

QUARTERSHOTS

“DECOY ESCORT”

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how to use this adventure

QuarterShots adventures are designed to be short, concise, and open ended. There are details sprinkled throughout, to inspire, but not overwhelm. These adventures are story frameworks that you, the Game Master (GM), will fill out with improvisation.

There is no reason to prep, or even read the whole adventure before you start. Information is presented as needed, in straight-forward bite sized boxes.

iconography

ARROW

► This information is either immediately or eventually apparent to your players, regardless of their actions or abilities.

magnifying glass

🔍 This is information hidden from the players. PCs trying to investigate, having specific abilities or asking the right questions might earn this.

question mark

? This is information that might be true depending on how the adventure progresses, or that you can choose to make true.

Since these adventures are compatible with virtually any TTRPG and any level of play, I don't give “stat blocks” or other system specific character attributes. It is up to you to come up with the non-player character (NPC) information that best fits your game and the player experience level.

Likewise, I may suggest a difficulty for an encounter, such as “medium” or “deadly.” How you build those encounters will depend on the rule-set you use and the “experience level” of the PCs.

Since D&D is a common reference point for most GMs, when an adventure discusses spells or other mechanics, I sometimes use D&D terms, such as “Detect Magic-like spell” or “Polymorph-like ability.” You are the best judge on what equivalent spell or effect mechanics you will use from your game system.

That's all you need to know!

decoy escort

Party is hired to escort a carriage of valuables to a nearby town. They have several road encounters before being ambushed. They soon discover the carriage was just a decoy... full of rusty nails!

the job offer

- ▶ A job is posted in the town square for *“armed escort to the next town,”* with a *“handsome fee commensurate to experience and title.”*
- ▶ Players meet Edril Plowerson, who interviews them hastily. Acting impressed, he offers them a token payment now and the *“main sum upon safe and whole transport of the cargo to the Halstead Shipping Company”* in the next city.

the carriage

- ▶ It's a sturdy looking, padlocked box transport.
- ▶ The driver is Doral, a young man in an oversized chain mail shirt with cocked crossbow at his side.
- Doral is quite inexperienced, but faking it.
- ▶ The suspension is sagging from extreme weight.
- The undercarriage is in disrepair, with only the clearly visible parts having been maintained.

road encounters

Run these encounters in the order of your choice. Pick one to be the ambush.

fletchers & tanners

- ▶ In the distance appears to be a heavily armed caravan of two carriages.
- On closer inspection, they seem to be fletchers and tanners selling *bows, arrows, leather armor, clothes and wooden toys.*
- ▶ A man in black leather, sits next to the front driver, He has a long sword across his lap and asks with suspicion, *“Where ya headed?”* and *“Whatcha carryin’ that’s so damn heavy in there?”*
- ▶ They're quick to show their bows for sale and offer to repair armor and bows at discounted prices.
- ? **Ambush:** The fletchers, showing off their bows are Archers, waiting command of their leader. Swordsman, swords hidden, pretend to be tanners. They try to convince PCs to remove their armor for repair.

primate hunters

- ▶ A caravan of four hulking covered wagons approaches and the front driver asks the players to pull off to the side so they may pass.
- Observant players may notice movement behind the huge tarps.
- ▶ As the players pass, a silver-back gorilla sees Doral eating fruit. It breaks free from its cage and attacks.
- ? If PCs attack the gorilla, the hunters will warn the players to stop, saying *“it’s more valuable alive.”* They will re-capture it with rope.
- PCs may use food to distract and calm the beast.
- ? **Ambush:** The gorilla is trained, and will follow commands of the leader. Archers hide in the other covered carriages. Hunters are Swordsmen trying to get close to PCs, while pretending to recapture.

BROKEN DOWN

- ▶ An old beat up, one-horse carriage appears to be broken down in the middle of the road.
- Large rocks on either side make it impossible to go around.
- ▶ When PCs approach, a man in peasant's clothing approaches *“Well met, travelers. My carriage is stuck in a rut. I have been unable to lift it myself. May you help?”*
- Observant PCs will notice sounds of coughing coming from inside the carriage. If questioned, the man will claim *“It’s my son. He has been touched by the croup. Do you have a healer?”*
- ? **Ambush:** If PCs approach the wagon, Swordsmen will exit the carriage claiming to be family, swords hidden. Archers are 50 feet off the side of the road.



the ambush

the ambushers

- PCs with a background in law enforcement or bounty hunting may recognize the leader as **Sillryn the Crass**, whom has an open bounty, dead or alive, for **highway robbery** and *“acts against the Gods.”*
- Half of the ambushers are Archers and the other half are Swordsmen.
- **Sillryn** carries a long sword, but prefers to stay on his carriage during combat. He directs the other ambushers, whom he has bullied into subservience.
- **Sillryn** carries two **potions**, one of **healing** and one of **invisibility**. He will save the invisibility potion for escape, if necessary.
- Observant PCs will notice the ambushers seem to resent **Sillryn’s** leadership style. A clever or charismatic **test of their loyalty** could get some of them to switch sides.

the plan of attack

- While the ambushers still appear friendly, several Swordsmen, with swords hidden, will try to get within striking distance of the PCs without garnering suspicion.
- ? After they have gained PC’s trust, **Sillryn** says the code words *“It appears we’re safe here.”* Swordsmen draw their swords and surprise attack the closest PC. Archers let arrows fly.
- The Archers’ **primary targets** are anyone in the PC’s carriage **driver’s seat**, to prevent anyone driving it away. See *Twist Ending*.
- The Archers’ **secondary targets** are whomever **Sillryn** calls out. **Healers and concentrating spell casters** take top priority. All Archers will focus on the same target until it goes down.
- Swordsmen will not follow PCs far from the carriage, preferring to gain control of it, and eventually drive it away.

twist ending

- ? As soon as anyone tries to move the carriage, or if either side gets a clear advantage, one ambusher will attack a horse or otherwise cause them to spook, **upending the PCs carriage**. The back will bust open, throwing chests onto the road. Several of them will break apart, **blanketing the road with bent and rusty nails**.
- Combat will grind to a halt as all stare at the mess in disbelief.
- **Sillryn** will address both his men and the PCs, *“I don’t see any point in continuing. So sorry you put your lives on the line for this!”*
- They will leave, if PCs let them.



non-player characters

Name	Race	Description	5e Equivalent	Treasure
Doral	Human	Blonde, thin, oversized chain armor	Commoner, MM p345	3 copper, 1 silver
Sillryn	Human	Slicked back, short black hair, black leather gloves, constant smirk	Bandit Captain, MM p344	Healing Potion, Invisibility Potion
Archer	Human	Mid 20’s, male	Bandit, MM p343	5 silver
Swordsmen	Human	Mid 20’s, male	Bandit, MM p343	5 silver
Gorilla	Beast	Silver back, hungry	Ape, MM p317	



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