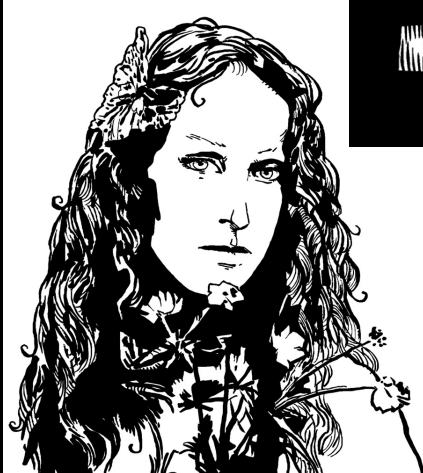
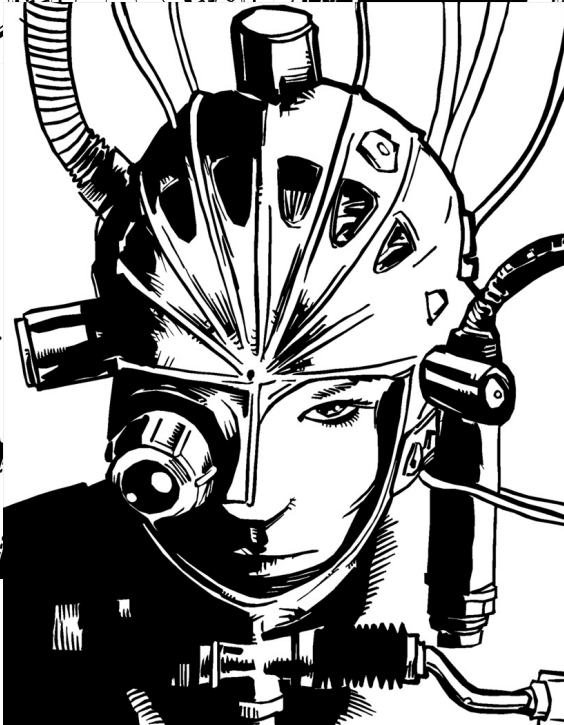
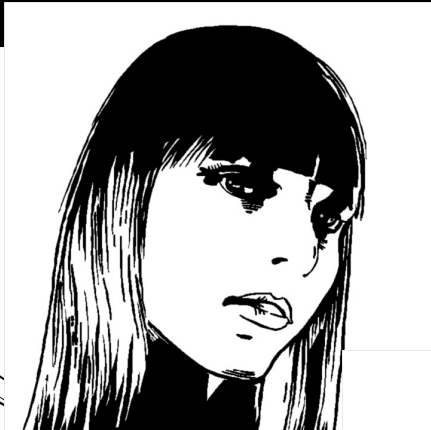
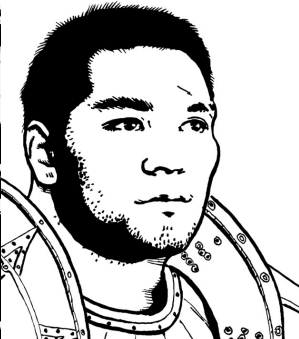




10 HALF-ELF BACKGROUNDS



10 Half-Elf Backgrounds

By Dragon Sun Game Company: Manuel Joaquin & Chris Conn
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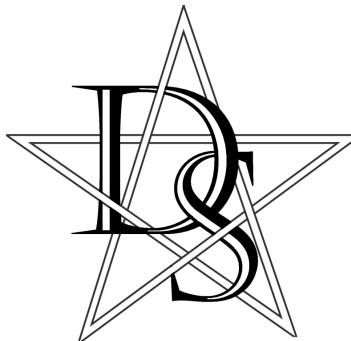
By Jeff Preston (<http://team-preston.com>)

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HALF-ELF BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds grant you the ability to customize your character even further by suggesting ideas for your character's history. Likewise, the DM can use backgrounds to make NPCs more memorable with personality traits & their own odd, little habits.

Half-elves benefit from the inheritance of 2 distinct races. Feel free to choose a background from the elven set. In addition, a number of the gnomish backgrounds, especially Faerie Friend, Professor, & Tourist, are appropriate. The elven & gnomish backgrounds can both be found on Drivethrurpg.

Although the 10 backgrounds we present here are specially tailored for half-elves, backgrounds are virtually rules agnostic. Feel free to use them with any game, any race, any character!

AMBASSADOR

On the simplest of levels, ambassadors are experts on resolving problems between persons or groups of people. An official ambassador may work for their kingdom under the direct authority of their ruler to represent their nation to foreign interests. On a less grandiose level, merchants, guardsmen, or even thieves' guilds may have "ambassadors" to speak for them.

Ambassadors are adept at understanding what potential issues could be & why people would be upset about them. Diplomacy is the byword of a good ambassador. Quite a few problems can be resolved simply by listening to people. Likewise, ambassadors are good at negotiating & proposing resolutions.

What level of diplomat are you? Do you work on the national level? Does your king trust you to work on behalf of the nation? How much oversight are you subject to? Does your ruler give you quests to fulfill? What was the most difficult / dangerous accomplishment you've performed for your king?

Or, do you work on a humbler level? Are you involved with organized crime? Are you their public face? Do you work with merchants, traveling from town to town negotiating for warehouse space & tax rates? What was the most valuable contract you've ever brokered?

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Persuasion

Languages: 2 Standard Languages of your choice

Equipment: A pair of ear-&-nose clippers; 2d6 minor ice-breaker gifts (flowers / wine / cigars); a hand mirror; a set of fine clothes; & a belt pouch containing 15 gp.

FEATURE: NETWORKING

Your work has left you with a good memory for faces & names. Likewise, in places that you've already visited, you have at least one person who regards you as a useful acquaintance if not a dear friend.

You tend to cultivate contacts the way other people collect stamps. Unless your time in a new town is especially busy, you can assume you create at least one contact there even if just in your down time.

Contacts are useful people (clerks, barristers, guardsmen) who you can easily meet with to acquire information or permissions. Depending on your history & the favors you've arranged for them in the past, (nobles, merchants, brigands) you may be able to convince a contact to provide more tangible assistance in the form of basic gear, food, or shelter.

VARIANT AMBASSADOR: NEGOTIATOR

Rather than working on a national or realms-wide level, some ambassadors concentrate on more immediately helpful, less grandiose concerns.

These negotiators might help with family disputes or step in when merchants fight over space in the market square. Likewise, it's not unheard of for negotiators to act as unofficial lawyers, helping wayward out-of-towners navigate local laws.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Ambassadors, especially those of half-elf descent, are well known for their even-handed approach to trouble. The best ambassadors are empathetic individuals who can approach problems from both sides of the issue.

At the same time, quite a lot of ambassadorial work involves connecting with other people. Many ambassadors enjoy that sort of thing; indeed, their extroversion may be why they became ambassadors in the first place. Other ambassadors need time alone to recharge, having dealt with people all day. Regardless, ambassadors all tend to be charismatic people with well-developed networks of contacts.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 From orcs to elves, I greet everyone with a big smile
- 2 Although I am fluent in just a few languages, I know how to say "hello," "thank you," & "where's the toilet?" in more than a dozen
- 3 I maintain a civil air at all times, making sure to use proper titles, or "sir" or "madam" when unknown. It takes a lot to break my calm
- 4 I keep a little scrapbook / collection / travel chest of interesting things I've gathered on my journeys
- 5 I make sure to display any badges, medals, &/or honors I've been awarded (& some I've faked). Always dress to impress.
- 6 I always try to sprichin in my partner's native lingua even if I don't speak it & have to make it up as I go along
- 7 I never eat foreign food. I've been sick one too many times to trust the native cuisine. Alcohol, on the other hand...
- 8 I always try to talk things out before resorting to physical violence

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Balance.** Be fair. Remember: who invaded *who* last time? (Neutral)
- 2 **Compromise.** Let's just split the difference. (Neutral)
- 3 **Empathy.** Think of it from their point of view. How would you feel if a bunch of armed strangers barged in to *your* throne room? (Neutral or Good)
- 4 **Friendliness.** I know a guy who knows a guy who might be able to help. Let me pay a few calls & see what we can work out. (Any)
- 5 **Helpfulness.** I can't just sit here & let them make the same mistake again & again! Not when I can help! (Any non-Evil)
- 6 **Superiority.** We all know my people brew the best wines. Why settle for less than the best? (Lawful or Evil)

d6 Bond

- 1 My lord / family / dear, dear friend trusts me to save our homeland from disaster. I cannot fail them.
- 2 My prince demands I secure an alliance / a marriageable princess / an apology from a neighboring kingdom within the year
- 3 I have devoted friend / ally who literally owes me their life for a deal I brokered in the early days of my adventuring career
- 4 I negotiated 1 year of freedom before I must return to the cannibal Cyclops / ancient dragon / crossroads demon to face my fate
- 5 A foreign power will soon wage war upon my peaceful home unless I can convince them otherwise
- 6 I love my companions dearly, but, let's face it: they can be a little stupid at times. It's best if they leave the talking to me

d6 Flaw

- 1 Being around people is physically draining. I need alone time.
- 2 I have no compulsion against lying through my teeth if it'll close the deal. I'm not making promises. I'm selling *dreams*
- 3 My raw animal magnetism can attract unwanted attention
- 4 I trust my gut reaction when I first meet a person no matter what they say or do to the contrary after that
- 5 I actually have a phobia about gnomes / elves / tieflings. Look, they just freak me out, alright? I don't want to talk about it.
- 6 I'm addicted to telling people what to do. It's a natural high. Then again, I always know best. Why shouldn't I boss people around?

ANIMAL LOVER

Sometimes it's stressful to be around people. There's just so much pressure. Whether they mean to or not, everyone is trying to pull you this way or that. "Can I touch your beard?" "I love your eyes," "You're so lucky your father was an elf/human/whatever! Ugh!

Animals aren't like that. All they want is to know where their next meal is coming from & maybe have a nice scratch behind the ears. Critters are the perfect companions, undemanding, empathetic, filled with unconditional love.

What do you like animals so much? Were you a farm kid brought up around animals all your life? Or are you a city brat who never had the chance to experience the friendship of a little, furry friend? What kind of animals do you like the best? Are you a cat person? A dog person? Do you hold grudges if people like the "wrong" sort of animal, or are you happy to associate with anyone who shares your passion?

Perhaps you turn to animals for companionship because there's something lacking in society. Too ethereal to be fully human, too basic to be fully elf, half elves very often suffer alienation from both of their potential homes. Whether isolated through old age or by their unfathomable cosmic power, misfits can find solace from their loneliness by collecting pets.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Nature

Languages: Sylvan & 1 Standard Language of your choice

Equipment: A play toy (a Frisbee / a rubber ball / or a squeaky rat); 2d6 animal snacks (beef jerky / sunflower seeds / or doggy biscuits); a doggy bed; a puppy tent; a set of sturdy, common clothes; & a belt pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: ANIMAL TRAINING

Animal lovers make for the best animal trainers, thanks to their innate empathy with their animal friends.

Training is intensive & must be consistently applied over long periods of time for the animal to successfully remember the trick. You can't train your animal while you are resting or performing other work, such as traveling, exploring, or participating in combat or healing. Training most often happens in downtime.

When you train, you spend a day working on one trick with your animal. At the end of the day, roll a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check against DC15. A success indicates progress on the trick. When you have accumulated the required number of successes (see below) the animal can perform the trick when the animal's owner spends an Action to issue the command.

Note that animal training does not cover combat, as combat is the purview of the beastmaster ranger.

Basic Trick: 3 successes required to learn

Fetch	The animal retrieves the item you point at
Heel	The animal comes to you & follows you closely
Sit	The animal sits calmly
Stay	The animal does not move until you tell it to
Wait!	The animal stops what it is doing & pays attention to you

Fancy Trick: 5 successes required to learn

Dance	The animal spins, bounces, & bobs as if dancing
Limp	The animal feigns injury
Play Dead	The animal rolls over & stops moving
Shake Hands	The animal touches its paw to your hand
Speak / Hush	The animal makes a loud cry or stays quiet

Work Trick: 5 successes required to learn

Get {Item}	The animal searches for a specific type of item & brings it to you. Train this trick multiple times to teach the animal to retrieve additional types of items.
Go	The animal moves to the spot you point at
Home {Place}	The animal starts traveling towards a specific home. Train this trick multiple times to teach the animal to go to additional homes.
Open / Tug	The animal tugs on a door, chest, or box you point at
Search / Track	You present the animal with a scent, & the animal searches for the source of the scent.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

In storybook tradition, the animal lover is pure of heart, sweet, innocent, sometimes even naively so. All sorts of forest critters, & sometimes even supernatural beings like unicorns, are drawn to the animal lover's virtuousness & will dance & sing with you, especially in the mornings.

On the other hand, a person's love of animals may be born of depression. Whether through advanced age or advanced power, eccentricity can isolate a person, leading them to collect animals to use as a surrogate sources of love. It's no wonder that witches are often associated with black cats.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I howl when I get excited & whimper when I get frightened.
- 2 I give my companions, both humanoid & animal, cute nicknames like "Captain Fluffypants" or "Rumpy Cooocobutter."
- 3 I'm very much a dog / cat / parrot person. I don't trust anyone that dogs / cats / parrots distrust.
- 4 I can't sleep unless I'm surrounded by furry creatures.
- 5 If forced to kill a Beast, I make sure to hold a proper funeral.
- 6 I'm a big time vegan. I can't eat meat or wear leather of any sort.
- 7 I have a pet squirrel / blue jay / tarantula who lives in my hat. Sometimes, I slip a snack under my hat for him.
- 8 Everything I own, from my backpack to my PJs, is emblazoned with pictures of widdle doggies or cute kitties.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Animal Anthropomorphism.** Animals are people, too! (Good)
- 2 **Being Green.** Take nothing but memories, leave nothing but footprints (Good)
- 3 **Disgust.** People are nothing but a disease, a *cancer!* (Evil)
- 4 **Freedom.** It's good for the soul to get away from it all (Chaotic)
- 5 **Innocence.** *A unicorn wanders out of the forest, drawn to the song of your unsullied soul* (Good)
- 6 **Trust in Nature.** Wolfykins never lies to me ☺ (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 Evil wizards combine owls & bears & deer & hawks into unnatural abominations. I must stop these horrible experiments!
- 2 My beloved animal companion ran off, leading me on a vitally important mission.
- 3 A terrible disease has befallen all of the cats / dogs / birds of my home. I seek a cure.
- 4 In my hometown, the birds circle widdershins over the chapel: an omen of dire portent.
- 5 I have a recurring dream of a golden hart / hound / serpent promising greatness
- 6 I quest to fund my animal rescue mission back home

d6 Flaw

- 1 I can't stand being around people. Crowds give me panic attacks.
- 2 I'm far more likely to help animals in distress than I am humanoids
- 3 I'm a slave to my Fight or Flight instincts
- 4 Crazy Cat Lady: I have an insatiable craving to steal any small animals I find
- 5 My pets'... *odor* pervades everything I own. I no longer notice the stink, but the dander & ammonia can play havoc with allergies
- 6 Witchery: My dog tells me to do things... *EVIL* things...

BOHEMIAN

"Do this," "Don't do that," "Stay within the lines," "The lines are our friends," "STAY BETWEEN THE LINES!"

Bohemians are a special type of gypsy, or at least a special type of wanderer. They've grown discontent with typical, so-called "life" & travel in search of a new community, or perhaps to make one of their own.

What sets bohemians apart from your normal vagabond is the bohemian urge to create. Indeed, the reason many bohemians dropped out to begin with was the stifling environment that threatened to extinguish the flame of their genius. To a bohemian, it's not just art or mere philosophy. A bohemian's work is their *raison de vivre*. Burn a bohemian's book & you might as well cut off her head.

Sadly, many, if not most, bohemians fall into the starving artist category. Their brilliance is just not recognized, sometimes even perversely rejected as being "too good." Over time, society's failure to live up to bohemian ideals, combined with the public's banality, can wear down even the brightest bohemian, ultimately leading to depression, substance abuse, & tragedy. Which, paradoxically enough, inspires the bohemian to even greater artistic heights.

What inspired you to leave home? Are you a nobleman stirred by the plight of the common folk? Do you wish to express the horror of Man's monstrosity towards Man? Are you more of the intellectual type? Perhaps you recognized the ways that "regular" social norms are, in actuality, nothing more than chains that make slaves of Men. Is your work an expression of that awfulness or are you trying to change things for the better?

What are your ideals? Are you vegetarian? Vegan? Are you a pacifist or perhaps a teetotaler? Is marriage a sacred union or is it a lie meant to enslave women? How vocal are you about your ideals? If you see someone eating meat, are you content to recognize their life choices as the equal of your own, or must you confront the villain over the murder of helpless creatures?

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Performance

Tool Proficiencies: 2 of your choice from any of the musical instruments, calligrapher's supplies, glassblower's tools, painter's tools, potter's tools, &/or woodcarver's tools

Equipment: 1 musical instrument or artisan tool of your choice; a lock of hair / ribbon / poem from a lost love; 1d4 bottles of strong spirits (absinthe / laudanum / vermouth); a set of common clothes; & a pouch with 5 gp

FEATURE: ARTIST COMMUNES

You are a world-traveler, a wanderer, an adventurer. You are just as likely to wake up in the gutter as you are to wake up in (somebody else's partner's) bed. You go where your heart, your intellectual curiosity, & your passion lead you.

There are other people like you. The social pressures of any large mass of people will generate malcontents, oddballs, or anarchists who just can't or won't fit in to the roles that society says they should. In their search for meaning, these proto-bohemians often find themselves amassing in the cracks of civilization, where they form communities of like-minded individuals. Here they are free to express themselves, pursue their loves, & live their lives in any way they see fit.

You are a member of these centers of art & innovative philosophy. When you find a commune, the community will provide for your basic needs of food & shelter. More importantly, communes provide intellectual & creative stimulation as well as rumors, gossip, & substances of a recreational (though possibly not entirely legal) nature.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

More than their homelessness, their lackadaisical attitude, or even their art, the defining characteristic of all bohemians is their intelligence. If you don't have the mental power to properly perceive your surroundings, you're not a romantic starving artist. You're just some filthy, drunk hobo.

All bohemians are idealists; one might even say romantics. They have ideas of the way things Should Be. The problem is that life so very often disappoints by not living up to expectations. When this realization first hits, the young bohemian-to-be is often so shocked that they drop off the grid, running away to join an acting troupe, a band of gypsies, or a coterie of hippies.

If they're lucky, the young misfit eventually finds their way to the bohemian community, where they mature into political anarchists, authors, actors, musicians, painters, philosophers, &/or professional Byronic lovers.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 What I put on or in my body is my business. Don't talk to me about "decorum." That's just the Man trying to keep us down.
- 2 Loss & longing are the greatest inspirations for Art.
- 3 I am far more passionate about my art, my friends, & my mission than I am about my hygiene
- 4 I trust gypsy fortune tellers more than I trust any priest or abbot
- 5 I cannot suffer in silence. What use are tribulations unless there's a crowd to witness? "Woe! WOE is me!" *dramatic swoon*
- 6 Food, drink, art, the society of good friends: there are many, many things more valuable in this life than mere money.
- 7 The despair from this so-called "life" has left me wane & listless. I wail & moan anytime someone gives me a job to do.
- 8 My dealings with guardsmen / kings / art critics have left me with a chip on my shoulder

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Art.** Art is the frame upon which I bare my soul (Any)
- 2 **Escapism.** Come. Help me forget this slow-motion tragedy we collectively call "life." (Any non-Good)
- 3 **Fervor.** Life is pain. Pain is inspiration. Inspiration is action. Therefore, Suffering is Art. (Any)
- 4 **Liberation.** Your words can't define my Me, man (Any non-Lawful)
- 5 **Simple Living.** Consumerism is just another form of slavery. (Any)
- 6 **Vagabondism.** The earth is my bed. The sky, my blanket. The world, my home (Any non-Lawful)

d6 Bond

- 1 I've travelled extensively with the Romani, gypsies, & other floating itinerants. They are like family to me.
- 2 I've sliced off my ear / finger / tongue & sent it to an unrequited love to symbolize my eternal devotion to them
- 3 (Don't let the other bohemians know, but I can only afford my gypsy lifestyle thanks to a trust fund my father set up in my name.)
- 4 Someone is systematically kidnapping my bohemian / gypsy friends. They arrive in town & then disappear without a trace!
- 5 I use my art like a knife, secretly installing character assassinations &/or inspirational works in public for all to see
- 6 Insult my dignity? Nothing but wind. Denigrate my homeland? I care not. But breath a word of derision towards my beloved, & I will not rest until I have reduced you to nothing but dust & ash!

d6 Flaw

- 1 Ownership is an illusion. Theft, doubly so.
- 2 I am often too passionate. Even a stranger's tale of woe can move me to tears or to a riot of rash action
- 3 My companions find it odd that mere gold does not motivate me
- 4 I drink to forget. If I blackout, all the better.
- 5 I refuse to obey any "authority." Tax collectors, sheriffs, parents, the so-called "nobility" are nothing without the proletariat
- 6 My dismay can get the better of me. In especially trying situations, I'm prone to giving up with a cry of "Alackaday!"

COURTIER

Excited little wrens of whispered gossip flew about the court, charging the usual polite susurrus with an energy not heard for ages. On his throne above the court, King Jean stroked his auburn beard & smiled as he reminisced on a certain favored courtier whose voice was as sweet as morning song & whose jests were like to set the room aroar.

The king sighed, content. At long last, Lady Margolis dela Forteverte has returned to grace his realm.

At the dawn of time, the court comprised the people who were the strongest warriors, the greatest wizards, or generals who could muster the largest armies. Life was very pragmatic, with every courtly member having a practical, usually martial skill.

In the age of enlightenment, such brute force is frowned upon. Indeed, overt displays are uncouth, clumsy, stains of an unenlightened society. Rather, the modern measure of a safe, thriving kingdom is the number of artists, intellectuals, philosophers, &/or personae célèbre the court can support.

You are one of these celebrated people. What is your area of expertise? Are you an artist? An author or poet? You are more than a mere jester or simple songstress. What makes your skills so impressive?

A courtly patron sponsors your position. What is your relationship with your patron? Are you family? Is it professional? Or is the relationship of a more romantic nature? Love-hate? What sort of services (gossip, musical, questing, or otherwise) does your sponsor require in return for their patronage?

Skill Proficiencies: Perception, Performance

Tool Proficiencies: 2 of your choice from the musical instruments &/or the gaming sets

Equipment: 1 musical instrument or gaming set; either a folding fan or a box of snuff; 1 accessory such as a cane / a lace ruff / a powdered wig; a set of fine clothes (doublet & hose); & a belt pouch containing 20 gp.

FEATURE: ROYAL PATRONAGE

You enjoy employment at court. Work with your DM to determine your noble master's details & what kind of services you render.

In exchange for your courtly services, your patronage grants you a small monthly stipend, which normally covers comfortable or possibly wealthy lifestyle expenses, as appropriate for your character's back story.

In addition, you have access to your court, where you might hear gossip, be able to gather information not available to commoners, & even receive quests (& thus their commiserate rewards) from the nobles.

NEW WEAPON: THE SWORD CANE

Martial Melee Weapon	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Sword Cane	35 gp	1d6 piercing	1 lb.	Finesse, light

Genteel courts often prohibit openly displaying weapons. And rightly so! Such blatant shows of belligerence are so gauche as to approach vulgarity.

Still, the more military-minded (some might say, "paranoid") courtiers have struck a compromise: the sword cane. As the name implies, this weapon is a sword hidden within the shaft of a cane. By employing this cunning contrivance, one can be decently, if not blatantly, armed whilst observing the niceties of polite society.

Sheathing the blade in the cane conceals the weapon with a DC of 13. More expensive models may have a higher DC, at the DM's discretion. Due to its light weight, which is necessary to maintain the ruse, the sword cane is a fragile weapon generally not suited for regular heavy use, especially outside of court.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Strictly speaking, courtiers have no practical use to the royal court. They are not warriors, nor military strategists. Neither are they governors, judges, nor any other type of administrator.

Rather, the courtiers' function is more abstract: they are there to demonstrate the court's civility. A good courtier brings with them an atmosphere of sophistication, of education. They defuse the stress of political life with witty anecdotes & cunning banter. Courtiers flirt & gossip & entertain, playing the members of the court as cleverly as they pluck the strings of a harp.

As a rule, courtiers are well-educated. In addition to the typical subjects common to academia, many courtiers, male & female alike, go through years of training in dance, music, & general etiquette to produce the most urbane court attendant as possible.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Everything I do is large, grandiose, with big, sweeping gestures. It's all about drama!
- 2 I often speak in comparisons ("This conversation is like a broken pencil: pointless.")
- 3 Malodorous vapors greatly offend my faculties. To combat such encounters, I carry lavender scented handkerchiefs at all times
- 4 Cotton? Hemp? It might as well be sandpaper on my skin. No, it's only the finest of silks for me.
- 5 A smile, a wink, a well-timed nod: I find flirting comes naturally
- 6 A pinch of snuff does wonders for the constitution. It can be quite addicting, to be perfectly honest.
- 7 My skill with song / the mandolin / the harp is renowned at court
- 8 Etiquette demands that one salutes &/or bows before commencing hostilities, even with the lowest of creatures.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Comportment.** Nothing is so important as to permit a lapse in good manners (Lawful)
- 2 **Empathy.** A good courtier can intuit what type of conversation, music, or wit is needed at any given moment. (Good)
- 3 **Erudition.** Education elevates society (Lawful)
- 4 **Gentility.** Kings rule, warriors fight, but I'm the one that puts the "noble" in "nobility." (Any)
- 5 **Politicking.** Who says courtiers have no real power? I've got those fools wrapped around my little finger (Evil)
- 6 **Wit.** Music has its charm I'm sure, but nothing can substitute for an agile mind & clever repartee. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 For my faithful services to the court, I am to be ennobled with a title, property, lands! I just have to complete one more quest...
- 2 The prince / princess is suffering a deep depression. Surely a splendid gift will lift his / her spirits (& earn me a fitting reward)
- 3 On my daily constitutional walk in the castle garden, I found a nearly empty vial labeled with a skull hidden amongst the roses
- 4 A young courtier / princess / king swoons for an unrequited love, but dare not act rashly in court
- 5 While in the privy, I heard voices, 1 male & 1 female, conspiring to kill the king / the treasurer / my lady love. When I rushed to investigate, the chamber was empty
- 6 A visiting elf / foreign ambassador / orc dignitary has taken a rather intense interest in me. Soon, I received a gilded invitation that hints at a secret to be revealed...

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am conducting an illicit tryst with 1 (or more!) member of the court. If anyone should discover the affair, blood will surely flow.
- 2 I value my standing higher than my very life. What value is life for those of ill repute?
- 3 I have earned the ire of a rival courtier / nobleman / general who will do anything to ruin my plans.
- 4 My unbridled ambition often leads me to overstep my abilities.
- 5 Try as I might, my anecdotes always seem to fall flat. Perhaps I lack the experience to lend my stories an authentic touch.
- 6 Secretly, I resent the constant need for politeness & civility. What harm is there in slumming it with the commons?

ETHEREALIST

Where two worlds meet, the in-between places, something magical happens. Things go soft. Taboos are forgotten. Anything is possible. New, wonderful things appear.

Half-elves are the living embodiment of this kind of synergy. In addition to passing back & forth between the worlds of humans & elves, some half-elves seek even stranger vistas, ever more eccentric peoples and places. In walking the borderlands etherealists pass beyond this world to seek wonders unfound in mundane existence.

Etherealists are border-walkers, blank slates, empty ciphers. They are shining examples of what it is to rise above the muck & mire of daily life. Their distance enables them to take a step back & see the good & bad in everyone & everything. Etherealists seek the place where the rising ape meets the falling angel.

A wanderer with no real home, what drove you to explore? Did you even have a home to start with? How did you find your first big secret? Did you make a deal with a crossroads demon? Or did you discover a door that was bigger on the inside? Are you exploring for exploring's sake or are you searching for something more concrete? Family? A lost lover? Your real home?

What is the most impressive place you've ever seen? What lessons did you learn there? How will you share the things you've learned? What's the most terrible ordeal you've lived through? Have you explored the depths of Hell? Seen the heights of Heaven? How have these experiences changed you & what does that mean for the people around you?

Skill Proficiencies: Arcana, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Navigator's Tools

Languages: One of your choice from Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal, or Primordial

Equipment: A set of navigator's tools; a feather from the wing of an angel / devil; a Planar Astrolabe; a set of common clothes; & a pouch containing 15 gp

FEATURE: OTHERWORLDLY EXPERIENCE

You've been everywhere; met everyone. After seeing dawn angels dance in the light of the Twin Suns of the Blessed Fields of Elysium, it's hard to take such petty things as "race" seriously.

You are unfettered by the chains of petty biases such as race, sex, creed, or class. Orc or human, male or female, king or commoner, you suffer no penalties to interacting with NPCs who are different from you.

VARIANT FEATURE: NAVIGATING BETWEEN WORLDS

If your character has the etherealist background, you may select this background feature in place of Otherworldly Friendliness.

You've traveled the paths that lead between worlds. You know which creeks to cross to get to the Feywild, what supplications the Devil-Guards demand at the Gates of Hell.

You can use your navigation tools &/or appropriate skills (like Arcana, Nature, Religion, or Survival) to guide yourself & up to 5 allies safely along extraplanar paths, use planar gate keys safely, or interact with border-guarding, extra-planar psychopomp NPCs like Charon, Death, or Cerberus.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Etherealists are an odd lot. Almost by definition, an etherealist starts out life as a misfit. Many, if not most, are born into societies into which they just don't belong. Neither fully human, nor fully elf, half-elfen etherealists often start their travels in search of a real home.

As time goes on, however, etherealists find themselves haunting crossroads or border towns, sometimes even the literal Ethereal Plane. That which started out as a means to an end becomes the end etherealists mean. The places in between, soft on reality, call these extraordinary adventurers to explore an ever stranger, ever more borderline existence.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I often converse in koans, riddles, or parables.
- 2 Although I love my friends & allies, I think nothing of wandering off alone without telling anyone {except the DM, of course}.
- 3 Nothing ever seems to faze me. I greet hardships & friends alike with the same imperturbably benevolent smile.
- 4 I've gotten used to being alone. It's embarrassing when people catch me talking to myself, which happens... a *lot*...
- 5 I move with languid grace, never early, nor late. Always in the right place at the right time.
- 6 I never judge a book by its cover. Who knows? This orc could be a brain surgeon! That frog may be a cursed prince!
- 7 I find meditation is helpful in times of stress or turmoil.
- 8 You ever talk to an angel? No? Come this way... I have someone I want to introduce you to...

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Dreaminess.** Haven't you ever wondered what's out there, beyond the stars? (Neutral or Chaotic)
- 2 **Exoticism.** Home again, home again... /sigh How boring (Chaotic)
- 3 **Lateral Thinking.** Sometimes you can't see the best solutions if you stay within the lines all the time (Chaotic)
- 4 **Mercurialness.** When you aren't anything, you can be anything (Any non-Lawful)
- 5 **Otherworldliness.** I have seen things you wouldn't believe (Any)
- 6 **Perspective.** You can't smell the stink until you get out of the monkey house. (Chaotic)

d6 Bond

- 1 I can find friends in the strangest of places. Ogres, goblins, lizardfolk, maybe even a vampire or 2, any of them can make a great friend if given half a chance
- 2 Exposure to interplanar energies has warped me, changing me in ways beyond mortal ken
- 3 I / my mother / my lover suffers a slow, yet terrible sickness, the cure for which lies somewhere in the infinitude of the multiverse
- 4 (I have a dangerous angel / demon / devil "ally" who owes me an unbreakable debt, yet who hates me more than existence itself)
- 5 I'm a lucid dreamer, but sometimes I have visions of people or places I've never imagined. Surely that means they must be real?
- 6 I have a network of allies, rivals, friends, & enemies spread all over this world (& the next)

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am terribly claustrophobic when it comes to crowded places. I can panic & burst into violence if crushed between people for too long
- 2 I've been so many places. Touched so many thoughts... I can't guarantee that I'm the same "me" that I was a moment ago...
- 3 What makes undeath / diablerie / jaywalking so taboo? What would happen if I were to cross *that* line?
- 4 I've met, loved, fought, & lost thousands & thousands of people. What's one more forgotten name to me?
- 5 I've seen things man was not meant to see... It's left me with something trying to scratch its way out from behind my eyes...
- 6 No one realizes that we're all just one missed meal away from descending into chaos & cannibalism. What's the point of it all?

FLOWER CHILD

People aren't meant to slaughter one another. Just look at wars: soldiers spend far more time finding ways to avoid fighting than they do on the killing fields. Hell, even when they come home, the soldiers' former violence haunts them, flaying their souls in bouts of dreadful self-torture. Bloodshed makes victims of us all.

No, violence is not the way. Make love, not war! Where there is brutality, let us sow peace! Where there is cruelty, let love bloom! Such are the flower child's goals. When other people respond with hatred or aggression, the flower child garlands their assailants with wreaths & blossoms. Darkness cannot drive out the night; only light & love can do that.

Pacifism is an extreme position in a typical D&D setting. How do you resolve violence? Are you purely a healer, focusing on support & curative magic while leaving the aggression to other people? Are you satisfied with simply "never shedding blood" & so limit yourself to bludgeoning weapons? Or do you find any type of violence abhorrent? Do you try to win your enemies around to your point of view?

How far do you take your nonviolence? Are you gentle with animals as well as people? What counts as "people" for that matter? Who deserves clemency? Only members of your own race? Gnomes? Dragonborn? Tieflings? What about goblins, orcs, or ogres? Can you *truly* call yourself a pacifist if you're willing to kill when it's convenient?

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Nature

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism kit & 1 musical instrument of your choice

Equipment: An herbalism kit; 1 musical instrument; bundles of flowers to braid into wreaths or into your hair; a set of loose, brightly colored common clothes; & a pouch containing 10 gp

FEATURE: IDEALISM

Every time you interact with other people, you feel an upwelling of faith in your newfound companion. Sometimes it's hard to say why, but you experience a flood of goodwill & joy towards your fellow sentient being.

Your idealism just beams from you almost like an aura.

Everyone who meets you reacts better towards you than they might to other people. An NPC's starting attitude can never be worse than "indifferent" towards you when you first meet (see the DMG p244).

VARIANT FEATURE: FLOWER POWER

If your character has the flower child background, you may select this background feature in place of Idealism.

You are devoted to your doctrine of nonviolence. You collect daisy chains, flower wreaths, &/or pouches full of flower petals. You may deliver your "attacks" through your flowers rather than your usual methods. For example, a fighter might bestow wreath after wreath upon her opponent via her sword "attacks." A bard's *vicious mockery* cantrip might be colorful bursts of flower petals rather than the usual bouts of magical abuse.

If you choose to use your Flower Power feature, make your attack as usual & convert the attack's usual damage to psychic damage.

In addition, if your Flower Power attack's psychic "damage" would kill an opponent, the opponent does not die. Instead, your opponent repents its evil ways, at the very least slinking away to rethink its life. The DM may decide your opponent is so moved, it seeks ways to make amends for the violence it tried to cause you, becoming your newest ally.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Peace, love, & music. These are the 3 devotions that mark all flower children. Society is filled with violence driven by hatred, ignorance, & fear of strangers. But they're just people, man. They're no different from anyone else. If you really think about it, it's not the strangers that are strange, man.

It's us.

Flower children try to break away from all that. Violence only begets more violence. Fear only begets more fear. What would happen if, instead of panic, we responded with gifts? With flowers? How much nicer would life be if we could all just get along? Flower children are determined to find out.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Flashing the peace sign is the best way to say hello or goodbye
- 2 Our bodies are our temples. I've vegetarian / vegan / teetotal
- 3 If I'm ever anxious or nervous about anything, I have one of my special snacks. It always mellows me out
- 4 I always try passive resistance before resorting to anything as shameful as violence
- 5 If nature intended us to cut our hair we'd've been born with scissors
- 6 I LOVE sing-alongs & drum circles!
- 7 Volunteering is my favorite thing to do in my free time
- 8 I'm *extreeemely* careful about the litter my party leaves behind at a campsite.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Big Hearted.** I was born with an enormous need for affection & an enormous need to give (Any)
- 2 **Counterculture.** Turn on, tune in, drop out. Follow your bliss! (Chaotic)
- 3 **Passive Aggression.** *This* is what you call a "protest?" I hope you had "fun" (Evil)
- 4 **Peace.** *hangs daisy chain around orc's spear* (Good)
- 5 **Socialism.** You can't *own* property, maaaaan. (Any non-Evil)
- 6 **Tree Hugging.** If you listen hard enough, you can hear the sap pumping in her bark... (Chaotic)

d6 Bond

- 1 The king is pushing us out of the old caravans that we were squatting in. I need to find a new place for the commune to settle
- 2 Mother / father / the baron is slaughtering the unicorns / goblins / phoenixes. It must be stopped before we hunt them to extinction!
- 3 They say the best herbs grow on an island in a lake at the top of a volcano in the middle of the ocean. I'ma find that herb ☺!
- 4 I always carry small gifts with me (flowers / snacks / spin-art) to help people mellow out
- 5 My king is drafting everyone into his slave-army & sending us to die in useless wars!
- 6 The king decreed the woods must be cleared & flattened, including the thousand-year-old trees in its heart. How could he!?

d6 Flaw

- 1 It's horrible how people slaughter & eat their animal brothers & sisters! I can't keep my mouth shut when I see such atrocities!
- 2 To my everlasting shame, my father is a corporate sellout in the slavery / war / murder (fur) trade
- 3 I get jittery & paranoid if I can't have my special snacks.
- 4 I destroyed my commune in a fit of uncontrollable, supernatural rage! The blood of the innocent is on my hands!
- 5 I'm sure they mean well, but people tell me I'm too trusting or naive when it comes to strangers
- 6 I labor under a curse that causes me to sprout warts the size of grapes on my face & body each time I spill blood. I'm trying to make the best of a bad situation by adopting this pacifist attitude

FORESTER

Civilization isn't always what it's cracked up to be. Many people choose to forego the hassle of dealing with people & make their way on their own through the wilderness. Foresters are people who find life amongst the green more rewarding than the humdrum of the city.

Although they're named after the woods most of them live in, foresters might live in the plains, deserts, mountains, or any other wilderness in which they can find a rewarding existence. Likewise, foresters aren't necessarily lovers of nature. It's the problems of the city, not the love of the green, that drove foresters out. In addition to nature-loving rangers & eco-warriors, foresters might be poachers, trappers, or even rugged individualists like military scouts.

What was the problem that drove you from the city? Were people just too conniving? Did one too many people disappoint you in love, business, or family? From a heavier angle, are you fleeing debt? Punishment for a crime? A tyrannical overlord? Are you an escaped slave?

If you're a half-elf, how did you feel watching your friends & family succumb to geriatric ailments while you staid eternally young? As for the elves, how did the elves react to a mixed-breed living among them?

What advantages do you find in the wilderness? Does hunting allow you to feed a family you could never afford in the city? Is it the solitude that is so attractive? Do the woods allow you to recharge after dealing with two-faced civilization? Perhaps you find companionship with the plants & animals that you never found in the city.

Skill Proficiencies: Nature, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Cartographer's Tools, Herbalism Kit

Equipment: Your choice of either cartographer's tools or an herbalism kit; a portable stove; an inflatable duck / deer / bear decoy; a set of traveler's clothes; & a pouch with 10 gp.

FEATURE: FORESTERS' CACHES

You & other foresters keep stashes of food & supplies cached throughout the countryside.

Stashed several days' travel apart in the secure places in the wilderness, each of the foresters' caches contain food & supplies equivalent to an explorer's pack (see the PHB p. 151).

Generally speaking, the caches are well hidden, safe from animals discovering them or being washed away in a storm. Accidents do happen, however. In your own territory, finding a cache is usually fairly easy, DC 10 if a roll is required. The further afield you journey, the harder it gets to find a cache with the DC to find one rising at the DM's discretion.

If you use a cache, it's considered good manners to resupply it, especially if you are in a foreign territory. Some foresters go the extra mile & leave a "thank you" in the form of a note or extra supplies.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Whether it was the money they could make selling pelts, the need to escape the hustle & bustle of the city, or simply a love of nature, foresters value life in the wilderness over living with other people in civilization. The benefits of living in the wilderness outweighs the advantages offered by the city.

Like everyone else, half-elves experience the need to fit in. In a sense, half-elves are lucky. They have two homes they might choose from, the human cities & the elven enclaves. But when neither satisfies, what is a soul to do? Many half-elves turn to nature, mother to us all, to find the peace they crave.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Actions speak louder than words. My actions speak very loudly.
- 2 It's hard for me to grasp the concept of money. I prefer to barter for pelts, herbs, or services.
- 3 People walk so slowly! If you can't keep up, get out of the way!
- 4 Taverns, roads, *people*? Ugh! Give me a tent & a bedroll any day!
- 5 I keep a scrapbook in which I press flowers, leaves, & other interesting tidbits from the places I visit in my adventures
- 6 I scratch my big, bushy beard when deep in thought.
- 7 A bath? Why, I haven't bathed in... hold on, what year is it again?
- 8 If there's one thing I miss about people, it's the ale / coffee / bacon

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Discovery.** You never know what you'll find if you don't step outside of your boundaries every once in a while (Chaotic)
- 2 **Isolation.** My longevity is a curse. I'd rather be alone than watch my friends grow old & die. (Neutral or Chaotic)
- 3 **Rejection.** Humans? Elves? *Civilization*?! A curse upon both their houses! (Evil)
- 4 **Self Realization.** You'll never find yourself if you look to other people (Chaotic)
- 5 **Wonder.** Do you know what it's like to sleep on the softest bed of moss & awaken to the sweetest birdsong? (Any non-Evil)
- 6 **Yearning.** I don't know what I'm looking for, but I know it's not amongst the elves or humans. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I keep my most treasured possessions in a secret stash *very* well hidden in the wilderness. I don't know what I would do if I lost it.
- 2 There's a utopia hidden deep within the wilderness. I protect the secret of its existence with my life!
- 3 I have a cousin / friend / twin from the city who cares very deeply about my health & wellbeing.
- 4 I keep a tree-house / cave-house / giant-peach-house in the woods
- 5 A talking squirrel / eagle / golden carp stole my magical ring
- 6 I was lost in the woods as a baby & raised by wolves / elephants / the king of the jungle

d6 Flaw

- 1 I *HATE* being touched. If anyone touches me, I suffer a desperate urge to run away & find some good, healthy dirt to roll around in
- 2 I committed a horrible crime in the city. My retreat into the wilderness is an attempt to escape my guilt &/or punishment
- 3 Privacy? Discretion? Ownership? These things make no sense! I always end up poking my nose into dangerous places.
- 4 People make me edgy. If there are too many strangers around, I can fly off the handle. It's a fight just to maintain my composure.
- 5 I haven't spoken to anyone in so long, I've almost forgotten how to speak Common
- 6 Nuance, duplicity, sometimes even plain etiquette are lost on me. Living alone with animals for so long, I take things at face value

GOLDEN CHILD

Occasionally, a child is born who has far greater potential than their peers. Everyone else fades in comparison. Golden children complete tasks with an ease that belies the hardships normal people struggle even as they stumble over everyday problems. Through their brilliance, athleticism, or raw animal magnetism, golden children outshine everyone around them.

Naturally, when a golden child is born into a family, the clan might pin all their hopes & dreams on the prodigy. Sometimes, particularly desperate (or noble) families will attempt to breed a golden child. Elven stock is especially valued, resulting in a larger than usual proportion of half elven golden children.

How much pressure were you under in your youth? Was your birth a matter of destiny? Are you the one who will lead your family out of the gutter? Were you raised on a strict educational, physical, &/or medical regimen? Or was your amazing aptitude an accident of genetics? Are you truly as amazing as they say, or are your accomplishments nothing more than the blind admiration of an overzealous mother?

What are you so amazing at? Are you naturally athletic? Perfect of form? A demigod-in-the-flesh? Do you possess a cutting intellect that can discern the heart of any quandary? Are you a savant of unparalleled mental ability? Perhaps you are a matchless beauty, a vision that melts the hearts of man & beast. Perhaps you're all of the above.

Skill Proficiencies: Performance (Etiquette) & 1 of your choice from the following – Arcana, History, Medicine, or Religion

Tool Proficiencies: 1 textbook* related to your area of study (see table below) & 1 musical instrument of your choice

Equipment: Either 1 textbook or 1 musical instrument of your choice; a seal / signet ring bearing your family's emblem; a scar / birthmark (proof of your destiny or left by an overly strict parent); a set of fine clothes; & a pouch containing 15 gp

d8 Familial Destiny	d8 Area of Study
1 Bred to seduce the prince / princess	1 Cultural Studies
2 Bred to spy on elven nations	2 Linguistics
3 Brilliance with Magic	3 Arcanology
4 Revive an ailing bloodline	4 History
5 Devotion to the Church	5 Philosophy / Religion
6 Heir to the Pater Familias	6 Archeology
7 New breed of super-men	7 Biology
8 Political bid to ennoble the family	8 Genealogy

* NEW TOOL: TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are tools which you can use in knowledge-related ability checks that pertain to the subject matter of that textbook. For example, you could use a textbook on genealogy to determine the parentage of a particular person by their hair &/or eye color. As tools, textbooks follow all the pertinent rules.

FEATURE: INFALLIBILITY

You can do no wrong, at least in the eyes of your family & admirers. No matter what depths of failure into which you topple, your family never reacts with anything more than disappointment... which, paradoxically, can pain you worse than any display of anger.

You can always depend on your family, & sometimes friends or admirers, to provide you with food & a place to rest. Members of your family might even hide you from mundane dangers, although they won't usually risk their lives.

However, depending on your current standing with your family, your mother &/or father might sacrifice themselves for you, especially if they consider you to be their, or the family's, ultimate salvation.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Golden children have amazing potential, sometimes even at the genius level. Their abilities may be physical, mental, magical, spiritual, or any combination of the above. The unifying characteristic of golden children is that they were born with their abilities; to a golden child, dissecting the secrets of the multiverse is as natural as breathing.

People put golden children under great pressure, if just from their parents' admiration. Unspoken expectations can be as powerful as any taskmaster's whip. In turn, golden children can internalize these expectations, creating a sense of extreme duty (onus? responsibility?) that lasts well into adulthood.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I just *beam* charm. Winking is my favorite "punctuation mark."
- 2 I bite my nails / tap my foot / pull my hair when I stress about my family or friends
- 3 I am obsessive about my "thing" (music / a sport / most monsters killed in a single fight). I must be the best!
- 4 Everything I've ever tried has worked out for the best. If my incessant optimism doesn't get the job done, my hard work will!
- 5 I don't always realize I'm doing it, but when I do something particularly impressive, I always strike a heroic pose.
- 6 I wear a bracelet emblazoned with the initials "WVMMWMTD," for "What Would My Mother Want Me To Do?"
- 7 I'm extremely polite, especially with my elders / nobles / women
- 8 Everybody has always been so kind, I assume the best of people.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Destiny.** I'm the chosen one (Lawful)
- 2 **Great Expectations.** My family has faith that I will save us from our ignoble fate. I cannot fail them. (Lawful)
- 3 **Momma's Boy.** My family has sacrificed so much for me, I'd hate to ever disappoint them (Lawful or Good)
- 4 **Narcissist.** Did you see that? I'm awesome! ... You know... you really should be more impressed with me. (Evil)
- 5 **Perfectionist.** What use am I if I allow my skills to dull? (Any)
- 6 **Spoiled Brat.** What do you mean I can't have it? It's mine! I found it! *I WANT IT NOW!* (Any non-Good)

d6 Bond

- 1 I am the seventh son of a seventh son (& a half-elf to boot). I am destined for great things
- 2 My family has fallen out of favor with the queen. I must find a way back into her good graces.
- 3 One day I will take over the family business. I must hone my skills until I am worthy of taking on that responsibility.
- 4 The king declared "whosoever can venture forth & return with the Golden Fleece / the Head of the Dragon / slay the Cannibal Ogre shall be ennobled." This is my family's chance at greatness!
- 5 My late father entrusted me with our family's deepest secret: the location of a fearsome weapon / lost treasure / wondrous artifact
- 6 I don't know if it's my winning smile, my golden curls, or my ocean-blue eyes, but people fight over the chance to be friends with me

d6 Flaw

- 1 My brother / sister hate me with a rage that confounds me
- 2 I project my own weaknesses on the people around me, rather than admit I might not be perfect
- 3 I am *desperate* to please. I'll do *anything* to avoid disappointing one of my authority figures, such as a parent or teacher.
- 4 I can fall into dejection if people don't recognize my achievements (loudly, often, & with appropriate vigor!)
- 5 I *hate* it when people outshine me. I can brood in cold outrage for weeks before I get my vengeance my for humiliation
- 6 I can never forgive myself for failure, even if it's not my fault. I feel so guilty I have to do something to make things right.

LOVE CHILD

Imagine living the plodding life of a medieval farmer: turn the soil, plant the seeds, pray for rain, cull the weeds, bring in the harvest... Then everything dies & you hunker down in whatever hovel you managed to patch together & pray the cold doesn't kill you before starvation does.

And then you see your first elf. Effortless grace! The wonder! Such beauty! Who could resist such perfection? Frankly, it's amazing there aren't more half elves around. Only the worst prude could object to such a love. Elves, though, are free as the wind. To cage an elf is to destroy them. All too soon, the elf must move on & the human farmer is left with nothing but memories...

But then, nine months later...

You are a love child: the product of an affair between 2 unmarried people (assumed to be an elf & a human in this project). What was your childhood like? Children are famous for their cruelty when it comes to people who don't look like them. Did they bully you? How has your life changed as you grew older? Do people consider your looks odd? Or exotic?

Who raised you? You are the living reminder of the single most exciting, romantic experience in your parent's life. Does your parent love you for it? Or do they somehow resent you, as if it was your fault the love of their life disappeared forever?

What about your absent parent? They were never there for you while you were growing up, but does that really matter? Do you fantasize about meeting your absent parent & the adventures you might embark upon? Or do you crave a chance to berate them over the hell their absence put you through?

Skill Proficiencies: History, Insight

Tool Proficiencies: 1 Gaming Set of your choice & 1 Musical Instrument of your choice

Equipment: Either 1 gaming set or 1 musical instrument of your choice; a gift brooch / teddy bear / letter from your mother; an extra-thick, extra-soft knitted wool sweater; 1d6 packed lunches wrapped in brown paper; a set of common clothes; & a belt pouch containing 15 gp

With elves being the chaotic, freedom-loving, nigh immortal creatures that they are, & with humans being more sentimental & at least somewhat possessive, the human parent is more likely to raise a love child. However, this is hardly the rule.

d12	Raised by...	d12	Your absent parent(s)...
1-3	...human mother	1-3	...was exiled for practicing the "Love which Dare Not Speak its Name."
4-6	...human father	4-6	...forever watches you from afar, but is cursed to never speak to you again.
7-8	...elven mother	7-8	...is lost adventuring in the Fey Wild.
9-10	...elven father	9-10	...is trapped in a twinkling crystal prison suspended high in the night sky
11	...an uncle / aunt	11	...is king / queen of a far away land that no one's ever heard of.
12	...your grandparents	12	...died defending you from the Faerie Queen / a pack of werewolves / a racist wizard.

FEATURE: MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR

Your whole life someone's been sending you little tidbits, gifts, & souvenirs. There's never been anything as communicative as a letter or a message, but you always receive a very special present on your birthday.

Not to mention, as you grew up, your mysterious benefactor somehow kept up with your changes tastes even so far as to know your favorite foods!

Your parent claims she is flabbergasted as to whom this person might be, but you have an idea. Recently, you've received a strange gift, a very strange gift indeed. One odd enough to spur your search...

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Many love children are the product of a whirlwind union of star crossed lovers. Love children have happy childhoods provided by one (or, very rarely, both) loving parent, who is still basking in the rosy, although possibly bittersweet, afterglow of their exciting romantic affair.

Since almost all love children grow up with an absent parent, many a love child's first quest is to discover more about their missing parentage. In spite of this one loose, if rather important, thread, love children tend to grow up to be cheery, well-rounded individuals, thanks to the love & attention lavished upon them when they were young.

Note: On the following tables, to avoid awkward writing, we assumed it was your (human) mother who raised you.

Adjust the entries to suit your character.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I always compare the food we eat to my mother's home cooking
- 2 I'm a love'em & leave'em kinda person
- 3 My mother & I used to play this game / instrument all the time. Come! Let me teach you how to play!
- 4 I'm relentlessly optimistic. I always see the best in every situation.
- 5 Everywhere I go, I collect a little gift, perhaps a postcard or box of sweets, to bring home to my mother as a souvenir.
- 6 I was an only child. I'm not afraid to head off on my own
- 7 I find myself humming songs my mother used to sing
- 8 It's a personality flaw, but it really, REALLY annoys me when anybody touches my stuff

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Abandonment.** What does it matter? You're just going to leave me in the end. They always do. (Evil)
- 2 **Life.** Don't give up! We always find a way (Any non-Evil)
- 3 **Love.** Have you ever been wrapped up in a soft, fluffy towel straight out of the laundry? Yeah, my family's like that. (Good)
- 4 **Self-Sufficiency.** I know how to stand on my own 2 feet. (Neutral)
- 5 **Sentimentality.** Tell me no more! Only a heartless fiend could ignore such a woeful tale! *Of course we'll help!* (Chaotic)
- 6 **Support.** Look. There's no one else. It's up to us now. (Lawful)

d6 Bond

- 1 On the day I set out on my adventures, my mother gave me this sigil ring. It's the only clue I have to my father's identity.
- 2 Until someone pointed out I was a half elf, it never struck me as strange that my father... I mean my step-father... was human
- 3 Every night, I wake up screaming from a nightmare of razor toothed demons attacking & devouring a strangely familiar elf...
- 4 Out of the blue one day, a strange, young elf / half elf / human girl showed up on our doorstep: I have a sister I never knew about!
- 5 The villagers never understood my family, & they're getting more & more violent. My mother & I need to find a new place to live.
- 6 I'm discovering strange new powers / skills I could never have imagined. My mother says my father is the only one who can explain what is happening to me

d6 Flaw

- 1 My mother lied about my father my whole life! I'll never forgive her for keeping me in the dark about family secrets, secrets about me
- 2 My absent father must be the most awesome adventurer ever. He traveled the world! Wrestled giants! Out-stared the sun! I'd do anything for him!
- 3 Bastardy is my berserk button. I cannot contain my rage if someone belittles my family.
- 4 There's something bad in my genes. Something didn't mix right. I suffer hemophilia / bouts of lethal depression / a thirst for blood
- 5 I'm certain it's my fault that my father left us. I'll do anything to make everything right!
- 6 I'm reckless about secrets. It's never been an issue in my family. I have trouble understanding how or why people can be so furtive

PUNK

*Gods save the queen!
She ain't no human being!
There is no future!
In our land's dreaming!*

*Don't be told what you want!
Don't be told what you need!
There's no future! NO FUTURE!
No future for you!*

They think they know it all. They think they know what's best. Well, if they're so bloody smart, why are *they* the ones slaving in the shit & mud when the king is all up on his gold throne? I ain't no sucker, man. I know the deal. I'm not going to wait for his nibs to throw me a bone. I got plenty o'me own bones to throw around.

Society ain't all it's cracked up to be. But what are you gonna do? Most people are too stupid or too sheepish to do anything about it. Even if they could, most of them don't even see the problem to begin with. That's why the punks do what they do. They're trying to shock a docile populace out of its complacency.

How do you express your rebellion? Do you reject human / elf fashion in favor of races other than your own? Do you indulge in body modification? How extreme are your piercings &/or tattoos? Do you paint graffiti critical of the king / sheriff / local lord? Do you hold rallies / concerts / protests to foment discontent?

What exactly is your problem with people? Is the problem society? The expectations of politeness? The responsibilities they claim a "mature citizen" is expected to fulfill? Are you more frustrated with the sheep-like people around you who are so stupid, so WEAK, that they don't even see the problem in the first place?

Or, is this all just the delusions of grandeur of an adolescent mind?

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Insight

Tool Proficiencies: Thieves' tools & 1 musical instrument of your choice

Equipment: A musical instrument of your choice; a beat up notebook filled with your songs / poetry; 1d6 uses of hair dye in various colors (but mostly black); dozens of safety pins, spikes, & piercings to modify your clothes &/or for body-art; a set of black leather common clothes; & a belt pouch with 10 gp.

d12	Body Modification	Body Modification
1	black nail polish	7 1d12 ear, facial, &/or body piercings
2	head shaved bald	8 1d6 facial, arm, &/or body tattoos
3	hair dyed black	9 blood red contact lenses
4	rainbow Mohawk	10 all-black contact lenses
5	double Mohawk	11 reptilian sub-dermal implants
6	hair & skin bleached bone white	12 Cosmetic demon wings magically implanted at temples or shoulders

FEATURE: REBEL, REBEL

Whether it's your intangible but pervasive air of rebellion, or the crazy, colorfully spiked hair, the black leather jacket, & the piercings in your face & body, there's something about you that people recognize as defiance.

Naturally, you prick authorities' ire, gaining you unwarranted harassment from the police. On the other hand, subversive elements of society, people like starving artists, the homeless, even mob bosses, recognize in you a kindred spirit.

It's all too easy for you to stir up trouble. Goading a guardsman into abandoning his post & chasing you down the street? Piece of cake. Rousing a crowd into a garbage throwing mob? Not a problem! Anytime anyone gives you half an ear, you know exactly what to say to piss them off.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

The world is easy. Why does everyone have make things so *hard* all the bleeding time? If they'd just listen to me for half a minute, I'd sort them out right quick...

When punks look at society, they see one thing: people are fricking stupid. Either they're trying to push you around, like the sheriff, the king, or your mother does all the time, or they're just too dumb to share the same air.

Luckily, you found an outlet, a way to let off some of the steam from the stupidity pressure cooker you're forced to live in. One way or another, you found your way into the punk movement, screaming your rage & frustration to music blasted at volumes almost too loud to hear.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 BO is natural. Chicks dig the pheromones.
- 2 After a big success, I pierce something or get a tattoo to celebrate
- 3 I have a favorite black leather jacket that I *always* wear. I'll cram it over my armor if I have to, but I'll never leave home without it
- 4 I insist on giving our adventuring party a name... something like "the Dragon Blitters" & I scream our name as my war cry
- 5 I play my music in public places & scream out my anger-rage-frustrations at passersby
- 6 Don't. Touch... the *HAIR!!!!*
- 7 Nose picking, farting, spitting... who cares if it's "rude"? It's the thought that counts, right?
- 8 Look, stop calling me "Jon," alright m8? It's "Raven Nitescream" now

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Angst.** *YOU'RE NOT MY DAD!* (Any non-Good)
- 2 **Individuality.** I'm not going to tell you what to do or what to think. You just need to *think*. (Neutral)
- 3 **Mutiny.** The fact that it's what *HE* wants us to do is all the reason we need to tell him to go screw himself. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Passion.** I don't care what we do. Just do it *now*. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Pushing Boundaries.** Sometimes you gotta get outta yourself to find yourself, y'kno? (Any non-Lawful)
- 6 **Rebellion.** DON'T tell me what to do! (Chaotic)

d6 Bond

- 1 They think it's just stupid music, but really we're a whole movement. Fight the power!
- 2 My mom is on me to cut my hair & get a "real" job. Bigger that!
- 3 My people are losing more & more money to the so-called "nobles." Pretty soon we'll be nothing but slaves.
- 4 Humans? Elves? They're all the same: friggin' sheep. It's like there's a conformity curse or something.
- 5 Never mind the bollocks. The skinny is the "king" is just a lazy parasite sucking the blood from the rest of us like a greedy lizard
- 6 I'm never going home! They'll force me to get married if I ever go back! And the person they found? Ugh! Face like a frog!

d6 Flaw

- 1 I have a real problem with authority. Who do they think they are?! *Down with the Man!*
- 2 Trust is for fools. "Friendly" people are either idiots or liars.
- 3 (I suffer from crippling self-doubt, which I mask with my rudeness)
- 4 If I don't like someone, I go out of my way to piss them off. And, there's aLOT of people I don't like.
- 5 Society is so screwed up, who'd want to face it sober? *BELCH*
- 6 That sheriff! Always hassling me, just cuz I dyed my Mohawk neon pink. Well, wait 'til he finds out I stole his jail keys. Bloody berk.