

ALLIES & ADVERSARIES

WINTER'S

URCHINS

THE ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES series provides GMs with NPCs that can be quickly and easily inserted into any adventure or ongoing campaign. Each NPC receives a detailed treatment of character traits, ideals, bonds, and flaws, as well as game statistics, physical description, backstory, and tips on how this NPC may be used in play.

Below are four homeless, impoverished children who are just trying to survive through the winter. These urchins live in a city of Dickensian cruelty and kindness, and can be inserted into any city in the world of your campaign, or can exist as residents of any number of cities. It is the eve of Winter Solstice, a joyous time for merrymaking and togetherness. All of these urchins are hoping or praying for a miracle to happen—and the player characters may be that miracle.

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HOPE AND SCALES

A young woman in rags dashes from a darkened alley and collapses on the cobblestones before you. Below her ratty hood, you can clearly see the horns that mark her as a tiefling. Cradled in her arms is a reptilian infant swaddled in a patchwork blanket.

STATISTICS

Traits: I take what I can from the rich humans of this city. They are evil, thoughtless, and cruel.

Ideal: I want to live and survive long enough to ensure Scales can get back to his true parents, no matter what it costs me.

Bond: I care about this baby dragonborn more than myself, and will put his needs above my own.

Flaw: My parents were killed by the prejudiced nobility and rich of this land, and cannot trust them.

Chaotic good Medium humanoid

Str 12 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Con** 9 (+0)

Int 10 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+2)

Notes: Hope is a tiefling **commoner**. As a tiefling she has 60 feet of Darkvision and the Hellish Resistance feature.

Scales is a baby dragonborn **commoner** but is yet unable to walk. He can use his Breath Weapon as an action, dealing 1d4 fire damage on a failed save and half damage on a successful one.

Possessions: Hope carries a burlap sack containing a jug of water, a number of rags, and a day's worth of stale rations.



PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Hope is a tiefling woman who appears no older than 13. Her dark hair is oily and disheveled, and she has large, amber eyes. Her horns are cracked and show signs of daily brawling. She is dressed in a rags that are wet from snowfall. She shivers from the cold only when she thinks no one is looking.

Scales is a baby dragonborn with tarnished golden scales. Swaddled in cloth, he wears the remains of his eggshell as a sort of helmet. He looks somewhat malformed and smaller than a newly hatched dragonborn should be, but his big wide eyes and cooing squawks are nonetheless adorable.

BACKGROUND

Hope is an orphan raised on the streets of the city, living the frantic and desperate life of beggar and occasional thief. She believes herself to be a good person; her morals only as flexible as her desire to stay clothed and fed.

Ten days ago, Hope stumbled upon a dying human woman in the streets. The woman thrust a large egg into her hands, telling her to keep it safe. A day later, the egg hatched and Scales was thrust into her life. Since then, the two of them have been pursued by a group of seven human cultists in dragon masks, demanding they give up the child so they might sacrifice it on the eve of the upcoming Winter Solstice. Hope has been running and hiding across the city streets, trying to keep the baby dragonborn safe.

ROLEPLAYING HOPE AND SCALES

Hope is somewhat prickly. She speaks with the rough accent of a dock worker and is quick to insult others if she feels they're not following what she's saying or treating her with respect. Scales is still a baby; he's friendly and adorable, but prone to finding danger.

KETCH THE CLEVER

A young boy with a hoarse voice calls out to you from the rooftop of a nearby building. "Oi! New in town? Don't be going that way. You'll get stopped by the ruddy taxmen ye will! Follow me, why don'tcha. I know all the good routes!"

STATISTICS

Traits: Ketch is wise beyond his years in terms of his skill, able to effortlessly perform the actions of an adult thief or rogue.

Ideal: Skill. Every problem in life is just a chance for me to test my skills and prove myself.

Bond: I owe Saint Patches everything. She's taught me so much and looked out for me when nobody else would.

Flaw: I can't help but pick the pockets of others, even if they're helping me.

Chaotic neutral Small humanoid

Notes: Ketch the Clever is a human **bandit**. He has advantage on all Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks made to pick pockets, but disadvantage on all Constitution checks and saving throws due to his poor health and small body.

Possessions: Ketch carries a set of lockpicks up his sleeves, as well as a dagger, a flask of liquor, and six hidden pouches containing the stolen purses of city dwellers (1d10 × 10 sp in coins, trinkets, and jewelry).



* Jensen Torperzer, "Día de los Dinosaurios Muertos." *EN World ENsider*, <http://www.patreon.com/posts/dia-de-los-3613311>

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Ketch the Clever is a 10 year-old boy with pale skin and sandy hair. He speaks with the voice of a Dickensian urchin child asking for "More." He wears a patchwork assortment of clothes, heaped in layers to both fend off the cold and conceal items and coins he's stolen from passersby.

BACKGROUND

Ketch is a human pickpocket and a hustler doing his best to keep himself fed while collecting coins for his mistress, Saint Patches the Miserly. He wants the players' help in stealing enough coin to buy food for all the other orphans, but in truth he needs the money to buy medicine for his mistress.

Ketch was born in New Aztlán* and brought to this city as a younger child, where his adoptive parents were killed by cut-purses on the street. The small child was taken in by Saint Patches, a miserly old female human thief who was the head of a destroyed thieves' guild that used street urchins as decoys and pickpockets. Saint Patches raised Ketch as her own son and taught him all her skills in thievery and deception.

Now, Saint Patches has grown sick and feeble. Ketch seeks to steal enough money to buy the expensive medicine that might save her.

ROLEPLAYING KETCH THE CLEVER

Ketch is a charmer. Friendly and charismatic, he isn't afraid to use his age or his impoverished appearance to con player characters into loosening their wallets. He lies, cheats, and outright steals to get what he needs. When caught or confronted he's quick to appeal to others' sense of morality: that he's just trying to survive and that he needs the help.

While the player characters are in the city, Ketch can be introduced by having him offer to be their guide through the winding streets. He knows the city like the back of his hand, and can be invaluable to the players in this regard (provided they're willing to pay him).

BILL THORPE

A grimy teen with cauliflowered ears and a bad eye crosses your path. "Empty your pocketses, richbloods!" he snarls. Three more urchins step in behind you, blocking your escape, and their leader raises a curved black dagger, pointing it at you.

STATISTICS

Traits: I take what I can when I can get it, no matter who gets hurt. Winter in the city is harsh, and I aim to live through this one.

Ideal: Strength. I've lived on the streets this long because I'm the strongest, and I'll prove it to anyone who tries to take what's mine.

Bond: I love only myself, but I can't bear to be separated from my dagger.

Flaw: I tend to lose control when I get angry, and end up making decisions I later regret.

Chaotic evil Medium humanoid

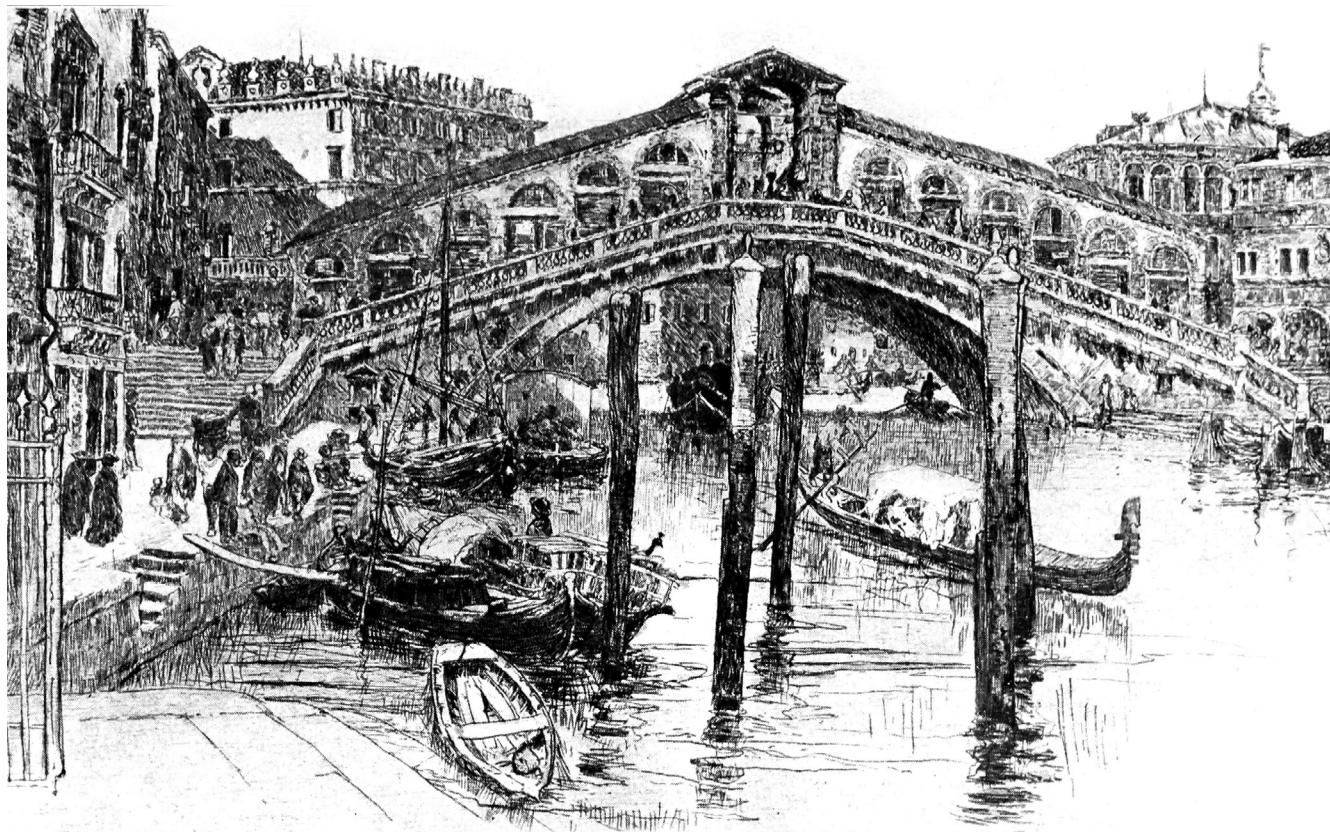
Notes: Bill Thorpe is a human **thug** with 19 hit points (3d8 + 8) since he's just a teenager. His magic dagger, *Ripper*, gives him disadvantage on all Charisma

rolls, but allows him to reroll damage dice showing a natural result of 1.

Possessions: Bill Thorpe carries a wooden cudgel (club) and a cruel looking black dagger (*Ripper*, below). He wears shabby rags ill-suited for winter wear. If pursued, Bill Thorpe escapes to a warehouse at the base of a sloping hill in the city. On the roof is his makeshift home, a lean-to set up amid the tiles of the roof. It's here that the rest of Bill Thorpe's possessions lay: a half drunk bottle of wine, four days' worth of rations, 1d8 × 10 cp stored in a sack, and items from three rolls on the Trinket table in the player's core rulebook.

Ripper: Weapon (dagger), rare (requires attunement). You gain a +2 to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon, an evil dagger that urges the wielder towards violence. Whenever this dagger rolls a 1 on its damage die or Sneak Attack dice, you may reroll it.

Curse. The fiendish spirit of this weapon punishes you with anxious thoughts when you resist its call to violence, imposing disadvantage on all your Charisma checks and saving throws.



PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Bill is an ugly youth of 14 years. He bears the numerous scars of a life lived on the rough streets of the city. His teeth are jagged and yellowed, and his dark hair has been roughly shaved away in spots. He moves with the predatory walk of a dinosaur, bobbing forward and cocking his head as he points a knife at you.

BACKGROUND

Born in Rivereave*, Bill Thorpe escaped his family at a young age and suffered a long journey on the road to find a rich uncle he'd been told was living in the city. As it turned out, the uncle had squandered what little fortune he'd had, and was living as a drunk. He turned away young Bill Thorpe, who was then forced to live on the street.

For the past few years Bill has been living above a warehouse in the city, using its design as a natural windbreak. He spends his days sleeping and his nights accosting and robbing people on the street, avoiding the eyes of the city watch. He leads a posse of urchin children and teens, robbing travelers and visiting nobles.

* Scott Marcley, "The Town of Rivereave." *EN World ENSider*, <http://www.patreon.com/posts/over-the-next-hill-3229263>

About six months back, he bashed a shady adventurer over the head with a rock, stealing his traveling bag. Inside, he found the dagger *Ripper*. Since then, Bill Thorpe has become attuned to the cruel blade, and has slowly transformed into a savage and violent creature as a result.

ROLEPLAYING BILL THORPE

Bill Thorpe is prone to act unthinkingly, lacking mercy or remorse. He speaks in the broken Common of a person far removed from society, and will answer any perceived slight or insult with violence. Observant characters should be able to pick up from his nervous scratching, his empty gaze, and his almost inhuman viciousness that Bill Thorpe's actions are not entirely his own.

Separating Thorpe from *Ripper* will cause him to scream and clutch for it like a child. If separated for more than a few moments, he will collapse to the ground in a fit, rocking back and forth as if in a traumatized state.

Bill Thorpe and his gang of 1d6 + 2 child **commoners** appear as a random encounter at night in the city. They surround the player characters as they enter an alley and demand they surrender their gold. While the urchin children are intimidated by weapons or shows of strength, Bill Thorpe fights to the death.