

# a dozen UNUSUAL PATRONS

BY PHILIP REED

Low-level characters, those just starting out in their careers as dungeon adventurers, need a helping hand every now and then. Even at higher levels, after the PCs have killed a few dozen monsters and stolen – then lost! – a fortune in gems, assistance is always appreciated.

What follows are twelve patrons, powerful NPCs who are providing the party (or maybe just one of the members of the group) with extra coin, muscle, or influence when it is most helpful. Of course, these patrons are not simply good samaritans out to help the adventurers. No, each one of them has a reason for standing in the shadows and helping their underlings when the going gets rough.

None of these characters are meant to engage in combat, which is a good thing since there are no game stats! If you do find yourself in a situation where you need to know how many hit points one of these patrons may have, you will have to go with your own experience as the GM . . . and then make something up!



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# anatomy of a patron

1. The patron's name.
2. A little descriptive text.
3. Who may benefit from the patron.
4. A bit of info that the GM may use to help when roleplaying the patron.
5. What benefits the patron grants to a character. These may be for starting characters or benefits that are gained during play.
6. The expectations that patron has of those who benefit from the patronage. These range from minor tasks to major demands.
7. An illustration of the patron.

## 1 Maja Plesse

Before his death, Maja Plesse promised her father that she would use his fortune to reward those who work to protect the world from evil. The late Zebback Plesse, paladin and defender of the weak, amassed a great hoard of treasure in his years as an adventurer, and he wanted nothing more than for his riches to be used to pay others to continue his work.

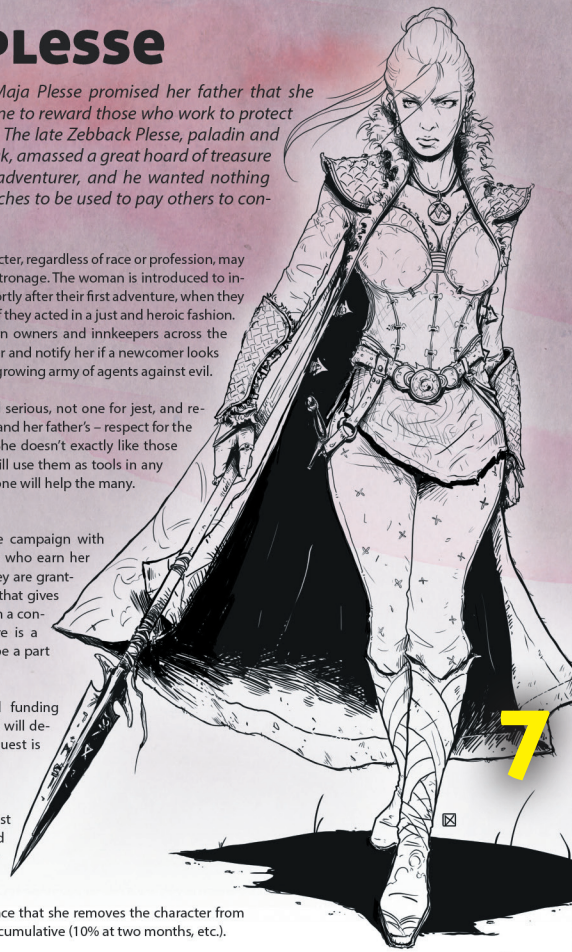
**Beneficiaries:** Any player character, regardless of race or profession, may be a beneficiary of Plesse's patronage. The woman is introduced to inexperienced adventurers shortly after their first adventure, when they have proven themselves and if they acted in a just and heroic fashion. Plesse has contact with tavern owners and innkeepers across the land, and they reach out to her and notify her if a newcomer looks like a suitable addition to her growing army of agents against evil.

**Roleplaying:** She is grim and serious, not one for jest, and respects those who share her – and her father's – respect for the law and order of the world. She doesn't exactly like those who break the law, but she supports, and she will use them as tools in any situation where the death of one will help the many.

**Benefits**  
Adventurers do not start the campaign with Plesse as a patron, but those who earn her support after their first journey are granted gold coins and a ring that gives them a discount on lodging at inns with a connection to the woman. There is a 25% chance that an inn will be a part of her network of contacts.

PCs may request additional funding during the campaign; the GM will decide whether or not their request is met by the woman.

**Expectations**  
Beneficiaries of Plesse must continue to adventure and fight evil at every opportunity. Each month that a PC goes without setting out for adventure, there is a 5% chance that she removes the character from her network of agents. This is cumulative (10% at two months, etc.).



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## USING THE PATRONS

As with many of the entries in the *A Dozen...* series, the pages that follow exist more to inspire the gamemaster than to detail every specific of an encounter or event. The patrons described in these pages should be used by the GM as background characters and presented to the party as options.

For those patrons that benefit starting characters, it is best if the GM and player discuss the situation in private. The gamemaster can offer the player character the opportunity to have a patron in the game world, but it should be the player's final say on whether or not the character is a patroness of another.

All of the patrons exist for one reason: to help add depth to the campaign and expand roleplaying opportunities.

These patrons should rarely be involved in an actual adventure; they choose to work in the background and avoid the spotlight. If you, the GM, choose to bring a patron into an adventure, you will need to provide whatever game statistics may be necessary.

As always, the patrons are suggestions and nothing that follows is set in stone. The campaign is yours to do with as you wish, and all of these characters are best if you twist them, adapt them, and make them your own.

You may also use these patrons to inspire you and your group. If you wish, share a page or two with each player and then ask: What would your dream patron offer? Together, you and the player may devise a new patron that fits your world and the player's view of that world.



# NAIXOD THE WHISPERER

*Naixod prefers to remain behind-the-scenes, in the shadows of society and unknown by most in the world. The kikimora witch has her own secret agenda and uses her wealth and power to enlist adventurers who can expand her reach and give her agents who travel the lands. A player character who accepts the creature's support may soon find that the price of that assistance is much too high.*

**Beneficiary:** Any arcane spellcaster, regardless of specialization, although she tends to choose those who work in the arts of necromancy and divination over others. Naixod chooses her beneficiary through magic, projecting her consciousness into the world in search of one who feels isolated and unsure of their arcane power. She promises those she selects that she will teach them spells and show them how to become stronger.

**Roleplaying:** A manipulative, evil creature that often talks to herself and will turn angry at unexpected moments and for almost no reason at all. The smallest of things will anger the kikimora witch, and she often displays her anger by cutting off a patronee from her support completely . . . until she decides she wants something.

## **Benefits**

The witch teaches her new patronees 1d3+1 new spells every six months, so long as she is happy with her agent. These may only be learned by visiting Naixod and spending at least two solid weeks with her, during which time she treats the patronee as a slave and forces them to do her bidding.

She also gifts her agents with 25 gold every week, which is delivered by messenger, often another patronee who is working for the witch. This gift is only granted in a large city; back pay is a thing, of course.

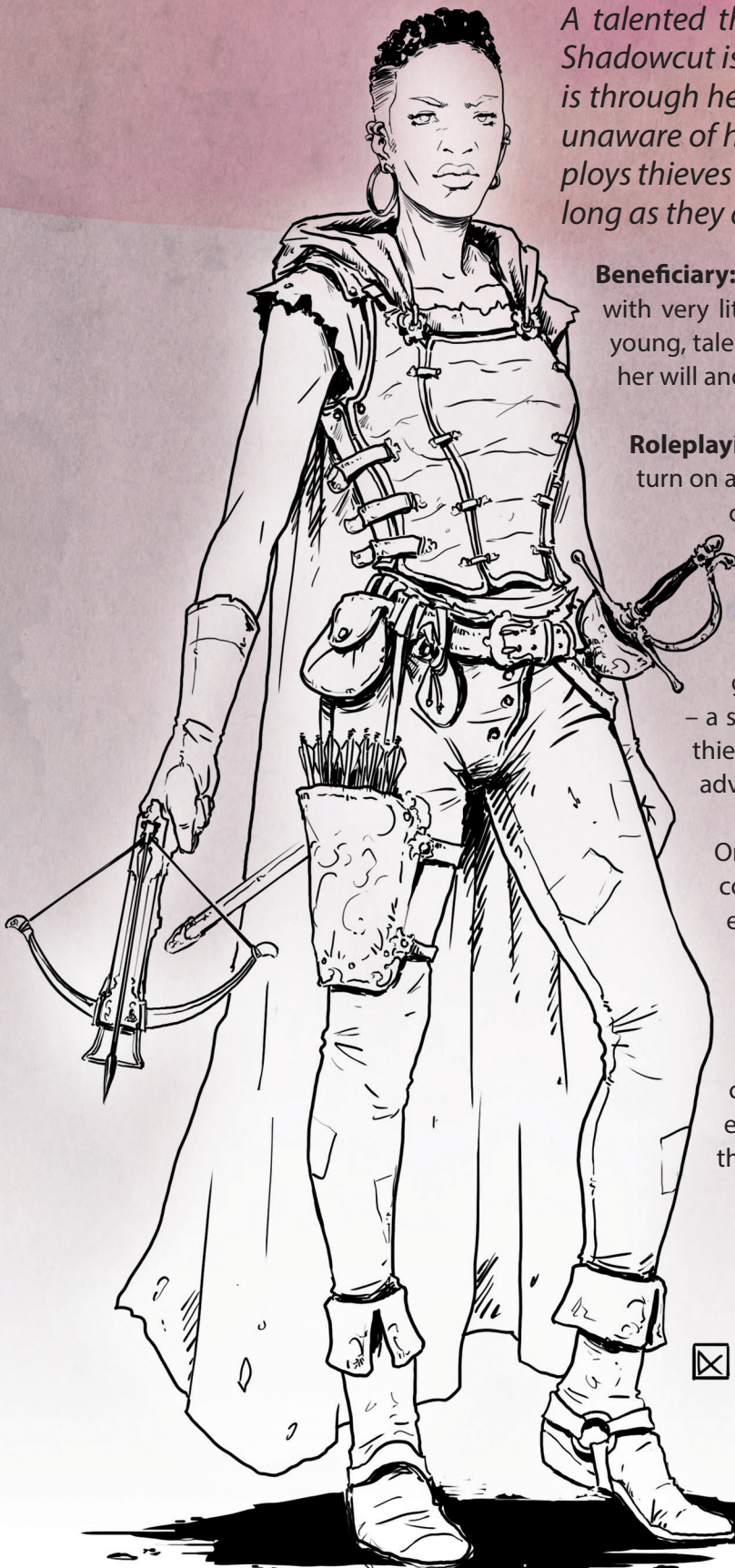
## **Expectations**

Total obedience and nothing less. If her chosen agent continues to perform her tasks as demanded – often to transport something to her, to bring her important news, or to sometimes kill an enemy – the witch keeps teaching spells and handing over coins.





# KIENDRI SHADOWCUT



*A talented thief and spy, one of the ways in which Shadowcut is able to keep an eye on so many at once is through her network of agents who are completely unaware of how they are being used. Shadowcut employs thieves and assassins, funding their efforts for as long as they do her a favor from time to time.*

**Beneficiary:** Thieves and assassins of any race, but preferably those with very little (or no real world) experience. Kiendri likes to get young, talented adventurers to train as her agents and to bend to her will and cause.

**Roleplaying:** The woman cannot be trusted, and is willing to turn on any one of her many agents for as little as a small bag of coins and jewels. She does not trust others and is as cold and uncaring as the meanest of monsters.

## **Benefits**

Kiendri teaches her agents the thieflly arts, which grants beginning characters – regardless of profession – a single thief skill of the GM's choice. If the character is a thief, they may choose one skill and improve it slightly as advised by the gamemaster.

Once every game session, so long as the character makes contact with Kiendri or one of her agents, the PC is handed 2d6+3 gold coins and an assignment.

## **Expectations**

The assignments handed out are usually of the “find person X and report back on their activities.” Failure to complete an assignment results in no pay . . . and another assignment. One who crosses Kiendri will soon find that they are hunted by her other agents.

*“Patrons are more than a resource for your group to draw on, they are also a responsibility.”*

*– Jeremy Crawford, James Wyatt, Keith Baker, **Eberron: Rising from the Last War***





# IRVING WENDELIN

*Nobleman and warrior, Wendelin is the owner of the small inn, The Dragon's Rest, that is popular with many adventurers who look to Wendelin as a source of information, experience, and support. He often invests in adventuring campaigns and dungeon crawls.*

**Beneficiary:** All adventurers, regardless of class or profession, who visit Wendelin at his inn and are willing to explore a dungeon that the man has learned of . . . as well as bring him a share of any treasures that may be discovered in the complex.

**Roleplaying:** Irving Wendelin is a businessman who loves to gamble, which is exactly what led to the man starting to invest in adventuring groups. He is willing to take risks on almost any party of dungeoneers, but those who have worked with him before and proven themselves capable and skilled are likely to get more and more financial support . . . in exchange for a greater cut of the treasure, of course.

## **Benefits**

Two very big benefits come to those who work with Wendelin. The first is information on dungeons and places where gold and treasure may be found. The man's contacts are constantly delivering news of possible dungeon sites, and he shares that with those groups who he chooses to work with. The second benefit is financial: Wendelin helps equip the party for adventure, paying upwards of 500 gold for supplies, transport, lodging, and food to an adventuring party who is setting off to raid one of the locations he has uncovered.

## **Expectations**

Full reimbursement of any financial contributions, doubled, plus a 10% cut of any treasures and valuables that the party may remove from the dungeon and bring back to society. Wendelin tries to trust everyone, but if he ever learns that a group has lied to him about their efforts he blacklists them and cuts off his funding forever.





# Dana LOUBALOVA

An experienced warrior, Loubalova works for the secretive Society of Blades and does all that she can to keep her membership in the group unknown to others. The Society provides her with the funding to appear as a wealthy merchant and she uses that role to travel from city to city, serving the group's needs as best she can.

**Beneficiary:** Any inexperienced adventurer, regardless of class or race, may be selected by Loubalova as an agent. Rarely does she take one who is experienced, preferring instead to manipulate those who are not yet knowledgeable of just how very cynical and twisted the world can be.

**Roleplaying:** Dana Loubalova is smart, patient, and dedicated to the Society of Blades. She plays her role as a merchant well and is always guarded by 1d4+2 warriors who are selected for their loyalty and skill. Her disguise is near-perfect, and she has actually become a skilled merchant and now generates revenue for the group as well as working to further their cause.

## What is the Society of Blades?

This organization of warriors and fighters is dedicated to tracking down dangers to the kingdom and stopping them. The group has a few dozen members, the financing of the king, and works against any possible threat to the king. Members will die before revealing the existence of the organization; the king's mages have cast spells that guarantees this.

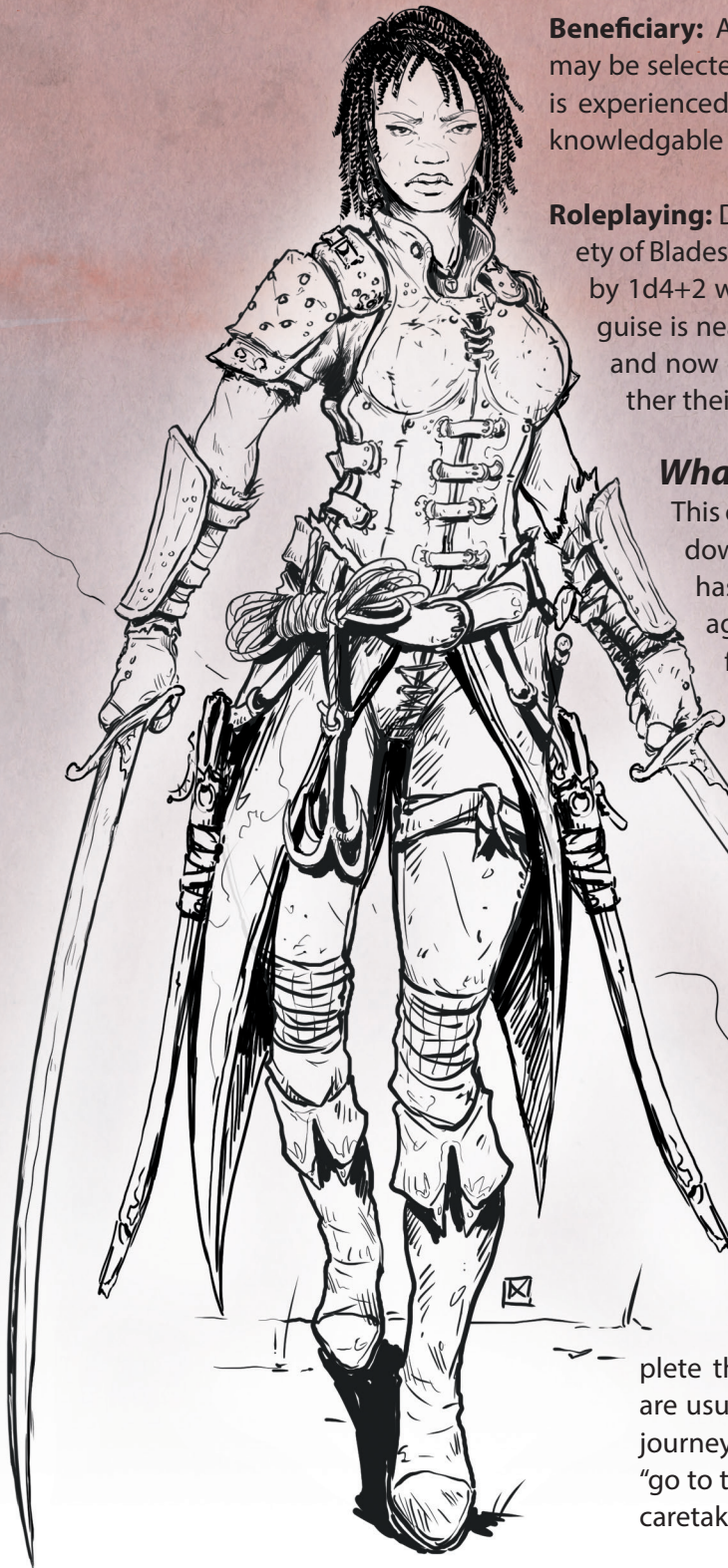
## Benefits

Starting characters who are an agent of Loubalova begin the game with one weapon of their choice as well as 25% bonus starting funds.

Each time the PC enters a tavern or inn, there is a 3% chance that one of the woman's other agents will be there and hand the PC a scrap of parchment on which is written an assignment. In addition to the task the PC is also given 4d6+6 gold pieces.

## Expectations

Loubalova demands that her agents complete their assignments quickly and without question. The tasks are usually either escort jobs – guard an item or character on the journey from Point A to Point B – or collection assignments such as “go to the tower at the edge of the wood, retrieve a book from the caretaker of the tower, and deliver it to a different town.”





# IRONROAR

Also known as "The Brutal One," the minotaur master of the Tower of Souls prefers to keep to himself and does all he can to persuade others to leave him and his home alone. Ironroar knows that adventurers consider his home a "dungeon," so he enlists others to protect his home by spreading rumors and lies to discourage strangers from entering the tower.

**Beneficiary:** Any adventurer, regardless of class or race, who is willing to serve the minotaur. Ironroar sometimes persuades those who infiltrate his tower to turn back and instead serve as an agent. If one who enters the tower refuses his offer of support in exchange for leaving him alone, the minotaur will seek to kill the intruder.

**Roleplaying:** Powerful and aggressive, Ironroar wants nothing more than to be left alone in his home. The minotaur was once a warrior and fought as a soldier in wars, but he now wishes for a peaceful life of solitude. If confronted, his violent past comes out and he does all he can to kill those who go against his wishes and disturb him. If the PCs can somehow befriend the monster, they find that he is thoughtful and intelligent and is a strong friend to those who earn his trust.

## Benefits

Ironroar pays his agents, giving each 5 gold every month so long as they continue to spread word that the tower isn't a destination worth exploring. The minotaur uses scrying spells to keep an eye on his agents.

The PCs must return to the tower to collect their pay, and the minotaur doubles their pay if they return no more than once every few years.

Additionally, the minotaur will send information to those agents who serve him well; the monster has a crystal ball that grants him arcane knowledge that he shares from time to time as the GM feels is necessary.

## Expectations

Stay away and warn others to stay away. So long as the PCs do that, the minotaur keeps paying them.





# OLIVIA PETROVA

*In her early years, Petrova was the daughter of a wandering fighter who had no home and was doing all he could to care for Olivia after the death of her mother. At the age of sixteen, when her father died, Petrova swore to devote her life to helping children in need.*

**Beneficiary:** Any good character, regardless of race or class, who shares Petrova's desire to help children in need.

**Roleplaying:** A tough woman, hardened in battle and unafraid of the world around her, Petrova is shockingly gentle and kind when interacting with children. Those who dare to cross the woman will find that she is brutal and violent in battle, one who is far more skilled as a warrior than many expect.

## **Benefits**

Starting characters who are patronees of the woman are granted free room and board at a small orphanage on the outskirts of town. She will welcome any agent there for as many nights as they need, and there are usually 1d3+1 other agents at the orphanage at any time, helping her to care for the children and to teach them of what skills the agents may possess.

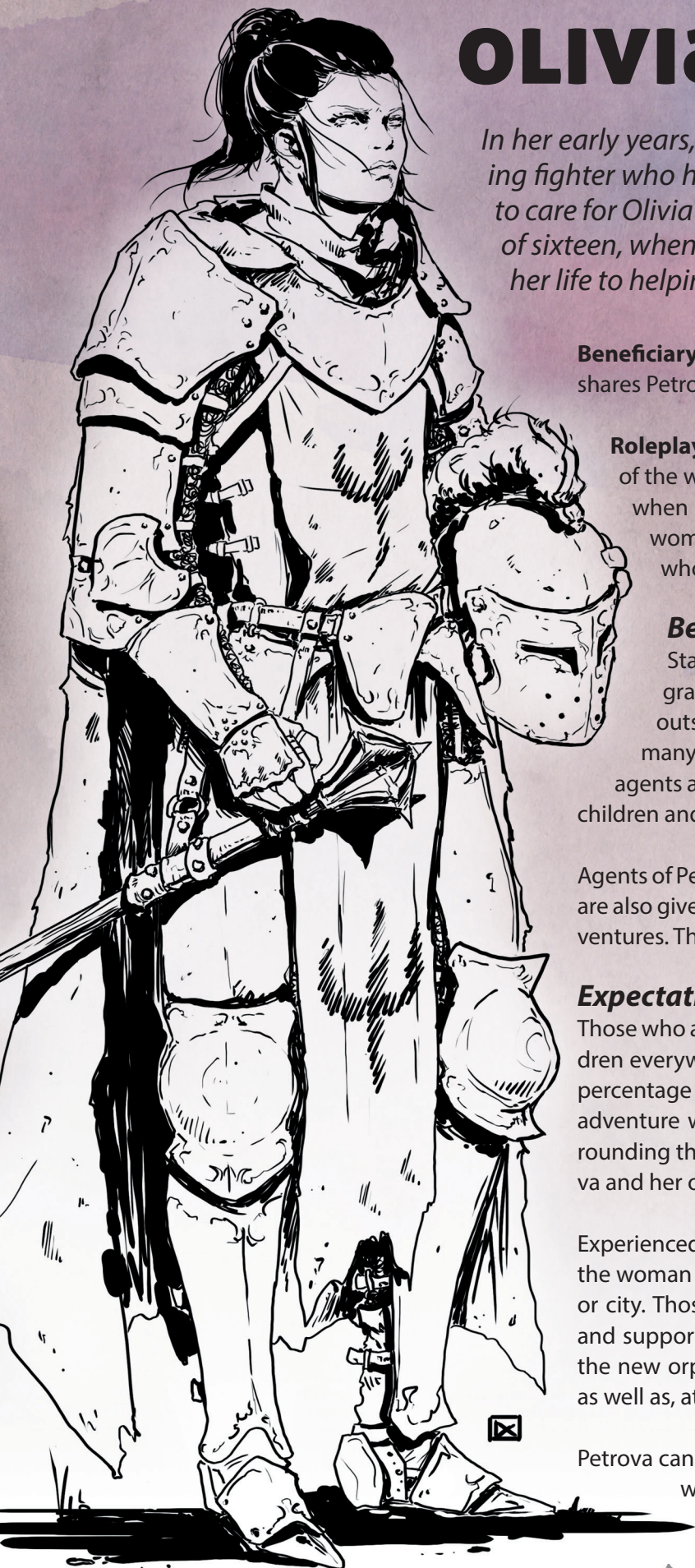
Agents of Petrova, in addition to the chance at free room and board, are also given a small satchel of gold to aid them in their earliest adventures. This satchel contains 4d6+6 gold pieces.

## **Expectations**

Those who accept Petrova's patronage are expected to protect children everywhere. Additionally, Petrova asks that all agents share a percentage of whatever gold or treasures that they may claim on adventure with the orphanage. There's no hard and fast rule surrounding this, but agents who prove to be unwilling to help Petrova and her orphanage will soon find themselves unwelcome.

Experienced and powerful characters will eventually be asked by the woman to set up and fund a new orphanage at a nearby town or city. Those who do as she asks will gain the woman's blessing and support; she and her agents will become immediate allies of the new orphanage and visit regularly, bringing with them funds as well as, at times, another child or two who needs a place to stay.

Petrova can be a powerful ally to those who prove to her that they will do all they can to help children.





# MEENAH NIGHTCLAW

*Unwelcome in most cities of the land, the troll fortune teller Meenah Nightclaw must rely on her servants to bring her news of the world of men. She selects one agent at a time, granting her servant gifts . . . up until she is tired and moves to another toy.*

**Beneficiary:** Any arcane spellcaster, regardless of race, may be Nightclaw's chosen one for a time. She often selects a novice adventurer, usually an apprentice who has just set off into the world or a mage with only a handful of adventures behind them, though there have been times in the past when she has selected a more experienced wizard to serve as her agent.

**Roleplaying:** She presents herself as slightly mad, a touch of insanity preventing her from realizing her full potential. It is all an act; Nightclaw is smarter than most and a clever, fiendish beast who will trick others when possible and take advantage of all.

## **Benefits**

Most of Nightclaw's assistance comes in the form of information, often fortunes and premonitions that may aid her agent. At the start of each game session, the PC agent of Nightclaw will be visited by the woman – either in person, when possible, or in a dream if the distance is too great – and she will give the character a hint of what is to come. As the GM, this provides some planning on your part, but it can make for fun foreshadowing and roleplaying opportunities.

## **Expectations**

Nightclaw's single expectation of her agents is news of the world. Each time that the two meet – either in person or in a dream – the PC must give her news that she feels is important. There's a 10% chance that whatever news she is given, regardless of its true importance, is dull and she severs all ties with the PC and chooses a new agent.





# Maja Plesse

*Before his death, Maja Plesse promised her father that she would use his fortune to reward those who work to protect the world from evil. The late Zebback Plesse, paladin and defender of the weak, amassed a great hoard of treasure in his years as an adventurer, and he wanted nothing more than for his riches to be used to pay others to continue his work.*

**Beneficiary:** Any player character, regardless of race or profession, may be a beneficiary of Plesse's patronage. The woman is introduced to inexperienced dungeoners shortly after their first adventure, when they have proven themselves and if they acted in a just and heroic fashion. Plesse has contact with tavern owners and innkeepers across the land, and they reach out to her and notify her if a newcomer looks like a suitable addition to her growing army of agents against evil.

**Roleplaying:** She is grim and serious, not one for jest, and respects those who share her – and her father's – respect for the law and order of the world. She doesn't exactly like those who she supports, and she will use them as tools in any situation where the death of one will help the many.

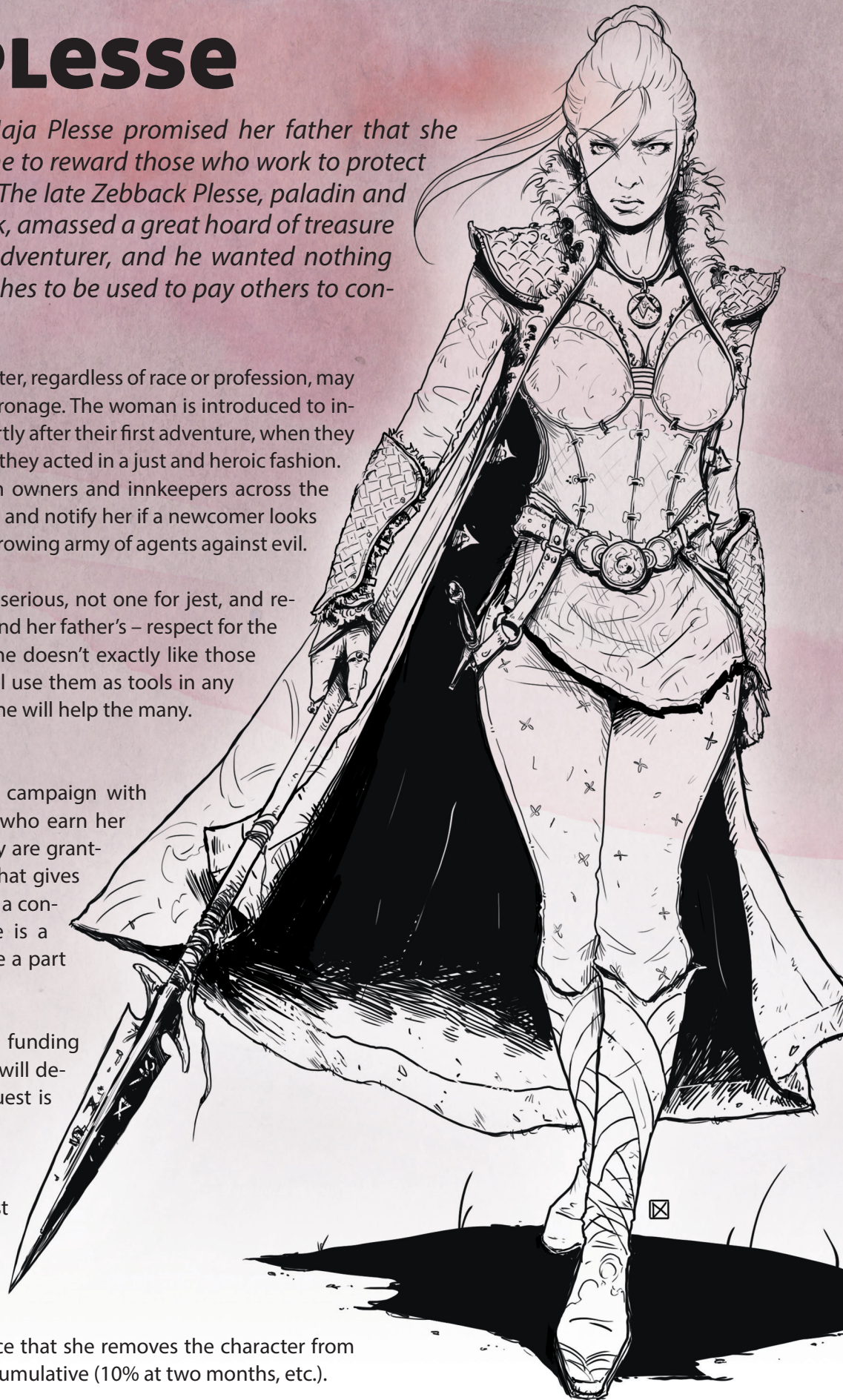
## Benefits

Adventurers do not start the campaign with Plesse as a patron, but those who earn her support after their first journey are granted ten gold coins and a ring that gives them free lodging at inns with a connection to the woman. There is a 25% chance that an inn will be a part of her network of contacts.

PCs may request additional funding during the campaign; the GM will decide whether or not their request is met by the woman.

## Expectations

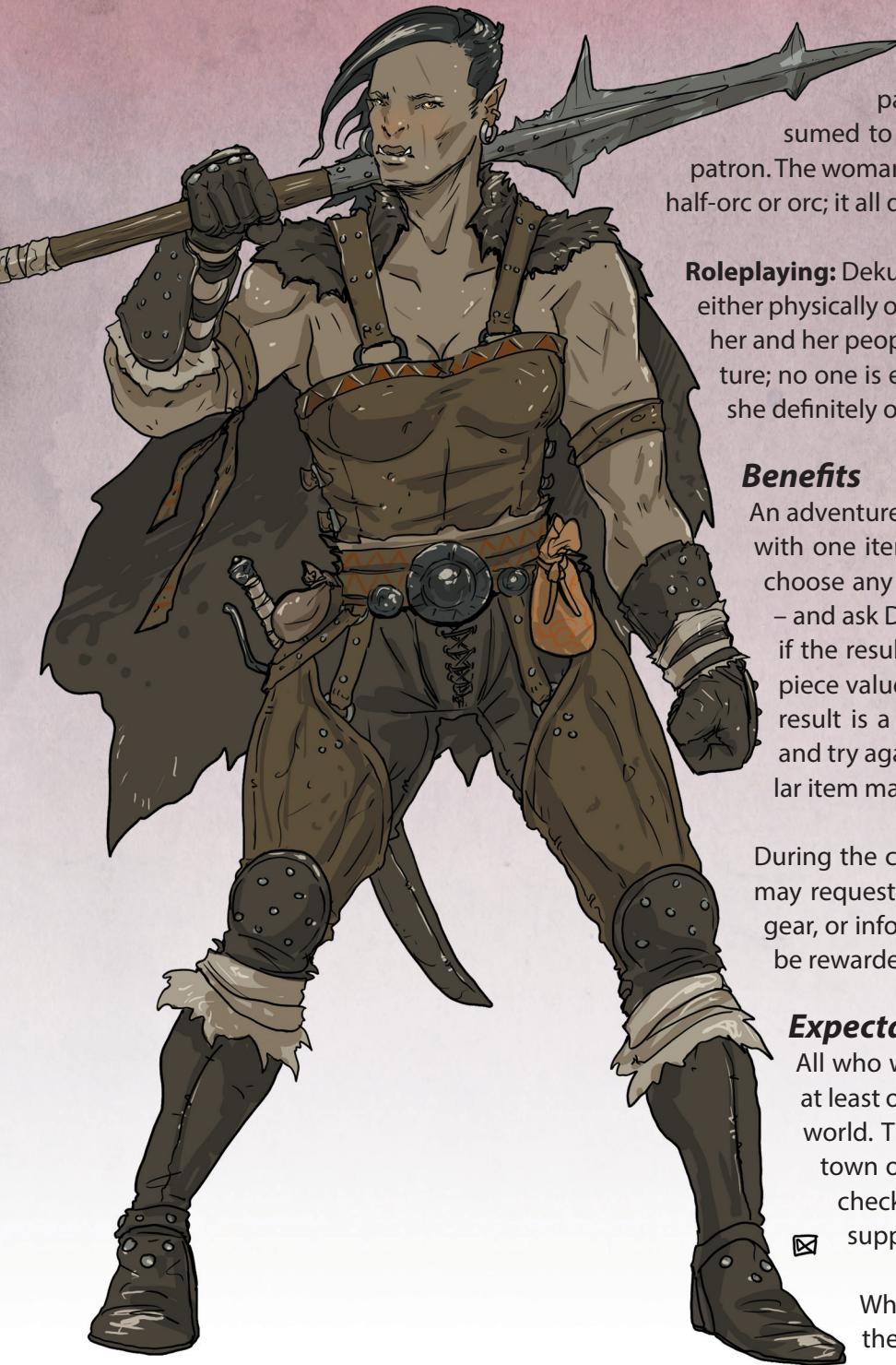
Beneficiaries of Plesse must continue to adventure and fight evil at every opportunity. For each month that a PC goes without setting out for adventure, there is a 5% chance that she removes the character from her network of agents. This is cumulative (10% at two months, etc.).





# BALRA DEKU

*As the leader of her people, Balra Deku is always looking for ways in which to both enrich her town and protect the orcs and half-orcs who live there. Over the years, Deku has found that little is more valuable than a steady supply of rumors and information from the cities of the humans, so she always sits down with one of her own who chooses to set off into the wild and enlists the departee as another agent to the cause.*



**Beneficiary:** Any PC orc or half-orc character may benefit from Deku's patronage. A character just starting out is assumed to have come from Deku's town if she is their patron. The woman may become a patron of an experienced PC half-orc or orc; it all depends on what happens in the campaign.

**Roleplaying:** Deku is a violent woman, prone to attack others – either physically or verbally – if they question her or act against her and her people. She should be presented as a force of nature; no one is every sure of how she will react and at times she definitely overreacts.

## **Benefits**

An adventurer with Deku as a patron starts the campaign with one item provided by the woman. The player may choose any item – weapon, armor, or adventuring gear – and ask Deku to supply the item. The PC rolls 3d6 and if the result is equal to or greater than the item's gold piece value, Deku hands it over at no charge. If the die result is a failure, the player may select another item and try again until one attempt is successful. A particular item may only be requested once.

During the campaign, a beneficiary of Deku's patronage may request aid – in the form of financial support, new gear, or information that Deku may possess – which will be rewarded as the GM feels is appropriate.

## **Expectations**

All who work for Deku must report back to the town at least once each month with news from the outside world. This can be either a personal journey to the town or a message sent by other means. Failure to check in each month will result in Deku cutting off support to the PC.

When the GM feels it is necessary, Deku will ask the PC for other things during the campaign.



# SARAKI ZODON

*Before his undeath, Zodon was a powerful wizard accustomed to apprentices and servants acting to fulfill his every command. Since his transition from the world of the living to the life of a lich, Zodon has depended on paid agents to keep him informed of events in the larger world and to supply him as necessary.*

**Beneficiary:** Any neutral or evil character, regardless of class or race, may serve the lich. Zodon never accepts good-aligned agents; if one seeks the lich out and begs to serve the creature, Zodon agrees and then attempts to murder the new "patronee" at the first opportunity.

**Roleplaying:** Saraki Zodon is a villain, always plotting some evil deed or other and often in search of even more and greater magics. The lich is unpredictable and excitable, prone to screaming fits and will break things when angry.

## **Benefits**

Agents of Zodon have at their command the skeletal minions of the lich; any patronee may ask the lich to send skeletons to aid in a task and there is a 50% chance that  $1d6+3$  skeletons will be assigned to the agent (% chance modified as the GM sees fit, depending on how well the agent has served the lich).

Additionally, agents of Zodon have access to the monster's cache of magic swords, armors, scrolls, and potions. Zodon gifts his loyal followers with one item of their choice (lower power items, nothing too great in power) when they swear allegiance to him.

## **Expectations**

Agents must return to the lich once every week unless they request permission to stay in the world for a longer time. Every time a patronee of the lich returns, they must bring treasures or valuables to add to the monster's hoard and deliver whatever news they may have uncovered. Zodon expects more out of the experienced agents; the GM will decide if the lich is happy or not with what the agent brings him.



DANIEL  
COMERI



# BELTRU THE executioner

*By day, Beltru Gover serves as the executioner of the city, tasked with beheading those who are sentenced to death by the magistrate. At night, the man is a fence, dealing in stolen goods and making money for himself and the thieves he hires.*

**Beneficiary:** Thieves, murderers, assassins, and criminals are those who serve Beltru Gover. The man avoids any who are not of a neutral or evil alignment.

**Roleplaying:** Confident and cunning, those who know Beltru Gover the fence would never imagine that the man hides his identity during the day behind the hood of the executioner. During the day, he can be seen walking the streets of the city, carrying his axe and serving as a menacing reminder to the people of the city that they must obey the laws. The town watch encourage this behavior, believing that it makes their jobs easier if everyone knows what fate befalls those who dare to commit terrible crimes in their city.

## **Benefits**

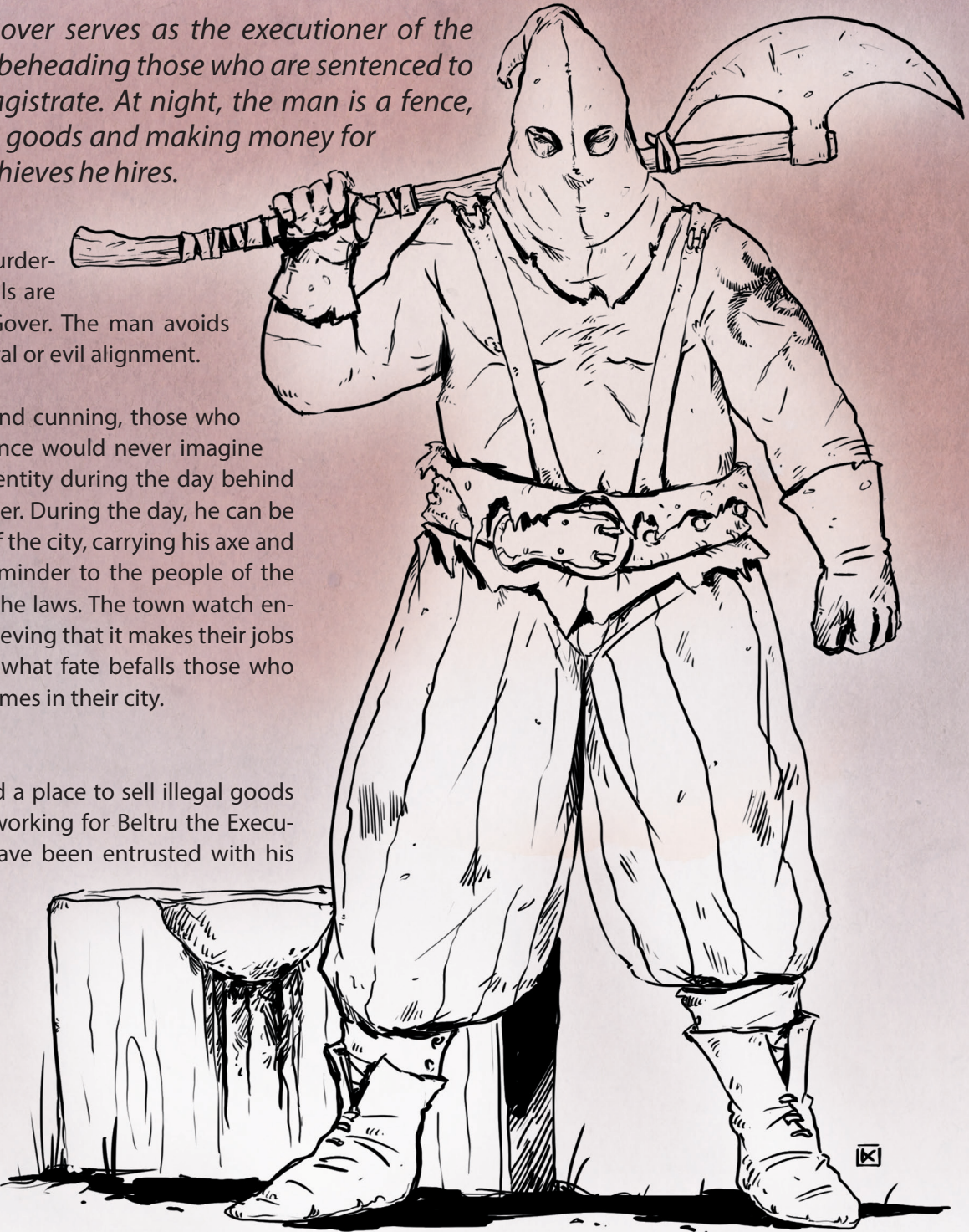
Contacts, information, and a place to sell illegal goods are the main benefits of working for Beltru the Executioner. Only those who have been entrusted with his true identity become beneficiaries of the man's work and power . . . and he will seek out and kill any who he believes are going to turn against him.

A patron of Beltru Gover receives secret info on the movements and plans of the town watch, which greatly benefits thieves operating in the city. Knowing when and where it is safe to commit murder, robbery, or other illegal actions is a major advantage.

Beltru also pays his agents every week. The exact amount depends on the agent's experience and must be determined by the gamemaster.

## **Expectations**

Those who take the man's money and information must share with him a percentage (20% or so, as chosen by the GM) of any gold stolen and are expected to bring all items to him to fence. Of course, he also takes a percentage of the sale of fenced goods.





# KLOKOR

*The orc shaman lives alone in the forest, keeping to himself and doing all that he can to avoid others. At times, the orc enlists others to act as his right hand, carrying out his assignments in exchange for gold and support.*

**Beneficiary:** Almost anyone who will do as the orc shaman commands. Klokor tends to select neutral or evil divine spellcasters as agents and prefers to work with races other than elves or dwarves.

**Roleplaying:** Klokor is patient, smart, and friendly to all who dare not threaten him. The orc prefers to be left alone, but will feed unexpected guests and be as kind as possible. The orc is an evil monster, but one that chooses to live with others and avoids needless conflict.

## **Benefits**

Klokor's agents start with a single bonus item. The agent may choose any item – weapon, armor, or adventuring gear – and ask the orc to supply the item. The PC rolls 2d6+3 and if the result is equal to or greater than the item's gold piece value, Klokor hands it over at no charge. If the die result is a failure, the player may select another item and try again until one attempt is successful. A particular item may only be requested once.

Additionally, the orc gives his agents ten gold coins each time that they visit him, though there is a 1 in 6 chance every time that the orc decides to sever the relationship and tell the PC that Klokor is no longer in need of an ally.

## **Expectations**

Each time that one of his agents visits, the orc assigns that patron a task. The tasks range from minor – “bring me a deer to eat” – to major – “find the human who wears an eyepatch and carries a magical sword and bring me his left arm.” The exact missions are left to the GM to decide and should grow more and more challenging each time the PC returns to the orc to ask for more coin.

