fallen in with evil demons and now does their bidding.

## **A terrible assignment.**

Martin has been set upon the task of preparing the city for an invasion. His demonic masters, those who have enslaved his mind and twisted him to their vile purposes, have instructed him to create dozens of gates throughout the city. Each gate requires weeks of time to prepare, and only once he has created a total of 100 gates will the city be ready for the demonic invasion.

The player characters may be hired by the owner of one of the boarding houses after the woman hears strange utterings and moans in Martin's rented room. If caught in the act, the man goes from friendly to destructive; once his secret has been revealed, the plan is ruined and he must escape the city. Finding and destroying all of the gates he has created will be quite a challenge.

# MARION LeCLAIR



*A skilled warrior, Marion LeClair has called the city her home for almost five years. Living in a small house in the dock district, LeClair leaves behind two teens each time she heads out on adventure; the two lads are capable of protecting themselves and their home when their mother is away.*

## **A missing mother.**

Zeb and Ranaka, LeClair's two boys, haven't heard from their mother in over a month. The last they spoke to her, LeClair told the two that she was joining an expedition to search the ruined caverns beneath a crumbled tower several miles north of the city. She had been hired as a guard to help protect the explorers – merchants who decided to brave the dangers of the underground – but the woman should have returned from the trip long before today.

They pair don't have much in the way of money, but they promise that their mother will reward the party if they accept the task of visiting the caverns and saving the woman from whatever disaster may have befallen her.

## **Kidnapped children.**

Under this scenario, LeClair returns from an assignment to find that her home has been broken into . . . and her children are missing. She will deal with the kidnappers directly, but she needs the assistance of others to find the criminals and determine where her children have been taken.

Heroes who agree to help LeClair may use tracking skills, or magical abilities, to follow the cold trail. A group of thieves who had been watching the warrior woman's comings and goings for some time now decided it was the perfect moment to strike. They cleaned the home of valuables, took the two boys, and now the criminals are hiding in a warehouse in the dock district and trying to decide how to deal with the two kidnapped teens. Forcing them into the life of sailors is the current plan, and the thieves are waiting for a friendly ship to come in so that they can send the boys out to sea.



# agawa ameen

*The young Ameen, no longer an apprentice and now a fully-recognized wizard, left his recent band of adventurers only yesterday and is looking for a new party to join. Ameen is inexperienced, having been on the road for less than a year, but the ring of mage's might that he wears makes him a far more powerful spellcaster than many first guess when they see his young face.*

Agawa Ameen is spending time today visiting the more active inns and taverns, searching for a new band of adventurers to join. Ameen should be less experienced than the player characters; if they are only now starting their first adventure, Ameen's past has been spent as an apprentice and he has never set foot in a single dungeon. He is eager, though, and will sign on with any party who will have him.

Ameen is a friendly, chatty man who asks many questions and always wants to learn more about the world around him. If the party asks him about his spellcasting knowledge, the man admits to knowing a few spells.

## ***The ring of mage's might.***

In truth, Ameen knows only a single spell: detect magic. The man wishes to learn more, but his spellbook is empty save for that one spell and he has yet to have a chance to study and learn more spells to add to the book.

The ring of mage's might that he wears grants him access to more powerful magicks than he truly understands. Fireballs, lightning blasts, and invisibility spells are only some of the abilities Ameen can cast thanks to the ring. The item also grants a magical bonus to defense, which has saved his life many times. If he is ever without his ring, his inability will soon be obvious.

# ELIZA KNOLLERT

*Bartender at Hook's Cross, one of many taverns in the city's dock district, where she runs a side-business as a rumormonger. Knollert knows many in the city and always has a bit of news that she's willing to share . . . for a price.*

Eliza works most nights of the week, selling the tavern's cheap ale and grog to the sailors and regulars while keeping an ear open for any information that may prove valuable. She isn't above giving a tight-lipped customer a free drink or two if she suspects that they may have some valuable information, and the owner of Hook's Cross allows the behavior . . . so long as Knollert cuts him in for a percentage of any info that she may sell.

Knollert lives in the tavern's basement, spending her nights in the miserable dampness of the cramped, smelly room that is a part of her pay.

## ***Selling secrets and dreams.***

If the party finds their way to Hook's Cross, Knollert takes an immediate interest in the group. She can spot adventurers and has enough experience and understanding of the profession to recognize the novice heroes, which she uses to her advantage. If the player characters are inexperienced newcomers, Knollert offers them a free round of drinks and then, as they are enjoying her generosity, starts talking about a nearby dungeon. "Only real heroes can survive," she tells them as she hints at riches and says just enough to keep their attention. "You wish to explore the labyrinth?" She shakes her head, begging them to avoid the dangers. If they pressure her, she soon relents and sighs. She will sell them a map that will guide them to the dungeon. 100 gold. And if they don't have the necessary funds, she offers to take a few dozen gold now and they can pay her after they return from their adventure.

The map is real. The dungeon is real. Unfortunately for the heroes, Knollert has sold copies of this same map to other adventurers and the location doesn't hold quite the number of treasures that she claims.

## ***Dealing with experienced adventurers.***

When faced with a group of dungeoneers who aren't beginners, Knollert takes a different direction and instead offers to trade knowledge. She's always looking to gather whatever she can to sell to others, and she is smart enough to avoid crossing experienced adventurers.

If the party visits this city often, Knollert may become a regular contact and source of information. As the GM, it is up to you to decide how she will react to regular interaction with the party. She's smart, though, and won't take unnecessary risks. It is in her interest to be honest with the party and she'll soon start to ask if there's any info they need her to chase down. Knollert could become a valuable ally in the city.





# LUKAS WEBB

*Warrior and a member of the city guard, Webb is one of the greatest defenders of the city who refuses to accept a position higher than squad commander. Time and again, those tasked with overseeing the guard have offered to elevate Webb to a position of leadership, and every time he refuses and states that he needs to be on the streets.*

Webb is a master swordsman and powerful warrior, stronger than most thanks to the belt of giant strength that he wears to enhance his natural might. In battle, the man uses two greatswords at once, a combination of skill and the magical power of the belt allowing him to perform combat strikes with a degree of power that many find unnatural.

When on patrol, Webb leads 1d4+3 city guards through the streets, keeping an eye on the area and moving swiftly to deal with any crimes that the squad may encounter. He is a friendly man, loved and respected by his fellow guards and trusted by those in the city who know of him and his reputation. He isn't patient with criminals, though, and many of those who operate in the city wish the man dead.

## **The bounty.**

The player characters, while in a tavern or inn, overhear scoundrels and thieves discussing Lukas Webb and the bounty that a thiefmaster has placed on the man's head: 500 gold to anyone who kills Webb.

The party will have to make a decision:

- Do they move to protect the man, either finding him and trying to convince him to go into hiding or by chasing down those who are making the promise of a reward for his death and dealing with the source of the promised bounty?
- Or, do they choose the path of evil and try to claim the bounty for themselves?