

## Chris

Your parents were good corporate drones, and you saw them slave their lives away to make money for faceless corporations. Your father worked 60 hours a week only to be laid off at 51. No other company wanted him, so he drank himself to death. Your mother faithfully kept working to support the family, but came home every day drained and lifeless. Neither of them had friends or any hobbies besides the television. They lived for their work.

You were 15 when your father was laid off. As you watched his suffering, you swore that you would never put yourself through corporate Hell. You found the tramps down by the train station, and began to learn from them. At 17 you dropped out of school and spent the next four years traveling. You tracked down every old tramp you could and got stories and histories and learned to tell them. At 21 you fell in love with a girl in Seattle named Carry and tried to settle down. You found work for a while telling stories and singing songs at several coffee houses and bars around the city.

For nearly two years it worked. Then one day, with no warning, she left you. You woke up in the morning, and there was a note on the table saying goodbye. She didn't tell you why or where she was going and you never saw her again.

That was the last time you stayed anywhere for more than a month or two. Over the past 20 years you have been traveling around the country by train, by foot or by hitching rides. Sometimes you find a gig in town, sometimes you busk on the streets, sometimes you even do a few days of labor. You have never taken charity, and you have always managed to get something to eat, although it can get a little tight. All the same, you have never tired of the wandering life. The stories you hear are amazing, and your stories can bring a little light to the eye of even the most jaded bum.

Nearly all your stories and songs come from the people you meet in your travels. In the last town you were in, you got a new story that should get you some mileage. You met Paul, who used to be a Catholic priest. When he was a young priest and working under another priest in his church he fell in love with a young woman from his congregation, and she loved him in return. However, he was truly devout and would not break his vows. The priest above him, on the other hand, was not so devoted to the rules. It was discovered that large sums of money had been going missing from the church over the past few years. The head priest pinned it on Paul, but offered not to press charges as long as Paul took the blame and resigned from the priesthood.

Trapped between a rock and a hard place, Paul resigned. He immediately began to pursue the woman with whom he was in love, but she would have nothing to do with him after the scandal. Bereft of both his livelihood and his beloved, he took to drink and wound up on the streets. A few years later, only shortly before you passed through town, he was wandering the streets one day and found his beloved working them. She had married briefly, but her husband had left her with a young child and no means of support, so she turned to the streets. They were reunited, but, last you saw, they still had no money, and you don't know how long the glow will last.

You always come to this fire when you're in town. Mel always has good food and some really interesting people come here. You should be able to draw out the life story of everyone here tonight and bring them with you to tell at the next town. In additions to getting new stories, you're here to tell your stories and see Misty. Sure

you've got a girl in almost every town, but Misty is fun, at least until she starts screaming at you.

**Story Seeds:**

You've been traveling for a while, and you've heard quite a few stories in your time, here are some of the stories that you might want to tell tonight:

- A man you know lost a brother in Vietnam. He had trouble dealing with the loss. After the war was over he went to Vietnam to visit the place where his brother died. He had a dream where his brother guided him through a battle in the jungle, and when he woke up he felt closer to his brother than he ever had in life.
- A man you met makes money on the street by selling balloon animals. When parents walk by with a kid, he makes a puppy, and the pulls out a pocket knife. When the kid reaches for the puppy, he threatens to kill the puppy unless the parents give him a dollar.
- In one community, the hobos took over an abandoned lot and were chased out. They didn't have anywhere to go, so they all decided to camp out on the mayor's lawn. Pretty soon, they were allowed back into the abandoned lot.

**Who you know:**

Misty: Misty is your girlfriend in this town. She's a whore, and she's getting a little old for the trade, but she still has some looks, and she sure knows what she's doing in the sack. She doesn't particularly like your outlook on life, but she likes the fact that you can turn even an old whore into a romantic figure. You usually wind up having a screaming fight after about a week together, after which you leave town. By the time you come back around, she'll have calmed down and be glad to see you.

Hetty: You have been through this city many times in the past 25 years or so. Hetty is the only person who has been here this whole time. What's more, she's always been old.

Sarah: Nice young thing. She's pretty cute.

Alfred: Alfred has some great stories. Now, if only he would learn how to tell them. Hey, that's what you're for. Some people just eat this alien conspiracy shit up.

Manny: Manny won't tell war stories... at least not without a lot of alcohol. This is a real shame, because war vets always have some great stories. Maybe you can ply Manny with some extra booze tonight.

Alex: Alex has some talent. Alex would love to follow you everywhere and hear all of your stories. Once this kid gets some seasoning and some new ideas, Alex might be worth hearing. You'd love to trade stories with Alex in 5 years.

Flash: Flash has some great stories, but Flash has completely forgotten which of the stories are true and which ones are crack dreams.

Cracker Jack: Jack is the one with the drugs. Reasonably reliable, all things considered. That's about all you can ask for. You have run out of GHB (often called liquid ecstasy) and you were hoping to get some before taking off with Misty. It should make the evening more interesting and her lectures easier to take.

Corvus: Listen. You tell the stories. You don't believe the stories.

Mel: This little corner of the urban jungle belongs to Mel. Mel always has a fire and is happy to have your stories. You've heard some pretty good ones here too.

Rose: Oh, she's cute.