

P.B. PUBLISHING

THE BIG BOOK OF BACKGROUNDS



Cody Faulk



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *The Big Book of Backgrounds*. Perhaps the best way to introduce this book and how it should be used is to discuss the motivations for making it and the intent behind it. To that end:

One of the many reasons that 5E is great is because it provides a wide array of choices to players when shaping their characters, but it also pays close attention to balance as it does so. Choice is important, as it is the lifeblood of any RPG, but balance is also critical. And why is that? Because balance protects choice. We don't want any player to ever feel like they *need* to choose a certain option during character creation or risk ending up with a lame duck character that can't measure up to its companions.

Presenting options that are balanced relative to each other means that a player is free to choose whatever suits them... to the degree you can ensure such a thing, at least. No system is perfect, and some settings, situations, and play styles will always lend themselves to some choices over others, but that's just life, really. To the extent one can preserve balance alongside freedom of choice in a role-playing game, it's generally a good idea, and it was certainly central to the design of 5E. More on that in a moment.

With the availability of choices being so important in a game like this, many feel compelled to create new and exciting choices for players, especially when it comes to character creation. The options presented in the core materials are great, but maybe there is room for more. Who doesn't like more choices, after all? Variety is the spice of life and all that, right? By all means, then, let us create! Expand! Elaborate! It's an RPG: imagination is everything!

So what sorts of choices are available to players during character creation? Race? Class? Feats? Of course! But 5E also introduced backgrounds, and these are a really great way to add depth to characters, filling in narrative blanks here and there, all while adding some mechanical influence into the mix, as well. While they obviously help flesh out a character's story, backgrounds also determine which proficiencies a character gets and their starting equipment. They also come with a special feature: one which should be carefully crafted if balance is to be maintained across all of the options.

These features are important, as they do help a character, but not in conventionally mechanical ways. The stock 5E backgrounds never grant something as directly useful as advantage to ability checks or bonuses to attack rolls. Background features are intended to be useful from a role-playing perspective – to further the story and to give that character access to options or edges that don't necessarily come up in the course of normal play all the time.

A properly balanced background feature should present the player with specialized avenues and opportunities to be heroic and unique in certain situations. This understanding is just as important as making sure that a background provides the proper number of proficiencies or the right level of equipment. If one wishes to create a new background and make sure it is balanced relative to other backgrounds (as is the spirit of 5E), one must be careful to keep these considerations in mind when shaping features, assigning proficiencies, etc.

So why all this discussion about choices and balance and backgrounds? What does it have to do with this book? *The Big Book of Backgrounds* was born out of the desire to present players with interesting new choices when creating their characters, specifically in the form of fully fleshed-out backgrounds. At the same time, the intent was to create *balanced* backgrounds that would not be more or less useful than the already existing ones. The backgrounds presented here were designed to fit as seamlessly as possible with those that came before (and hopefully those that may come after). Don't think of these options as replacements or improvements. These are simply companions that should accompany those that are already available.

That being the case, this book is intended to be used during character creation as a supplement to the existing background options available. Players and Game Masters should not fret over whether or not these backgrounds are mechanically balanced or if one or more of them are objectively better or worse than existing options. These backgrounds are intended to expand the options presented to players while respecting the spirit of balance that 5E has done such a good job establishing.

The Big Book of Backgrounds was created with players and GMs both in mind, and we sincerely hope you find it to be a useful and fun supplement for all of your 5E adventures. Good luck out there!



BACKGROUNDS

ADVISOR

You are an advisor to an important person. Perhaps you are the personal advisor to a local lord, or maybe you are a warlord's military strategist. In any case, you are frequently looked to for advice by someone with power. Your role is not necessarily one of fame and prestige, though it could be. It is also possible that you help rule from the shadows, whispering your advice to your liege in secret to ensure that he makes the right decisions. You may even occasionally pen documents on your superior's behalf – with or without their knowledge.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: Forgery Kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A bottle of ink, a quill, 3 pieces of parchment, a set of fine clothes, and a pouch containing 15 gp.

FEATURE: POSITION OF POWER

Because of your position, you command a certain respect. People who both know who you are and also have a vested interest in pleasing your liege tend to give you the benefit of the doubt and will go out of their way not to draw your ire, lest they potentially incur the wrath of your superior. Others within the organization you are a part of are also likely to curry favor from you however they can. Beware, however, as there could also be some close to you who are jealous of your position and may wish for your downfall.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Who is your liege? How did you come by your position? Do you advise your superior to be wise and just to protect his subjects? Do you care only for the law and the structure it imposes on society? Do you use your influence in an attempt to bend the land's ruler to your will for your own gain? Perhaps you encourage

violence to sate your own blood thirst. Your motives, morality, and ethics should play a very strong role in how you approach your role as advisor, and they should also help shape the relationship you have with your superior.

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your liege send you on a quest of great importance, or is it a decision you reached on your own? Or did you find your role as an advisor after adventuring for awhile?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am convinced that my beliefs are the correct ones. Anyone who believes differently is at best mistaken.
- 2 I enjoy when people recognize my importance.
- 3 I am annoyed by people who ask me for help and advice. Just because I am an advisor does not mean I am *their* advisor.
- 4 I consider those of lesser station than me to be inferior and less worthy of respect.
- 5 I never forget a debt owed to me, nor one I owe to someone else.
- 6 It is my responsibility to make sure my friends are taken care of however I can.
- 7 I consider it my duty to educate those who are ignorant of something I am knowledgeable about.
- 8 I always conduct myself formally and with dignity.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Tradition.** The best advice I can provide is to keep to the laws and traditions of the past. (Lawful)
- 2 **Justice.** No matter the situation or circumstances, any slight must be met with swift justice. (Lawful)
- 3 **Power.** My proximity to power ensures my authority and dominion over those beneath me. (Evil)
- 4 **Responsibility.** My position and its power come with a responsibility to do right by those whom my advice may impact. (Good)
- 5 **Change.** It is my duty to steer my superior's decisions toward growth and change so that things do not stagnate. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Practicality.** Always take the most effective route toward accomplishing one's goals. (Neutral)



d6 Bond

- 1 The organization I am a part of is all that matters to me. My role is to serve it as best I can.
- 2 I admire and respect my superior, and I will gladly serve him or her for as long as they will have me.
- 3 I was put in this position by other influential forces to keep an eye on my superior. My true loyalty lies to these other powers.
- 4 People will know my name before I'm through with this world.
- 5 I was put in this position by my mentor: my superior's predecessor. I miss my mentor dearly.
- 6 This position is a means to an end. Someday, it will be my turn to rule.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I advise rather than lead because I'm unwilling to make hard decisions myself.
- 2 I once provided terrible advice which had catastrophic consequences for my superior, but he does not realize I was the one responsible for steering him down the wrong path in the first place. I will do anything to make sure he does not come to that conclusion.
- 3 I have a hard time saying no to people who flatter me, regardless of their motivations.
- 4 I can't help myself when I learn something secret. I simply must tell someone.
- 5 I am not afraid to use my position of power if it means I can get the things I want.
- 6 I secretly believe that I should be the one in power, not my superior.

VARIANT ADVISOR: ARCANE ADVISOR

You are, specifically, your liege's advisor on arcane matters. Perhaps you are the court wizard in a small court, or maybe you are the chieftain's personal medicine man. If you choose the Arcane Advisor variant of the Advisor background, this background gives you proficiency in the Arcana skill instead of History.

AFFLICTED

Your most formative experiences have come about because you are afflicted with a chronic disease which you have not been able to cure. The exact nature of your affliction may vary from others who share this background, but your experiences with your disease and perhaps your efforts to find a cure have taught you certain skills and given you certain experiences.

Mechanically, one should assume that the disease does not affect or penalize a character's statistics, but one might

choose to roleplay that some of their existing ability scores and traits are at least partially the result of the disease. For instance, a player who makes a character with a low strength score and this background might choose to roleplay their character in such a way that their disease is responsible for their low strength score, though the disease does not actually penalize the character's strength score. The manifestation of this disease is purely for narrative and roleplaying purposes.

Skill Proficiencies: Investigation, Medicine

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism Kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A journal full of notes involving your affliction and cures you have attempted, a book or a collection of notes on conditions similar to yours, an herbalism kit, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: UNTOUCHABLE

Your affliction may or may not be an obvious one to others, but once they become aware of it, most people want nothing to do with you for fear of the consequences which might befall them due to their proximity to you. While this can certainly complicate matters social and otherwise in some cases, it can also sometimes work to the Afflicted's benefit. There are many instances in which the wide berth people might give you might actually allow you to get away with things others may not. For instance, people may turn a blind eye to minor offenses or insults, petty crimes, or other social faux pas because they are unwilling to confront someone with your particular affliction face to face. In this way, while you are used to persecution when people learn of your curse, it can also provide a form of armor as few are willing to risk their own safety to challenge you for what they might consider minor slights.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How does your disease manifest? What are its symptoms? How long have you had it and how did you contract it? How does it affect your interactions with others? To what lengths are you willing to go when searching for the cure? How do you prefer to



investigate for possible cures?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you contract your disease while adventuring? Or is your quest for a cure what drove you to take up the life of an adventurer in the first place?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I know life is short, so I try to live it to its fullest.
- 2 I go to great lengths to conceal my condition.
- 3 I rely heavily on gallows humor.
- 4 I act in public like there's nothing wrong with me.
- 5 I firmly believe that no one is worse off than me.
- 6 I don't like to talk to strangers, for fear of them judging me.
- 7 I am more concerned with my own pursuits than other people's.
- 8 Spend money while you're alive and healthy; you might not have the chance otherwise.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Dedication.** Just because I'm sick doesn't mean I can't help others. (Good)
- 2 **Exploitation.** Pity and fear are tools I can wield to my advantage at the expense of others. (Evil)
- 3 **Cure.** My primary concern above all others is finding a cure. (Neutral)
- 4 **Rubric.** Systematic research and testing will restore me. (Lawful)
- 5 **Variety.** The best way to find my cure is to try everything. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Health.** I just want to be healthy again. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 My affliction is divine punishment for something horrible I did.
- 2 I'm afraid if I die before I cure this, I will return as the undead.
- 3 I must cure myself before I return to my loved one(s).
- 4 I was exiled from my people because of my disease. Someday I intend to return.
- 5 I am trying to raise money to fund a serious attempt at curing my disease.
- 6 Anyone willing to stand by my side through this trial is a true friend and worthy of my loyalty.

d6 Flaw

- 1 When discussing my disease, I go into way too much detail.
- 2 I will try anything, even something potentially harmful, if I think it might cure me.
- 3 I am reckless to a fault.
- 4 I shamelessly try to use my condition to get attention, pity, and special treatment.
- 5 I am afraid of other diseases and germs; I think I might be especially susceptible to them.
- 6 I refuse to take food or drink from others for fear of what might be in it.

VARIANT AFFLICTED: CURSED

Rather than a physical disease, your affliction takes the form of a mystical curse which cannot be removed by conventional means. If you choose the Cursed variant of the Afflicted background, this background gives you proficiency in either the Religion or Arcana skill (choose one) instead of Medicine.

APOSTATE

You were once a devout believer in a particular religion, but circumstances led you to renounce your faith, or at least your membership to whichever specific religion you previously subscribed. You may have left quietly, you may have made a scene, but in any case, the religion you turned away from took note of your disaffiliation and has thus labeled you an apostate. Your experiences along this path have shaped who you are today.

Skill Proficiencies: Religion and your choice of one from: Deception, History, or Persuasion

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A holy symbol from the religion you abandoned, a treatise or book on another belief system, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: APOSTASY

You have a working knowledge of the particular religion you used to belong to, including its beliefs, teachings, rites, and expectations, and you generally know where you might expect to find followers of that religion. While you no longer have a favorable status among that religion and its believers, you are still familiar with certain significant figures within that religion and may have information about them, as well (discuss with your GM).



You are also, of course, familiar with how that religion handles apostates like yourself, including their relevant policies and tactics. As such, you have at least some idea how to attempt to avoid the notice of the remaining members of your former religion, and you also know where to look to potentially find other apostates similar to yourself.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Do you regret your decision to turn your back on your religion or do you stand firm in your choice? Would you go back if they would let you? Do you resent those who still belong to your erstwhile congregation? Do you still hold to any of the tenets of your faith, or have you abandoned all of it? What made you turn your back on your religion? The teachings? The other believers? Are your former brethren hostile toward you or do they simply mourn your absence?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you stumble into adventures once you left your religion? Or did your path of adventure teach you to grow apart from your religion somehow?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I don't talk about my beliefs unless absolutely necessary.
- 2 Worldly possessions are important; how else do you know how successful you are?
- 3 There's nothing I can't accomplish.
- 4 I am extremely protective of my friends and family.
- 5 I assume the worst about people until I know better.
- 6 I do not suffer insults or disrespect lightly.
- 7 I never apologize for anything.
- 8 I am always polite, especially to strangers.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Free Thinking.** People should make their own choices about what they believe in. (Neutral)
- 2 **Dogma.** One's beliefs should be built around a strict ethos. (Lawful)
- 3 **Benevolence.** One's beliefs should serve the greater good. (Good)
- 4 **Dominance.** Religion can be an effective tool to dominate others. (Evil)
- 5 **Self-Respect.** Mine is the only opinion that matters to me. (Any)
- 6 **Independence.** I wanted to be an individual, not just another supplicant. (Chaotic)

d6 Bond

- 1 I left behind people very important to me when I left my religion.
- 2 I intend to start my own religion and show people the true path.
- 3 I hold great respect for anyone who shares my beliefs.
- 4 I am totally shunned by those of my previous faith when they find out I'm an apostate.
- 5 I feel compelled to get involved when I meet someone else struggling with their religion's beliefs.
- 6 Even if I travel far, my home is never far from my thoughts.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I doze off at inopportune places and times.
- 2 I usually say the first thing that pops into my head; I have no filter.
- 3 I try to fix things that aren't broken, often breaking them.
- 4 My table manners are atrocious.
- 5 I've been told I'm forgetful, but I don't remember why.
- 6 Impatience is an art I've perfected.

CAREGIVER

By choice or circumstance, some people are called to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. You are one such caregiver. Perhaps you look after the elders in your home village, or maybe you are one of the people who looks after children at a local orphanage. You may be a nurse or orderly in a sanitarium, or you might simply volunteer to look after the sick. Your dependents might even be your own children or relatives. In any case, now or in your past, you have had the task of taking care of the daily needs and physical wellbeing of people who are dependent on you for their survival.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine and your choice of either Perception or Insight

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A set of common clothes and a pouch containing 15 gp.

FEATURE: EFFICIENT CARE

As a caregiver, you are familiar with what is required to take care of others, particularly on a limited budget. Your lifestyle expenses only cost half as much as normal as long as you maintain a modest lifestyle (or lower). This also applies if you are responsible for the lifestyle expenses of others. For each person you are responsible for, you may maintain

their lifestyle expenses at half the usual cost as long as you maintain a modest (or lower) lifestyle for them.

Additionally, wherever you are, you can easily locate and find work at local caregiving establishments, such as orphanages, hospitals, communal living for the elderly, or even in the homes of those who employ servants to look after their dependents.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How do you treat your dependents? Are you benevolent? Ambivalent? Malevolent? How did you become a caregiver? Do you like being a caregiver? What are your motivations for taking care of your charges? How selective are you about who you will care for? Who cares for your dependents while you are out adventuring?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you end up an adventurer as part of a quest to do something important for one of your dependents? Did you end up as a caregiver during the course of a previous adventure? Perhaps you need to fulfill some goal in order to help or protect the ones you look after. Is it that you are adventuring to help support your caretaking efforts? Or instead, are you questing for something that will help you exploit those under your care as part of some wicked plot?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 It's a thankless job, and I resent that.
- 2 I have the patience of a saint.
- 3 I am a curmudgeon.
- 4 I have a great sense of humor.
- 5 I am a staunch optimist.
- 6 I tend toward extremes of emotion.
- 7 I don't believe in compromises.
- 8 I try to keep everyone around me happy.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Importance.** It's not always a fun job, but it's important. (Neutral)
- 2 **Altruism.** I love the people I look after and truly wish to help them. (Good)
- 3 **Choice.** My charges need not surrender choice in exchange for survival. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Duty.** Someone has to care for these people; might as well be me. (Lawful)
- 5 **Selfishness.** I care for my charges because it benefits me. (Evil)
- 6 **Priority.** My most critical concern is the survival of my dependents. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 At least one of my dependents is a member of my family.
- 2 I can't stop until I've repaid my debt.
- 3 One of my charges has important information that people want.
- 4 I grew up an orphan, so I can relate to the helpless.
- 5 Someone died under my care due to my negligence, and I haven't forgiven myself.
- 6 I can't have children of my own, so this is the next best thing.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I secretly resent my dependents and their constant needs.
- 2 I abuse substances to help deal with the stress.
- 3 I automatically assume everyone needs me to take care of them in some way.
- 4 I complain about how hard my job is to anyone who will listen.
- 5 I try not to get attached to anyone if I can help it.
- 6 I take out my frustrations on my charges.

COLLECTOR

There are things in this world that deserve to be found, acquired, and kept. Perhaps it's weapons. Perhaps it's paintings. Perhaps it's poetry or songs. Maybe it's antique spoons. Regardless of what "it" is, you collect it, and that is your passion. Most of your life and/or career has been spent in pursuit of completing your collection. The specifics of your quarry and your methods may vary from other collectors, but one thing remains in common. You simply must complete your collection or you don't know what you'd do with yourself. It is much more than just an idle hobby to you.

Skill Proficiencies: Investigation and your choice of one from: Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion

Tool Proficiencies: Your choice of one type of artisan's tools

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Several large sacks, at least one item from your personal collection, a list of other items you wish to collect (some with possible locations), a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

d20 Collection Focus

- 1 Soil from each new place you visit
- 2 Flowers
- 3 Gemstones
- 4 Weapons
- 5 Books and writing on a particular subject, or by a specific author
- 6 Coins
- 7 Monster hair/pelts
- 8 Bird feathers
- 9 Sculptures by a specific artist
- 10 Insects of a particular type
- 11 Poisons
- 12 Harmless magic items
- 13 Animal pelts
- 14 Religious relics
- 15 Paintings concerning a specific subject matter
- 16 Bones from specific creatures
- 17 Jokes
- 18 Maps
- 19 Shoes
- 20 Recipes

FEATURE: SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT

Because you are such an avid collector, you have keen insight into the objects of your obsession. As such, whenever you are dealing with objects which are or should be in your collection, you are able to accurately assess the rarity and value of such items (both to the public and to collectors such as yourself) that you encounter. Likewise, you are able to easily recognize and identify imitations, fakes, and counterfeits among such items.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What are the circumstances that led you to start collecting? What lengths are you willing to go to in order to complete your collection? How complete is your collection and how long have you been collecting? Do you collect for yourself or as part of a group? What would you do if you ever finished your collection? Where do you keep the items you collect and how do you protect them, if at all? Do you have any obstacles preventing you from finishing your collection?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you take to a life of adventure in an effort to pursue your collecting more directly? Or were you an adventurer for other reasons, and your collection became part of your life somewhere along the way? If so, what happened that convinced you to start collecting, and why did you become an adventurer in the first place?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I keep the items in my collection, and myself, meticulously clean.
- 2 If we aren't talking about my collection, I'm probably not paying attention.
- 3 I am proud of my collection and will show it to anyone who expresses interest.
- 4 I don't know what small talk is or how to do it.
- 5 I keep careful notes about everything I can.
- 6 A stranger is just another potential friend.
- 7 I prefer to be told what to do.
- 8 I spend a lot of time worrying about my appearance and/or reputation.



d6 Ideal

- 1 **Completion.** No rest until my collection is complete. (Any)
- 2 **Protection.** I must keep these things safe so that others may enjoy them, too. (Good)
- 3 **Ephemerality.** Ownership is an illusion. I'm only holding these for now. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Archive.** Each one has a name, and each name has its place in the catalog. (Lawful)
- 5 **Greed.** I will have them all because I want them all - whatever it takes. (Evil)
- 6 **Rationalization.** If I don't collect them, someone else will. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 One of my parents left me their collection when they died, and I seek to complete it.
- 2 I lost my original collection when my home was destroyed.
- 3 I am often in direct competition with a rival collector.
- 4 Working on my collection is the only thing that keeps my haunting memories at bay.
- 5 I traded something very precious away for part of my collection, and I want it back.
- 6 Part of my collection was stolen from me; I must retrieve it.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I will degrade myself to acquire the parts of my collection if that's what it takes.
- 2 I am quick to believe anyone when it comes to what they know about the objects I collect.
- 3 I quickly lose interest when anyone speaks about anything other than the items I collect.
- 4 I have no concept of what other people do with their free time if it's not directly related to collecting.
- 5 I have a hard time recognizing the value of anything unrelated to my collection.
- 6 I am paranoid that everyone wants to take my collection away from me.

COURIER

You are a courier who is no stranger to travel. Perhaps you are a messenger for a powerful organization in your home city, or perhaps you are an independent agent whom people call upon when they absolutely need an item to get from one place to another. In any case, you make your way in the world by transporting things, be they goods, information, news, or even people, from one place to another. You may ply your trade solely within the city walls of a sprawling urban center, or you may range across continents and oceans to fulfill your mission. Perhaps both. Whatever your expertise, you specialize in getting things where they need to be quickly and safely.

Skill Proficiencies: Acrobatics, Athletics

Tool Proficiencies: One of your choice from: Navigator's Tools, Land Vehicles, or Sea Vehicles

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A satchel, a set of traveler's clothes, a trinket or souvenir from your travels, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: SHORTCUTS

As a courier, you are expected to deliver your charges swiftly and without fail. As this is your profession, you have developed a sense for how to get through familiar territory efficiently by putting your knowledge of both local shortcuts and obstacles to work. When traveling for an hour or more under your own power or via a vehicle with which you are proficient, you and anyone travelling with you may either travel 25% faster than normal or require 25% less distance traveled to reach your destination. The GM may choose either option as appropriate for the situation. You may only use this feature if you are personally familiar with the specific area through which you travel; secondhand knowledge of an area is insufficient to gain the benefits of this feature.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How did you get started as a courier? Are you independent, or do you work for someone else, perhaps an organization of some type? If you do have an employer, what is the nature of your relationship with them? Do you specialize in moving a particular type of product? Do you have any rules as to what kind of missions you will consider? Which geographic areas are you most familiar with? How much of the world have you seen?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Are you still a courier? If not, what happened to end your career? Did your current mission set you on the path to adventure? Are you between jobs looking to pick up a new contract?



d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I welcome a difficult task.
- 2 I collect a keepsake from every place I've been.
- 3 I look for the silver lining in every situation.
- 4 I love meeting new people.
- 5 I pity people who have lived in the same place all their lives.
- 6 I can't resist telling or hearing a good story.
- 7 Being a staunch realist has kept me alive this long.
- 8 I hate nothing more than wasting time.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Duty.** I am bound to fulfill my errand by any means necessary. (Lawful)
- 2 **Freedom.** Only when in motion am I truly free. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Impartiality.** I don't care what the job is or whom it's for. (Neutral)
- 4 **Exploitation.** Those who trust me to keep their secrets safe from prying eyes are foolish to have such trust. (Evil)
- 5 **Reputation.** One way or another, I will be known for what I do. (Any)
- 6 **Service.** I am honored by the trust people place in me. Service is its own reward. (Good)

d6 Bond

- 1 Nothing is more important to me than my current mission.
- 2 If I say I will do something, I'll let nothing stop me.
- 3 My courier days will end as soon as I have enough money to settle down.
- 4 I have family at home waiting for me between trips.
- 5 The call of the road or the sea is irresistible to me. I can't settle down anywhere for long.
- 6 The journey is its own reward. I don't care where I'm going, as long as it is an adventure.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I frequently find myself committed to more tasks than I can handle.
- 2 I have a hard time prioritizing anything ahead of my own pleasure.
- 3 I can't resist exploring somewhere I've never been when the opportunity arises.
- 4 The more secret my cargo, the more desperately I have to know what it is.
- 5 Boredom is my greatest enemy. I will do anything to avoid it.
- 6 Sometimes my packages don't make it where they are supposed to go, especially if they are valuable or interesting.

DAREDEVIL

Something within you just isn't happy unless you're risking your life. The thrill of adrenaline pumping through your veins is the best feeling you can imagine, and you are constantly looking for new and exciting ways to push your limits. Whatever it takes to get that that sweet rush of adrenaline, you're at least going to consider it, if not leap at it headlong. You may be bound to this life by some sort of promise, or you might pursue it simply by your whim. In either case, you live to risk your life.

Skill Proficiencies: Acrobatics, Athletics

Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A set of traveler's clothes, a map calling out points of interest to a daredevil, 50 feet of hemp rope, a gaming set, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: SWAGGER

Through your words, mannerisms, and actions, you demonstrate a certain subtle (or not) confidence in your own ability to attempt and survive death-defying feats. Those who observe and interact with you typically cannot deny that your confidence seems legitimate. When interacting with a creature you can meaningfully communicate with, they are very likely to believe that you will attempt (and likely succeed at) any dangerous task you express interest and intent in performing.

For example, when a daredevil character tells the king that they will scale the wall and save the prince, the king is likely to believe that the character can and will do just that. Likewise, while saving the prince, if the character warns off the kidnapper by saying, "Don't come any closer or we'll jump off this bridge!" the kidnapper is likely to take the statement seriously and react accordingly, whether that means stopping, attacking, or any other action that makes sense for that NPC believing that threat.

On the other hand, if the character were to threaten, "I'll slay you and all your guards if you don't let us go!" the kidnapper is likely to believe that the character will attempt it, though given the situation and the number of guards, the kidnapper might make his own determination about the probable outcome.



It is always up to the GM to decide how this feature affects an NPC's behavior and reactions, but the GM is encouraged to at least factor it into NPC interactions with the character where applicable so that the NPCs give the daredevil the benefit of the doubt when it comes to their ability and willingness to risk their own life.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What led you to the path of an adrenaline junkie? Do you enjoy the lifestyle, or is it something you feel compelled to do for some other reason? Knowing that people are often captivated by your death-defying acts, how does that shape your behavior, if it does at all? Is there anything that could convince you to give up this life? Do you seek to convince others that your way is a favorable one? Or do you live this way as a warning to others? Ultimately, what do you hope to gain from this way of life?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Is your adventuring career just an extension of your thrill seeking? Is adventuring an unfortunate distraction from your true passion? Or perhaps it is a necessary burden, in that you must quest to find greater danger with which to sate your desire for risk.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Life is too short not to push your limits.
- 2 I only feel alive when I'm risking my life.
- 3 My own mortality isn't something I care much for.
- 4 Battle is the ultimate thrill.
- 5 Boredom is worth than death.
- 6 People who aren't willing to take risks don't truly appreciate their lives.
- 7 I'm indestructible.
- 8 Reckless people are attractive. I'm as reckless as they come.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Fame.** Everyone will know my name. (Any)
- 2 **Freedom.** True freedom comes only in a rush of adrenaline. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Education.** I hope my example serves as a lesson to others. (Good)
- 4 **Followers.** People will follow someone brave right off a cliff, and I won't be shy about taking them there. (Evil)
- 5 **Clarity.** I find clarity in cheating death for no reason other than my own desire to do so. (Neutral)
- 6 **Vow.** I promised someone I would face these trials, and I am true to my word. (Lawful)

d6 Bond

- 1 I'm only doing this to impress someone.
- 2 I've been marked for death by an organization. What have I got to lose?
- 3 I owe it to myself not to be boring.
- 4 I have a lot to lose, and that makes it so much more exciting.
- 5 The best way to get noticed by important people is to do something bold.
- 6 If I ever stopped doing this, I'd have to actually face my shameful past.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I tend to put those around me at risk.
- 2 My thrill seeking is just another facet of my gambling addiction.
- 3 Once I have a dangerous idea in my head, I can't stop talking about it until I try it.
- 4 Impulse control? What's that?
- 5 I don't know I've gone too far until someone gets hurt, usually myself.
- 6 Other substances pale in comparison to adrenaline, but they're better than nothing at all.

DEMAGOGUE

There are many types of leaders, and they each have their own style. In your particular case, however, you maintain your leadership by appealing to popular desires or prejudices rather than using rational arguments and logic. You are a demagogue, and you use the emotions and beliefs of the common folk to elevate yourself to positions of power.

Skill Proficiencies: Performance, Persuasion

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A set of fine clothes, a mostly blank journal, a quill and ink, a small token or accessory by which people might recognize you, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: CULT OF PERSONALITY

When you address a crowd and speak to them about a topic which concerns them substantially, you have a knack for calling upon their deep-seated passions, fears, and desires. Even if you aren't particularly charismatic, you seem to somehow know just what to say and do in order to get the common people to at least listen to what you have to say. And once you get going, you deliver your messages with such conviction that any commoner who isn't your enemy will tend to at least seriously consider your words upon hearing them.

While your efforts to persuade, intimidate, or inspire

others still require the requisite languages and ability checks to succeed at their intended goals, you seldom have any issue attracting a decent-sized audience from the general population when you wish to address them publicly. Your public addresses to the common folk attract up to twice as many listeners as one would normally expect to gather for such a spectacle (up to the maximum amount of people available for such an audience and at the GM's discretion).

Additionally, members of the right audiences pay more attention to and consider your messages more seriously than normal. When giving your speeches or public addresses to an audience of commoners, the GM is encouraged to treat an indifferent crowd as friendly for the purposes of determining their reactions and willingness to act in the ways which you desire. A hostile audience of commoners, however, is not affected by this feature unless you can first successfully shift their general attitude to one of indifference, at which point you may then treat them as friendly instead.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Who is it that you lead? Or are you an aspiring leader without a dedicated following yet? What emotions and beliefs do you play on? Is there a particular enemy or villain you rail against? How do you really feel about the things you speak out about? What is your motivation to lead your constituents? Are your motivations benign or sinister? Do you just like to stir up trouble, or do you seek to keep to tradition? Or do you care either way in either case?

Regardless of the particulars, these statements should generally describe your style: you claim to represent the commoners, you incite intense emotions among them, you exploit those emotions to gain influence and power, and you claim that you will behave differently than your predecessors.

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you fall into the life of adventure because your work as a demagogue thrust you into it? Did leading your followers demand that you set out on a quest? Or did you become a demagogue because your adventuring put you on the path of leadership? Perhaps your daring exploits give you just the fuel you need for your propaganda machine.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 A healthy dose of fear can be a great motivator.
- 2 Truth is so subjective.
- 3 I want everyone to know how impressive I am.
- 4 People make their own luck.
- 5 I take great pleasure in being front and center with a crowd.
- 6 I'm not the worrying type.
- 7 I care very much about being punctual.
- 8 If one person can do it, surely I can, too.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Commonality.** Nothing unites people like a common enemy. (Any)
- 2 **Misdirection.** The safe way to be a bad guy is to first make sure the public thinks someone else is the villain. (Evil)
- 3 **Justification.** My leadership is for people's own good. (Good)
- 4 **Practicality.** Go with what works. Truth is a luxury. (Neutral)
- 5 **Agitation.** Sometimes people just need to be stirred up. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Tradition.** Problems start when people try to change the status quo. (Lawful)

d6 Bond

- 1 I have to fight bitterly against my rival as I contend for power.
- 2 I am an established leader and have quite the following.
- 3 Someday, they will all wish they had listened to me.
- 4 Some say my right to rule is divinely granted.
- 5 I want all of my followers to be capable.
- 6 The adoration of my followers is paramount to me.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I seek to fill every uncomfortable silence with words.
- 2 I will not tolerate my authority being questioned.
- 3 I secretly feel extremely inadequate.
- 4 I do not like to be touched.
- 5 If I want something, I won't be able to think about anything else for more than a few minutes at a time.
- 6 I have a hard time paying attention when other people talk.



DESERTER

Once, you were a member of a military organization, probably a soldier in an army somewhere, though your role may or may not have involved actual combat. In any case, somewhere along the line, you found a reason to leave the service of the cause for which you were enlisted. Perhaps you had a conscientious objection to the war, or perhaps you were simply afraid of dying in battle, or maybe you had another compelling reason, but in any case, you set aside your commitment to serve and walked away from your post. The army you left may or may not be actively looking for you, and how you feel about your decision to desert is entirely up to you.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Stealth

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise Kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A uniform from the group you deserted, a knife, a mess kit, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: DESERTER'S ATTENTION

You were involved with the military long enough to pick up some inside knowledge about the way such organizations function. In particular, you learned where the holes in such organizations are, as you studied and used at least one of these gaps to escape from service yourself. You have at least a general knowledge of how most conventional militaries operate, but you have much deeper knowledge of their various inefficiencies and shortfalls. For example, you know where and when gaps in sentry coverage at an army camp are likely to occur, you have a good idea as to which individuals in the ranks might be willing to accept a bribe, and you can possibly determine which parts of a supply train are likely to go missing without anyone noticing.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Whose service did you walk away from? Why did you desert in the first place? What has kept you from going back? Is the army you left hunting you? If so, who is looking for you and what would they do if they found you? How do you feel about your decision? Was it just in your nature to flee from such a situation, or did you have some other motivation for leaving?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did becoming an adventurer drive you to desert? Or did the motivation to adventure come after you left your service? What does adventuring give you that service in the military did not? Does your quest have anything to do with your past life in the military?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I avoid violence whenever possible.
- 2 I blame myself if things go wrong.
- 3 Discretion is the better part of valor.
- 4 I always have a joke ready to go in any situation.
- 5 What's the point of living if you aren't enjoying it?
- 6 Money is meant to be kept and spent as sparingly as possible.
- 7 I have a story for every occasion.
- 8 I like to watch the clouds and find shapes in them.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Devotion.** I'll give my all for a cause I actually believe in. (Good)
- 2 **Law.** Even in war, there are rules. I can't condone breaking them. (Lawful)
- 3 **Selfishness.** Let some other poor sods throw their lives away in my place. (Evil)
- 4 **Variety.** Serving under one banner forever just isn't for me. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Cynicism.** I've never seen a cause worth dying for. (Neutral)
- 6 **Survival.** I don't want to die! (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I just wanted to get home to my family.
- 2 I still keep in touch with at least one of my old comrades.
- 3 I want to live long enough to have children.
- 4 I still remember those who died during the fighting.
- 5 I hid something important before I left, and I intend to go back for it someday
- 6 I am being hunted down for my desertion.

d6 Flaw

- 1 When the going gets tough, I get going... away from the tough things.
- 2 I automatically assume the worst about people.
- 3 I indulge in a particular drug to deal with the guilt.
- 4 I lie about my personal history even when I don't need to.
- 5 I pick unnecessary fights.
- 6 I'm loud at inopportune times.

DIPLOMAT

You are an official diplomat for some nation or organization. Perhaps you are an ambassador from your country to another, perhaps you are a sanctioned negotiator on behalf of your guild, or maybe you are the chosen representative for some supernatural force or worldly power. In any case, your role is one of diplomacy, and you are called on to undertake diplomatic missions where you must communicate, represent, and negotiate on behalf of your patron.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion and either History or Insight

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: An ink pen, a bottle of ink, a pouch of fine sand, three pieces of parchment, a set of fine clothes, a letter confirming your diplomatic position, and a pouch containing 15 gp.

FEATURE: DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS

By invoking your title and office to the right people, you are often able to secure audiences with the officials of governments and organizations you encounter in your travels. This is most effective when your request is made to someone or something whom you would normally be expected to deal with in the course of your normal duties, such as a leader or diplomat whom you have dealt with previously or someone from a nation or organization related to your own. This is also sometimes effective in other situations where your intended target is not exceedingly familiar with you or those you represent; it is simply more difficult or less likely to achieve the desired results perhaps, and it may perhaps require some additional work to convince the relevant parties. In any case, this feature allows you some access and leeway to contact the negotiators and decision makers you might wish to visit during your adventures.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Whom or what do you serve? What is your relationship with them/it? What sorts of places have you been sent to previously? Are your missions typically long or short term? What is your particular style of diplomacy? Who do you normally correspond with? Who are you typically tasked with contacting? What sort of things do you negotiate about?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your latest diplomatic mission cause you to take up the mantle of adventure in the process? Is your adventure a diversion from your position? Or were you an adventurer already who later came into the position of diplomat due to your reputation and contacts?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I earned this position through hard work and dedication, and I intend to keep it.
- 2 I can't resist an open door, and my position opens many doors for me.
- 3 Luckily, diplomats aren't expected to physically work very hard.
- 4 This is a serious job, and I take it very seriously.
- 5 I love a good time, and diplomats get invited to all the best events.
- 6 I tend to exaggerate my own importance.
- 7 I secretly hate this job.
- 8 I love to travel, and my job takes me to new and exciting places.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Power.** I will use my position to further my own power. (Evil)
- 2 **Humanitarianism.** I try to use my position to help better peoples' lives. (Good)
- 3 **Stability.** Diplomacy brings stability, and stability is strength. (Lawful)
- 4 **Change.** I don't like rules and laws; I simply hope to promote change through my work. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Compromise.** Compromise and balance between parties is the key to good diplomacy. (Neutral)
- 6 **Patriotism.** The best interests of my nation are my first priority. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I would die for the good of my nation.
- 2 My position is my only passion, and I will do anything to protect it.
- 3 I come from common people, and I know their experiences well.
- 4 I received this position in return for favors I provided to someone important.
- 5 Someone in my family is the ruler of my nation.
- 6 I was forced into virtual exile by my political rivals to keep me away from their plans at home.



d6 Flaw

- 1 I abuse every benefit my position provides to me.
- 2 I don't really care about anyone else's point of view.
- 3 No one must ever know about what I did during my last mission.
- 4 I am somewhat of a deviant when it comes to entertainment.
- 5 I believe I am inherently better than everyone I meet.
- 6 I am paranoid about being kidnapped or assassinated.

DOCTOR

You are trained as a healer and a medical practitioner who makes a living by treating and/or studying diseases, maladies, and injuries. Most doctors typically intend to heal such conditions, though there are some who are more concerned with research and study than actually helping people. Whatever your priorities, your background is characterized by the medical knowledge you picked up as you plied your trade as a doctor.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine, Nature

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism Kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A healing kit, a small knife or scalpel, a notebook and pencils, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: HOUSECALLS

As a doctor, you are likely to find many opportunities to ply your trade as you go about your adventures. In particular, as you journey, you are likely to come upon populated villages, towns, cities, encampments, or even isolated hermitages. These congregations are almost always in need of a doctor's attention, especially the isolated or overpopulated ones. People get sick and hurt; it is inevitable. So with no shortage of aches, pains, maladies, illnesses, and injuries, there is virtually always a demand for the services of a doctor wherever people dwell. If people are aware that you are an experienced doctor, they may try to convince you to help them. This convincing may simply involve mundane persuasion or coercion, but it may also come in the form of offered payments. Payments, of course, could mean money, special items, information, or any number of other useful/valuable (or not) things. In certain places, some might even attempt to commandeer your services with varying degrees of guilt and/or force, so it may not always be a good idea to advertise your profession.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What sort of patients and subjects are you most used to dealing with? How do you feel about them? Do you enjoy your work? What are you ultimately trying to accomplish as a doctor?

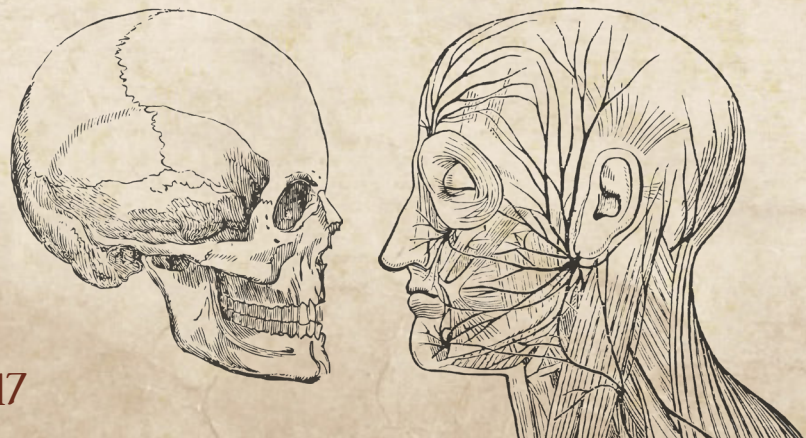
You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you become an adventurer because of something that happened to you as a doctor? Did one of your patients or their malady cause you to go out on a quest for information or rare medicines? Or did you perhaps take up the profession of doctor once you were already an adventurer and circumstances simply worked out where you had to learn the ways of a doctor out of necessity along the way?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am polite to everyone I meet, especially my enemies.
- 2 I prefer to save violence as a last resort.
- 3 I have a flair for the dramatic.
- 4 Laughter is the best medicine, and I am a doctor.
- 5 I expect everyone to respect what I do.
- 6 I am fastidiously clean.
- 7 I don't tend to follow my own advice.
- 8 All of my work only delays the inevitable.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Aid.** I use my skills to help everyone I can. (Good)
- 2 **Suffering.** There is so much to learn by studying those who suffer. (Evil)
- 3 **Health.** I strive to remedy illness and injury; health is the goal. (Any)
- 4 **Understanding.** I don't care who is sick or hurt, I only care how they are sick or hurt. (Neutral)
- 5 **Evolution.** Illnesses are constantly evolving, and so must I if I want to keep up. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Recording.** Tradition and established research are important to preserve so that we don't lose the accumulated knowledge of those who came before. (Lawful)



d6 Bond

- 1 One of my patients died inexplicably, and I must find out why.
- 2 My people are afflicted with a rare disease, and I must find the cure.
- 3 I am the pride of my family.
- 4 One of my patients was the child of a local noble, and my failure to help that child has attracted that noble's ire.
- 5 My sister died in childbirth. I became a doctor because of people like her.
- 6 I am more comfortable studying medicine than I am with actual people.

d6 Flaw

- 1 My bedside manner is terrible.
- 2 I use a lot of big words, but they don't usually mean what I think they mean.
- 3 I'm always looking for a shortcut, even when it might be more trouble than it's worth.
- 4 I tend to say the first thing that comes to mind, for better or worse.
- 5 I secretly feel that I'm more of a charlatan than a legitimate healer, so I am jealous of successful healers when I encounter them.
- 6 I tend to lecture people about proper health, even when they don't want to hear it.

VARIANT DOCTOR: FAITH HEALER

Not all doctors choose to seek the path of health through an understanding of nature. There are those who instead look to faith in a higher power to help heal the sick and injured. While they still practice practical medicine in many cases, the basis of their knowledge revolves around religious faith rather than observable nature. If you choose the Faith Healer variant of the Doctor background, this background gives you proficiency in the Religion skill instead of Nature.

DOOMSDAY PROPHET

The end is nigh! This is completely true as far as you're concerned. Whether real or imagined, you see visions of the end of the world. So vivid and real are these visions that you must at least suspect that they are prophetic in nature, or perhaps you are totally convinced. In any case, you may be compelled to share your visions with others to serve as a warning, or you may quietly witness the end, over and over in your mind. Will you try to stop it? Do you embrace it? Or do you just want to visions to stop?

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Religion

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A set of common clothes, a collection of small portents of doom that you have accumulated over time, apocalyptic scriptures or notes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: VISIONS OF THE END

You are blessed or cursed with extremely realistic visions which indicate the end times are coming soon. Whenever you complete a long rest, roll 1d6. On a roll of 1, 2, or 3, you experience no visions during that rest. A roll of 4, 5, or 6 indicates that you experienced one of these visions while you rested, perhaps in the form of a dream while you slept. The exact content and duration of the vision are up to the GM, but these visions always appear to be prophetic and apocalyptic in nature.

If you do experience such a vision while resting, there is a chance that it will also grant you some incidental insight into other matters which involve you. Roll another d6. If the result of this roll is a 4, 5, or 6, you may ask the GM one yes or no question related to you in some way, which he must answer truthfully. The GM has final say if your question is acceptable and may require you to ask another, but GMs are encouraged to allow some leeway on these questions. If the answer requires more than a simple yes or no to be accurate, or the response is neutral, the GM may provide a short phrase as a response to adequately answer the question. The intent is to give the Doomsday Prophet a means by which they might occasionally uncover secrets just by virtue of their unique gift/curse.

Examples of questions one might ask are: Did the halfling steal my ring? Am I the son of the king? Are my friends still alive? Will I find the final key? Does he love me? Will it rain here tonight? Can I trust the merchant?



FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What is the source of your visions? Is it a divine power, something totally alien to your world, or are the visions just a product of your own mind? Perhaps you don't know. Do you believe the visions to be true? Or do you prefer to think that you are mad? When and how do your visions come to you? What do you do with your visions? Are you compelled to share them with others by way of warning? Do you keep them to yourself and try to hide the coming doom you see on the horizon from others? How have your visions affected you personally?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Are you on a quest to determine if your visions are true? Or perhaps you believe in them totally, so you are seeking to stop the impending doom? Or maybe you welcome the end and are striving to accelerate it. It could even be that you are simply intrigued by the visions and seek to discover what they truly mean. Or it is even possible that your reason for adventuring is something totally unrelated, but in the back of your mind, all the time, you have the simmering fear of what is to come: the end that you have foreseen.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I have to warn them. Everyone.
- 2 Why me? I didn't ask for this.
- 3 Only I am worthy to see these visions.
- 4 The world is ending anyways; might as well enjoy these final days.
- 5 Only with faith will people persevere, even through the conclusion of the world's story.
- 6 Amassing wealth is pointless now.
- 7 Every crisis is an opportunity.
- 8 Knowing what's coming gives me a chance to prepare.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Compassion.** We must be good to each other in these final days. (Good)
- 2 **Fate.** Nothing can be done to change the path fate has laid out for us. (Lawful)
- 3 **Equity.** The end will come to saint and sinner alike. (Neutral)
- 4 **Resistance.** I refuse to accept that it has to be this way. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Acceptance.** All things that begin must end. (Any)
- 6 **No Consequences.** The end is coming no matter what I do, so who cares about consequences? (Evil)

d6 Bond

- 1 These visions are a gift that I welcome.
- 2 The end of the world will be a beautiful finale that I cannot wait to see.
- 3 I just want someone to believe me.
- 4 It is my job to warn people about what I have seen.
- 5 I must not squander what time I have left.
- 6 These visions are a curse, and I will do anything to get rid of them.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I sleep late, even on judgment day.
- 2 Best to be good and drunk when the end comes.
- 3 I'll try to weasel out of the apocalypse, just like I do with everything else.
- 4 You can make a pretty good living fearmongering.
- 5 I've given up on social graces like hygiene. Why bother?
- 6 The coming doom is everyone else's fault.

DUELIST

You find your calling in single combat, face to face and one on one against an enemy, not always to the death, but possibly. Your background is one steeped in challenges and violence. Do you duel for personal honor and glory? Do you duel on behalf of someone else or perhaps even a nation? Whatever your reasons, you find your place within the dueling ring more than anywhere else.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Intimidation

Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A journal documenting your duels, a writing implement, a set of traveler's clothes, a small trinket or accessory with your personal insignia on it, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: SECOND

You have the service of a commoner to serve as your second. This person is loyal and dedicated to you and serves you in multiple capacities. Your second can be expected to run errands for you, maintain your weapons, deliver challenges and messages on your behalf, prepare dueling grounds, and support you logistically before, during, and after a duel so that you can concentrate on the duels themselves. This person will not typically fight for you, but is generally loyal. Poor treatment or placing them in danger frivolously or frequently may cause them to leave your service, however.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Who and what do you fight for? Yourself? Are you a designated proxy for someone else? Do you fight on behalf of an organization or government? Is this your idea or have you been pressed into this role? Do you enjoy being a professional duelist? How long have you been doing this? Do you want to continue?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your role as a duelist lead you into a life of adventure? Or did your adventuring career lead you onto the path of the duelist somewhere along the way? What is your ultimate goal as a duelist? Adventure and excitement? Or something else?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 If I'm not the best yet, I will be soon.
- 2 I am a gracious winner.
- 3 Me? Loud? NEVER!
- 4 I don't typically speak until spoken to.
- 5 I will tell everyone who I am and what I do if given the opportunity.
- 6 I've never met a stranger.
- 7 I take my job extremely seriously.
- 8 This job gets a lot of attention from potential mates.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Heroism.** I fight for those who can't fight for themselves. (Good)
- 2 **Dominance.** I take joy in crushing those inferior to me. (Evil)
- 3 **Conflict.** The only way to know your worth is to test it. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Honor.** I fight for and with honor. (Lawful)
- 5 **Survival.** Any fight you walk away from is a good one. (Neutral)
- 6 **Thrill.** The thrill of single combat makes me feel alive. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 My duels are merely practice for the day when I find my father's killer.
- 2 My mentor was a legendary duelist.
- 3 A soothsayer foretold the time and place of my death.
- 4 Dueling is a tradition in my family.
- 5 I do this to win the heart of the one I love.
- 6 I consider each duel sacred.

d6 Flaw

- 1 My life is on the line so often, I rely on strong drink to relax.
- 2 I'm not happy if I'm not risking my life.
- 3 I have a hard time remembering that other people value their own lives more than mine.
- 4 I quickly lose hope when things start looking grim.
- 5 I suspect everyone is secretly trying to undermine me.
- 6 I have a secret shame I conceal at all costs.

EXECUTIONER

You are recognized as a trained executioner. The duty of ending lives at the end of due process falls to you. Your methods may vary by preference or the laws and customs of your people, and your affiliation with the justice system of your people is likely to be defined by the setting where you typically serve your role. Regardless of the particulars, you are skilled in the art of bringing the lives of the condemned to a swift (or not) end.

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Medicine

Tool Proficiencies: Poisoner's Kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A set of common clothes, an apron, a hood



or mask, 50 feet of hemp rope, a large knife, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: GRIM NOTORIETY

You are known to your people as an executioner, and as such, most people who recognize you give you a wide berth, though whether out of fear, respect, or disgust will depend on the person and the nature of your interaction with them. Most people who recognize you will go out of their way to cease dealing with you as quickly as possible. Perhaps they fear what you might do to them, or perhaps they are afraid of wasting your time, or they could even find your work so repulsive that they don't want to be seen with you. Regardless of the situation, when this feature is in effect (at the GM's discretion), people interacting with you can be expected to try to end their interaction with you as quickly as possible. Depending on the situation and how this takes shape, this may or may not be to your benefit.

Additionally, you typically have no problem finding employment as an executioner in places which have need of one.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How long have you been an executioner? How did you end up in this job? Do you enjoy what you do? Do you plan to continue being an executioner? Do you have a preferred or otherwise most common method of execution? What is your relationship to the local justice system which brings the condemned to you?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. How did your profession as an executioner lead you to a life of adventure? Did one of the condemned inform you about something which led you on a quest? Are you trying to escape your blood-stained past? Or did your exploits as an adventurer somehow lead you onto the executioner's path?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I make jokes to make my job seem less grim.
- 2 I tend to be brutally honest.
- 3 No matter how I treat the living, I handle the dead with respect.
- 4 Material wealth means little to me.
- 5 I wish I had entered a different profession.
- 6 World-weary? You could say that.
- 7 My job is a sacred duty.
- 8 My job is an art and a craft. I take pride in doing it well.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Justice.** I am but a cog in the machine that is justice. (Lawful)
- 2 **Safety.** The evil must die so that the good may live safely. (Good)
- 3 **Enjoyment.** You're going to pay me for this? Really? (Evil)
- 4 **Blameless.** I am neither judge nor jury. The blood is on their hands. (Neutral)
- 5 **Release.** I will set them free from persecution. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Inevitability.** Everyone has to die sometime. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I remember the face of everyone I have executed.
- 2 I come from a long line of executioners.
- 3 There is another executioner who is my bitter rival.
- 4 I like that my reputation usually precedes me.
- 5 Taking this role was the sentence for a crime of my own.
- 6 I know I executed the wrong person, and I intend to make it right somehow.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I tend to cut corners.
- 2 I don't have a good sense of the value of others' lives.
- 3 I feel intense guilt for every life I take, even the justified ones.
- 4 I hurt myself to remember that I'm still alive.
- 5 I am plagued by nightmares about the restless dead.
- 6 I have a hard time getting close to anyone, for fear of losing them.



EXPLORER

Discovering uncharted lands is your calling. You may be a rugged pioneer, a well to do expedition leader, or a simple wanderer. In any case, you are a seasoned explorer, and you are an expert at finding and traveling to unknown places.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Navigator's Tools

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A few maps relevant to your travels, a set of explorer's clothes, a travel journal and writing implement, a backpack, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: CHART THE UNKNOWN

As an experienced explorer, you have learned many tricks and secrets for traveling easily in new places. Also, you have developed methods to chart these areas while you explore them. When traveling for an hour or more under your own power or via a vehicle with which you are proficient, you may travel at a normal pace and simultaneously generate a detailed map of the areas you observe. Once you have personally mapped an area, as long as you have access to your relevant maps, you cannot get lost in that area except by magical means. Bear in mind that maps of certain places may be a rare commodity, and may therefore be considered quite valuable to the right people.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How long have you been an explorer, and how wide have your travels been? Have you discovered any noteworthy places? Are there any special places you have heard of, but have not had the chance to explore yet? Do you want to continue exploring? Do you have any plans to stop at some point? Do you prefer to explore alone or with a group?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. An explorer's life is probably fairly adventurous, but did the path of adventure lead you to exploration? Or did you want to explore first, and that desire naturally led you to a life of adventuring? Perhaps your quest to explore a particular place is the focus of your adventure, or maybe you have resolved to have as many adventures as possible while you see what lies in store in strange lands.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 The journey is more exciting than the destination.
- 2 I'm always in search of new jokes.
- 3 The best part of exploration is discovering new foods.
- 4 I feel alone even in a crowded room.
- 5 I don't believe in half measures.
- 6 There's no reason I can't have it all.
- 7 I do not fear the unknown.
- 8 I'm something of a control freak.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Exploitation.** New lands hold fresh people and resources to exploit. (Evil)
- 2 **Second Chances.** A new place can mean a fresh start. (Good)
- 3 **Completion.** If it exists, it should be mapped and documented. (Lawful)
- 4 **Opportunity.** New lands bring new opportunities. (Any)
- 5 **Discovery.** Discovery is its own reward. (Neutral)
- 6 **Wanderlust.** Just show me where the next horizon is. (Chaotic)

d6 Bond

- 1 My people need a new home, and I will find it for them.
- 2 I want to spread my people's way of life to every corner of the world.
- 3 I despise my homeland. Other places must surely be better.
- 4 The mysteries of unknown territories intrigue me.
- 5 My family is filled with famous explorers.
- 6 I explore to experience new and exotic cultures.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I can't bear to stay in one place for more than a couple days.
- 2 I consider all new cultures I encounter to be inferior to my own.
- 3 When the going gets tough, my first instinct is to give up.
- 4 I don't know the meaning of patience.
- 5 I have a hard time paying attention.
- 6 I am a shameless glutton.

VARIANT EXPLORER: SETTLER

While all explorers are interested in discovering new places, some of them are equally (or more) concerned with



the prospect of settling in these uncharted places after discovering them. If you choose the Settler variant of the Explorer background, this background gives you proficiency in either land or sea vehicles instead of a language.

FANATIC

Most everyone believes in something. Perhaps it is a deity, or a philosophy, or a motto, or a cause, or even just simple, meaningless existence. In your case, whatever it is that you believe in has consumed your life. You are what most people would call an extremist, and you don't necessarily disagree with that assessment, though you might. Whatever the object of your devotion, you are well and truly a fanatic about it. It is one of the, if not the single, most important thing in your life, and you may even believe that it should be the most important thing in everyone else's life, too.

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: Your choice of one musical instrument or one set of artisan's tools

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A small token related to the focus of your fanaticism, a set of essays or a treatise about your beliefs, a set of common clothes, a small knife, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: UNQUESTIONED FERVOR

Not everyone may know much or even anything about the object of your fanatical belief, but to those who do share your beliefs to any degree, you are obviously a stellar example of commitment to the cause. You can reliably seek shelter and at least minor aid from those who support the same cause as you. Other fanatical followers are also likely to come to your aid in more substantial ways if you request it. If your cause is a religious one, you can seek aid from temples and similar establishments devoted to your beliefs. Likewise, regardless of the type of cause you loyally adhere to with such fervor, you know what sort of places one might look to find fellow adherents, whether the casual type or those as fanatical in their belief as you.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What is the object of your fanaticism? What happened to cause such devotion to it? What lengths will you go to in order to see your cause triumph, and how has that shaped the way you approach things? Do you believe your cause is righteous? If so, why? If not, why not? Either way, do you care? Why do you believe so strongly? Have your beliefs been challenged in the past? If so, how do you typically respond to such challenges? Does your extremism cause problems for you, and if true,

how so? How do you react to those problems? How has your fanaticism shaped your identity and your behavior?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your fanaticism lead you to the adventurer's life? Or was it something that happened on one of your adventures that led you to such zealotry? Has your devotion pushed you toward a quest to further your cause?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Never. Clean. Enough.
- 2 I double check everything.
- 3 Respect is earned.
- 4 I'm not afraid to get my hands dirty.
- 5 I'm no leader.
- 6 I don't even get out of bed without a plan.
- 7 Vice is such a strong word for such an enjoyable thing.
- 8 I'm the only one who really understands how the world works.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Ruthlessness.** I destroy anything or anyone in my way. (Evil)
- 2 **Righteousness.** Mine is the truly righteous path. (Good)
- 3 **Preservation.** The status quo must be maintained by any means necessary. (Lawful)
- 4 **Change.** I am an agent of change wherever possible. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Certainty.** Morality and ethics are unimportant. My mission is all that matters. (Neutral)
- 6 **Dedication.** I will not be led astray. (Any)



d6 Bond

- 1 I am compelled to defend a particular place or person.
- 2 I want nothing so much as my parents' or superiors' approval.
- 3 Honestly? I first joined the cause just to find a mate. My fervor came later.
- 4 My beliefs push me to seek a special place or thing.
- 5 It is my duty to spread my beliefs.
- 6 I work hard every day to conceal my true heritage.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I get a sick thrill out of getting hurt.
- 2 I am vain to a fault.
- 3 I'd rather someone else do the heavy lifting.
- 4 I tend to panic if I get lost.
- 5 I'm terrible at making decisions.
- 6 I can't possibly ignore a challenge.

VARIANT FANATIC: REFORMED ZEALOT

People change, so they say. Maybe your opinions changed with age or experience, or perhaps the core of the people who shared your beliefs went down a path you didn't agree with. In any case, it's entirely possible that you were once a fanatic, but no more, now making you a reformed zealot instead. Whatever the reason for your change of heart, you've seen the error of your ways, and you have learned a great deal from your experience as a one-time fanatic. If you choose the Reformed Zealot variant of the Fanatic background, this background gives you proficiency in the Insight skill instead of Persuasion.

FARMER

Perhaps not the most glamorous profession, but certainly one of the most common and widespread, you are a farmer. Your knowledge of the land, and the plants and animals that inhabit it, has allowed you to survive with at least relative self-sufficiency. You are accustomed to growing your own food and taking care of your own basic needs, and you are probably no stranger to hard work and manual labor, as without it, you likely would have never survived, though it's possible you may have found ways to make others work for you, of course.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Nature

Tool Proficiencies: Land Vehicles and your choice of one type of artisan's tools

Equipment: A shovel, an animal harness, a sack, a wicker basket, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: EXPERIENCED FARMHAND

Having lived it for quite some time, life on a farm is something you are quite familiar with. You know what it takes to operate and sustain a farm, at least to some degree. Depending on your individual experience and your degree of intelligence and wisdom, you may be simply familiar with day to day farm work and how to go about it correctly due to personal experience and repetition, or you may be an experienced coordinator of the vast and sundry activities involved with managing an entire farmstead. In any case, you can easily find work at virtually any farm you encounter, as there is almost always something that needs doing on a farm, and not enough hands to do it. You can reliably find work in such settings, especially if you are willing to trade work for shelter, food, and other products of the farm rather than coin, though farms offering actual paying work is certainly not unheard of.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: what sort of farm did you work on, where was it located, and who owned it? What was your relationship like with the owners? Does farming run in your family? How did you become a farmer?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Were you a farmer before or after you became an adventurer? Did your adventures somehow lead you to become a farmer, or did you end up farming as a result of your adventures? Was there anything particularly interesting during your time as a farmer that steered you toward adventure? Or was it perhaps the monotony of the farm which drove you to seek out excitement?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I prefer to sleep with a nice, dry roof over my head whenever possible.
- 2 I was, in fact, raised in a barn. How could you tell?
- 3 I am extremely careful with money.
- 4 I am reluctant to discard anything that might possibly still have a use.
- 5 I'm never bored.
- 6 I like to sit and watch the clouds whenever I can.
- 7 I get restless if there's work to be done.
- 8 I like to take my time when thinking things over.



d6 Ideal

- 1 **Honor.** My word is my bond. (Lawful)
- 2 **Practicality.** I'm more concerned about what works than what's right. (Neutral)
- 3 **Independence.** Being self-sufficient means never being beholden to anyone. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Aid.** I try to help everyone I can. (Good)
- 5 **Exploitation.** Why break my back when I can make someone else break theirs for me? (Evil)
- 6 **Survival.** I just want to get by as best I can. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 My farm was destroyed by monsters, and I will see it avenged.
- 2 I have a wonderful farm and loving family waiting for me at home.
- 3 When I retire, I'm going to set up my own farm and live out my days there.
- 4 I learned how to farm from my adoptive parents, who were of a different race than me.
- 5 I don't like people knowing that I was raised on a farm, and I try to hide that fact.
- 6 I'm not welcome at home anymore.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I'm suspicious of anyone different than me.
- 2 I see no reason to bathe regularly. I'll just get dirty again.
- 3 Strong drink sure makes the day go by quicker.
- 4 I have an acute weakness for a pretty face.
- 5 I am terrible with directions.
- 6 I take everything literally and have no sense of sarcasm.

GAMBLER

Some people live to take chances, and in doing so, seek to find their fortunes. These gamblers come in all shapes and sizes, but they all have at least one thing in common: they take risks in the hope that those risks will lead them to rewards. Aficionados of various games of chance, the gambler indulges his urge to turn risk into reward wherever it makes sense, be it at the arena, a dark alley, a posh gambling hall, a military camp, or virtually any other setting where games of chance can find a place.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Sleight of Hand

Tool Proficiencies: Your choice of two types of gaming sets

Equipment: Two types of gaming sets, a set of fine or traveler's clothes, a non-magical good luck charm, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

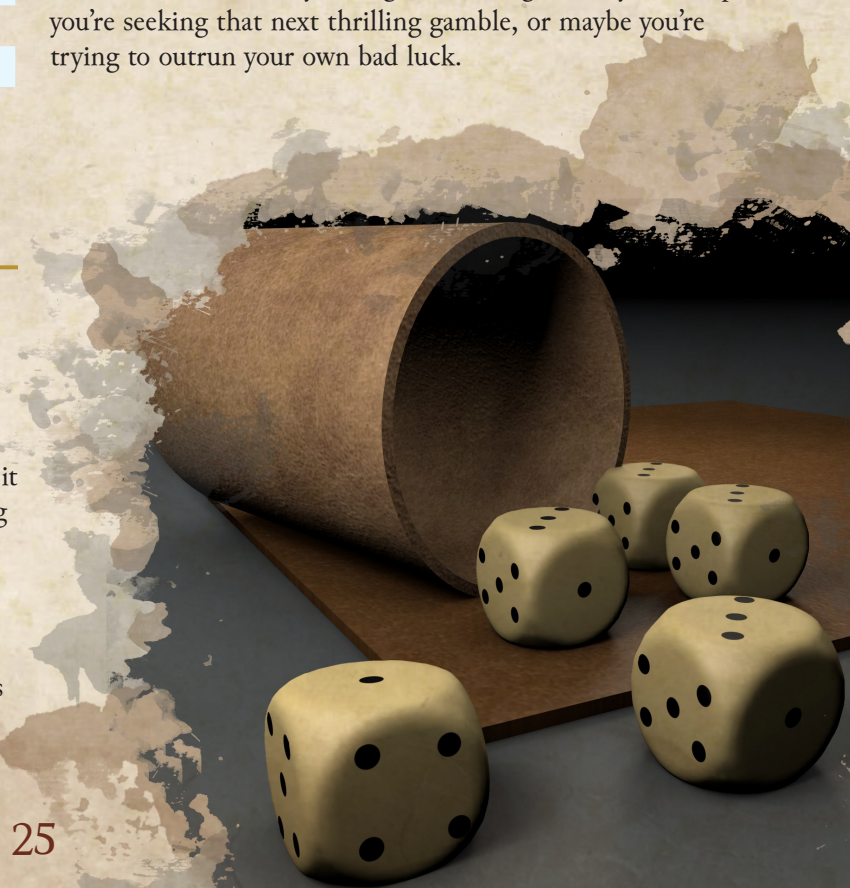
FEATURE: WHERE'S THE ACTION?

If there is gambling activity (action) going on, you seldom have much problem finding it. As an experienced gambler, you typically know who to ask and where to look to locate others who are interested in playing games of chance, or you at least know how to get a game started to attract others. Once you locate these other gamblers, you're usually able to secure a place at the table (figuratively or literally), though you may have to demonstrate that you know what you're talking about and have currency to wager... and sometimes only the latter. In short, you should typically have no problem finding opportunities to gamble so long as you can effectively communicate with those around you and they are willing to deal with you.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What is your preferred game of chance? Have you typically been successful with your wagers, are you a habitual loser, or somewhere in between? Would you consider your gambling habit an addiction or more of a hobby? In either case, is your perception of it actually accurate? Just how far are you willing to go to get an advantage when you gamble? Would you cheat? What's your style of gambling? Are you a cerebral, methodical risk calculator, or are you guided by your gut and the thrill of banking on long odds?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did the results of your gambling career steer you toward a life of adventure, or did your adventurous life teach you to gamble along the way? Perhaps you're seeking that next thrilling gamble, or maybe you're trying to outrun your own bad luck.



d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I don't like to stay in one place for long.
- 2 I'm extremely superstitious about my gambles.
- 3 Once I place a bet, I always have second thoughts.
- 4 My shoes against your hat. Let's flip for it.
- 5 I like to spend my coin as soon as I get ahold of it.
- 6 I hoard supplies, just in case.
- 7 What's the point of gambling if you don't have an audience?
- 8 The higher the risk, the more interested I am.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Generosity.** Spread the wealth when you win. (Good)
- 2 **Enabling.** A fool and his money are soon parted, and I'll help them along. (Evil)
- 3 **Predictability.** Everything is predictable with enough information. (Lawful)
- 4 **Randomness.** Random chance governs everything. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Excitement.** What's life without chance? (Neutral)
- 6 **Gain.** There's always room for more. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I skipped out on a debt, and now I'm wanted.
- 2 Someday I'll find that perfect bet if I keep trying.
- 3 One of my parents was a famous gambler, and I intend to make them proud.
- 4 I made a deal with some sort of powerful being to help me win a bet.
- 5 Once I have enough money together, my love will finally marry me.
- 6 I'll never forget that first jackpot.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I don't know how to quit while I'm ahead.
- 2 I'm terrible at remembering whom I owe and who owes me.
- 3 Strong drink and bad company go hand in hand with gambling.
- 4 Nothing is too valuable to risk on a wager.
- 5 I tend to exaggerate my prowess at any number of activities.
- 6 I indulge in a bad habit that helps me deal with the stress.

HIEROPHANT

You have a gift that you (and likely others) believe allows you to interpret the will of the gods. By scrutinizing and interpreting various signs via various methods, you gain an understanding of what some might consider sacred mysteries, even perhaps gaining insight into someone's current situation or possible future. The gods and their designs are beyond mortal comprehension, but you are able to at least glimpse at their divine plans and intents.

Skill Proficiencies: Investigation, Religion

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A set of ceremonial robes, a bejeweled vessel or holy symbol worth 5 gp, a censer, brazier, or deck of stylized cards, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: INTERPRET THE SIGNS

You have a talent for understanding the will of the gods by interpreting various signs. Perhaps you read the entrails of sacrificial animals, study the patterns of tea leaves, perform tarot readings, or observe the movements of the heavens. In any case, you are able to attempt to read such signs in an effort to gain insight into the future. Whenever you wish to observe such a sign, you must select a particular person, place, or event that has not occurred yet. You may spend ten minutes performing a ritual and studying the signs that result from it, and at the end of that observation, the GM may choose to grant you some insight into whatever the subject that you selected was.

It is entirely up to the GM how often and/or well this feature works, though the GM is encouraged to use this feature to occasionally introduce important clues, plot hooks, or other story elements to the player. It is also suggested that this information should be delivered in a cryptic or vague manner.

For example, if the player character performs a tarot reading on the local noble who hired the party of adventurers to investigate the haunted windmill, the GM may choose to tell the player that the cards reveal that the local noble has darkness surrounding him, impending doom at his door, or ill fortune lurking on the horizon for him. One or more gods must have it in for this person, they might surmise. This could mean any number of things, but the GM should not tell the player something direct like, "Someone will try to kill the noble tomorrow night" or "the noble's prize pig is sick." It is best to leave the insight cryptic, but give the player something meaningful to give them some clue to work with, especially one that helps establish a certain tone for the situation.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Which gods tend to feature in the signs you study? Is it always the same god(s) or does it vary? How did you come by this ability? How do you feel about your gift? What do you do with the knowledge you glean?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did things you foretold give you the inspiration or imperative to go on a quest? Did those quests lead to a life of adventuring? Were you an adventurer first and your exploits led you to develop a relationship with one or more gods whose signs you now interpret?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I never accept food or drink from strangers.
- 2 The gods say I'm allowed to nap wherever I want.
- 3 I am generous to my friends.
- 4 I like to fix things that are broken.
- 5 I don't understand most humor.
- 6 I find comfort in music.
- 7 I traffic with gods: what danger should I fear?
- 8 I like to be the center of attention.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Predestination.** The future is set. The world is never random. (Lawful)
- 2 **Protection.** If I can foresee disaster, I can help try to prevent it. (Good)
- 3 **Abuse.** True or false, so long as others believe me, I can use that to my advantage. (Evil)
- 4 **Randomness.** Fate changes every moment. The signs give but a momentary glimpse. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Impartiality.** The signs are impartial, free of context or intent. They are simply fact. (Neutral)
- 6 **Efficiency.** I can use this foreknowledge to make better choices. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I received this gift during a strange ritual.
- 2 This gift drove my mother mad; will it do the same to me?
- 3 I am a local celebrity because of my ability.
- 4 Those who can do what I do are hunted in the place I'm from.
- 5 I am merely an apprentice. My master has the true talent.
- 6 I have foreseen a great danger that I must try to prevent.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am extremely offended by those who doubt me.
- 2 I never change my mind once I've made a decision.
- 3 I'm sarcastic at inappropriate times.
- 4 Regular bathing is recommended, not required... right?
- 5 My table manners are atrocious.
- 6 I don't make eye contact with anyone.

VARIANT HIEROPHANT: SOOTHSAYER

While most hierophants interpret signs and portents in a religious context, there are some who take a more academic, arcane approach to such things, often going by the moniker of soothsayer rather than hierophant. If you choose the Soothsayer variant of the Hierophant background, this background gives you proficiency in the Arcana skill instead of Religion.

HUNTED

Someone or something is chasing you, hunting you down. Perhaps you are on the run from the law, or you might be marked a heretic by religious zealots, or you might possess some dangerous secret that someone else can't risk you revealing. You might even have a unique power or destiny that supernatural forces seek for some nefarious purpose. Or perhaps you are the nefarious one, and the forces of good are pursuing you to end your reign of terror. In any case, you are hunted, and have been for some time, so you have learned to run and hide as a matter of survival.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Stealth

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise Kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A set of traveler's clothes, 50 feet of hemp rope, a disguise kit, a small knife, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: ESCAPE ROUTES

Living on the run has taught you that you must always have an escape plan ready wherever you are because you might need to move on in a hurry. As such, it is difficult to corner you when the pressure is on, such as when your pursuers draw near. Whenever you are in an area or room, if you spend a short amount of time looking around (one action for a room or relatively small area, one minute for a large area or several rooms / one floor of a building), you notice details about the layout which inform you about the various ways to get out of that area or room. This feature does not necessarily help you circumvent situations which keep you from leaving, such as being tied up or a door being locked, but it informs you of all apparent visible routes of egress from the area.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Why are you being hunted? Is it a justified reason? How long have they been after you? Who is after you (generally and specifically)? Have you ever met your hunters? Do you want to? If your hunters catch you, what will you do? Will you run? Hide? Fight? Cut a deal? What will the hunters do with you if they catch you? What are you willing to do to escape capture?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Are you adventuring because you are being hunted? Are you hunted because of the reason you chose to be an adventurer?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I don't talk much in order to keep a low profile.
- 2 I actually like the attention that comes with being hunted.
- 3 I tend to hide myself as much as possible in public.
- 4 I am always on the lookout.
- 5 Just because I'm hunted is no excuse to miss out on life's pleasures.
- 6 I'm getting really sick of this life on the run.
- 7 If I seem as average as possible, maybe they'll overlook me.
- 8 I look forward to the day I'm free of this burden.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Self Preservation.** I will throw anyone into the path of my pursuers to slow them down. (Evil)
- 2 **Justice.** I deserve to be hunted because of what I did/am. (Lawful)
- 3 **Compassion.** If they are hunting me, they might leave others alone. (Good)
- 4 **Survival.** One day at a time, always one step ahead. (Neutral)
- 5 **Defiance.** I will never let them put me in chains. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Revenge.** Someday the hunter will become the prey. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 The person looking for me is also my jilted lover.
- 2 Someone important to me should be their target, but my hunters believe I am the true quarry.
- 3 No matter how long they hunt me, I will never abandon my home.
- 4 I will not let my hunters dissuade me from fulfilling the promise I made.
- 5 If I can find a certain item, it will make them stop hunting me. I hope.
- 6 I don't even know why they are hunting me, but I intend to find out.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I have been on the run so long, I can't ever settle down.
- 2 Trust no one – anyone might turn me in if they have the chance.
- 3 I lie compulsively.
- 4 I feel compelled to take anything useful I find; I might need it.
- 5 I am afraid to let anyone get close to me.
- 6 I seldom speak above a whisper in public.

VARIANT HUNTED: PREY

Your experience being hunted primarily took place in the wilderness, as though you were prey for some sort of predator, and as such, you had to develop skills to survive in relatively inhospitable natural environments even as you evaded capture or worse. If you choose the Prey variant of the Hunted background, you may choose to forego proficiency in either Stealth or Athletics and instead gain proficiency in Survival.

HUNTER

One of the oldest roles among communities of people, some have always been responsible for stalking and killing prey to provide life-sustaining food. There are, of course, also those who hunt for sport and glory, and some even hunt simply to prove themselves against the wild. Regardless of your reasons, you are a hunter, and you are quite used to taking down prey.

Skill Proficiencies: Your choice of two from: Animal Handling, Nature, Stealth, and Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Leatherworker's Tools, Cook's Tools

Equipment: A hunting/skinning knife, an animal trap, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.



FEATURE: HUNTER'S WORK

You are adept at harvesting prey, and as such, so long as the area you are in has some form of edible game available, you can hunt to provide enough food to feed up to ten people (including yourself) each day. Additionally, you are familiar with the commerce of hunting, so you are aware of the normal market prices for meats, pelts, horns, hunting supplies, etc. When in a settled area, you are also able to recognize and locate places and people who would likely be in the market to purchase and/or sell such things.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What drives you to hunt? A thirst for glory? A desire to test yourself against the wilderness? The need to make a living selling the products of your successful hunts? Or the simple necessity of food? How do you feel about your prey? Do you have a favored type of prey? What are your typical hunting tactics?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your life of adventure require you to hunt frequently to survive? Did you grow up hunting and stumble across an exciting reason to go out on an adventure? Perhaps you came upon something wondrous or mysterious as you pursued your prey.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I never lend anyone anything of value.
- 2 If one person can do it, any person can do it.
- 3 I love to visit new places.
- 4 I am shy around strangers.
- 5 Flirting is one of my favorite pastimes.
- 6 I often forget to eat and hate to sleep.
- 7 I like to show off my skills.
- 8 I try to stay quiet as much as I can.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Bloodlust.** The thrill of killing is all the reason I need. (Evil)
- 2 **Respect.** My prey gives its life so that I can live, and for that, I am grateful. (Good)
- 3 **Challenge.** I want to hunt the most challenging game. (Any)
- 4 **Stoicism.** I take no joy in the death of my prey; it is simply a part of life. (Neutral)
- 5 **Flux.** At any moment, predator can become prey; complete safety is an illusion. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Nature.** Predator and prey are simply roles in the natural order of the world. (Lawful)

d6 Bond

- 1 I respect every animal that I slay.
- 2 I want to be the most famous hunter of all time.
- 3 I always take a trophy from my kills.
- 4 Both of my parents were accomplished hunters, and I want to make them proud.
- 5 I prefer to make a living by selling the results of my hunts rather than using or consuming them directly.
- 6 I never forget to honor the god(s) of the hunt.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I find other people exhausting.
- 2 If I'm not the best, I'm worthless.
- 3 I am known to put my foot in my mouth.
- 4 I hoard worthless objects.
- 5 I know what's best for everyone, regardless of what they think.
- 6 I have frequent bouts of mania.

INFORMATION DEALER

You are an individual who collects, buys, sells, and trades information in order to make a living. Sifting through gossip for kernels of truth, mining tips from people in the know, and working your knuckles to the bone in the rumor mill to glean secrets are all the kinds of activities you might engage in to gather information. And once you have it, you trade that information to those who find it useful or valuable. You may get other information in return for your trouble, though goods, services, favors, or even cold hard cash are just as often exchanged for the knowledge you deal in. Regardless of how you get it or what you trade for it, dealing in information is your specialty, and there seems to always be a demand for such a service.

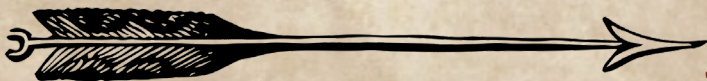
Skill Proficiencies: History, Insight

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A notebook, an ink pen, a dozen small tubes and slips of paper (for clandestine notes), a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 15 gp.

FEATURE: INFORMANT NETWORK

Given that your stock and trade is information, you have a respectable network of individuals spread across the territory you operate in. These informants don't work for free, but they actively keep their eyes and ears open for information, rumors, and secrets at all times because they know that any intelligence they gather might potentially be valuable to you, and for many of them, this part of the business helps them line their pockets or accumulate favors.



When you are in search of information or rumors, you may reach out to your informant network. The GM will let you know what methods are permissible for this, and it is up to the GM's discretion if and how your attempt succeeds, as well as what it might cost you. GMs are encouraged to use this feature to introduce plot hooks, hints, and world-building details to the player character.

Additionally, if someone knows that you are an information dealer, they may be inclined to do business with you (buying, selling, or otherwise) in exchange for information when they otherwise may not even consider it. This is entirely up to the GM's discretion in any given situation, but it is possible that people you run across may be willing to buy or sell information through you in various capacities.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Do you enjoy your work? How do you feel about the people you get your information from? How do you feel about the people who buy information from you? Do you specialize in a certain type of information? Is there a kind of information you avoid dealing in?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you become an adventurer as a result of your information dealing? Did one of the secrets you learned send you off on a quest? Or send you fleeing from someone dangerous who wants their information kept private? Or did your life of adventure cause you to end up on the path of an information broker simply by circumstance?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I spend my money freely.
- 2 I ensure everyone notices when I walk into a room.
- 3 I prefer to do more listening than speaking.
- 4 Violence is never my first choice.
- 5 I consider friendly insults to be a gesture of endearment.
- 6 I pride myself on being a good listener to others.
- 7 Compromises are for the weak and uncommitted.
- 8 I appreciate little more than a sense of humor.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Utility.** Information is a currency all its own. (Any)
- 2 **Tyranny.** Control of information is only a small step away from control of thoughts. (Evil)
- 3 **Amelioration.** Knowledge should be shared and applied to improve people's lives. (Good)
- 4 **Accessibility.** Information should be freely accessible to those who seek it. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Preservation.** Data should be collected, recorded, and cataloged so that it won't be lost. (Lawful)
- 6 **Power.** Knowledge is power. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 I am fascinated by unsolved mysteries.
- 2 I am a major player in my home town's rumor mill.
- 3 I am searching for the answer to a question I have never been able to find.
- 4 I consider my role as an information dealer a divine mandate.
- 5 I can't remember what got me into this business, and I can't see a way out.
- 6 My work helps me stay one step ahead of the people who know a dangerous secret about me.

d6 Flaw

- 1 If I don't have interesting information available, I won't hesitate to make something up.
- 2 I despise being around children.
- 3 I can almost never remember anyone's name.
- 4 I get tongue-tied when I'm excited.
- 5 I am paranoid that other people are watching me, waiting for me to make a mistake, so that they can take advantage.
- 6 I avoid crowds like the plague.



JOURNALIST

You are a practicing journalist, one who seeks out, gathers, prepares, and disseminates stories and news. Whether you are independent or work for an organization or publication, you are experienced with finding interesting stories and recounting them in writing for others to consume. You might be a hard-boiled investigator, a novice just getting started, or a philosophical traveler who merely wants to spread what you have experienced to anyone interested in reading it. In any case, you have a nose for a good story and you can use your credentials to gain access to the sources of such stories where others might find their way barred.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Investigation

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A notebook, an ink pen, 10 pieces of parchment, a copy of at least one of your articles or stories, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: GETTING THE SCOOP

As a journalist, you have a keen understanding of where to look for and how to find the kinds of stories that you prefer to report about. You typically have no problem sniffing out leads for a good story from the rumors and goings on in the places you visit and explore. You have a knack for recognizing places to look, finding the right people to ask, and knowing just what to say to learn the interesting details that can lead to you uncovering a hot scoop to report about. The GM is encouraged to use these leads as adventure hooks for you and your party.

Additionally, you are typically able to find people and organizations who would be interested in consuming and perhaps paying for your journalism; you know your audience and where you can expect to find them. This might also come in handy on occasions when such parties might be able and willing to help get you special or even exclusive access to people, places, and situations so that you can better perform your journalistic duties.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What sort of things do you tend to report about? Who funds your journalistic endeavors? Do you work for an organization? Do you pursue stories yourself and sell them to places in need of interesting news? Do you practice a particular style of journalism that you're known for? What is your reputation as a journalist like, if you have one? Do you have competition? If so, what is your relationship with them like?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you learn to be a journalist as you pursued an adventuring career and reported on the things you

encountered? Or did your experiences as a journalist lead you into adventures that eventually became the focus of your life?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I don't like to linger in one place for too long.
- 2 To my mind, the best way to get a story is to tell one of your own first.
- 3 A little embellishment can make a good story into a great story.
- 4 Attention to detail is the hallmark of a good journalist.
- 5 I don't believe in keeping work and pleasure separate.
- 6 Stories should always be shared over a meal or a drink.
- 7 I rely on my sense of humor in tense situations.
- 8 I have no problem embarrassing myself for a good story.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Protocol.** If you treat your sources in the ways they expect and if you follow the proper channels, you will get the stories you seek time after time. (Lawful)
- 2 **Diversity.** You can find a story anywhere and from anyone. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Education.** Educated people can better make informed decisions to help themselves. (Good)
- 4 **Propaganda.** False news travels fast and often gets me what I want. (Evil)
- 5 **Truth.** Journalists have an obligation to spread the truth, even if it is unpleasant. (Neutral)
- 6 **Influence.** If you provide people with their news, you can influence what they believe. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 There is another journalist out there who is my arch-rival. I must outdo them!
- 2 I want my work to be known across the world and beyond.
- 3 My sibling was killed while investigating a certain organization, and I intend to find out what happened.
- 4 One of my ancestors was a famous journalist, and I want to do justice to their legacy.
- 5 The best part of journalism is encountering different people and places.
- 6 I want to be a part of history's great events and witness them firsthand as they unfold.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I look down at people who don't work as hard as me, and no one works as hard as me.
- 2 I never believe I'm good enough at what I do.
- 3 The more different someone is from me, the more suspicious I am of them.
- 4 I perceive insults against me sometimes when none were intended.
- 5 I have a tendency to over indulge in at least one particular illicit substance.
- 6 I am deathly afraid of heights.

JUDGE

You are a judge: a person tasked with the duty and authority to pass judgment and deliver verdicts on disputes according to the laws of your locale. The exact nature of your role and your place in the system is shaped by the laws and governmental structure of your particular venue, but in some form or fashion, you are at least one of the local legal authorities, and it falls to you to mete out justice when crimes have been committed or when two or more parties have disputes in need of official settlement by the local government.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Insight

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: Official papers verifying your authority, a set of fine clothes, sealing wax, a seal of your office, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: RIGHTFUL JUDGMENT

Wherever your authority as a judge is recognized and when you are officially presiding over a legal dispute, those who abide by the law are bound to accept your judgment as final and just. While not everyone may agree with your decisions, once you pass judgment on a matter with you serving as the recognized arbiter, the people affected must abide by your decision or potentially suffer consequences by local law enforcement. What those consequences may be is determined by the situation, the setting, and the relevant laws governing such issues, which is all largely up to the GM to determine. In any case, you are both a recognized legal authority and an integral part of the justice system, so it behooves those within your jurisdiction to honor and respect any decision you make while in your official capacity.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What territory do you preside over? Where do you conduct trials? What sort of laws govern you and those around you, and how does

the local justice system function? Do you serve as judge to punish the wicked? To benefit yourself? Do you serve the concept of justice impartially? What are your goals and aspirations, and how does being a judge help you accomplish those (or not)?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you decide to personally discover the truth in a complicated trial? Have those who put you in power tasked you with a mission on their behalf? Perhaps your path to adventure is because of a quest which must remain off the books from your official capacity as a judge. Maybe your good name as a judge was besmirched and you have set out to correct that slight. Or is it that someone truly guilty kept their freedom due to a technicality, and you have taken it upon yourself to see justice done by your own hand? Regardless of the cause, it is important that you understand your motivations.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 There is no such thing as innocence, only degrees of guilt.
- 2 I never second guess myself after passing judgment.
- 3 I believe that my role is a righteous one.
- 4 I don't enjoy being a judge, but it is necessary.
- 5 The prestige of my role is the best part.
- 6 I resent the responsibility of my profession.
- 7 I talk over people because I am very important.
- 8 I treat all occasions seriously and solemnly.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Self-Interest.** I interpret the law to suit my own desires because I have the power to do so. (Evil)
- 2 **Perspective.** Law, ethics, and morality are all shades of gray. (Neutral)
- 3 **Due Process.** True justice demands that I follow the prescribed process. (Lawful)
- 4 **Help.** I use the law to help those who cannot help themselves. (Good)
- 5 **Truth.** I care more about the truth than rules. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Fairness.** Justice is blind. It does not care who you are. (Neutral)



d6 Bond

- 1 I worked hard to get this position, and I intend to keep it.
- 2 I will not fail to help bring justice to and for the people around me.
- 3 Someone close to me has secretly run afoul of the law, and I can't make myself bring them to justice.
- 4 The people who put me in this role expect me to subtly work to their advantage.
- 5 I will never forget my first trial.
- 6 I still fear I may have condemned someone innocent.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I get impatient during long testimonies and explanations, so I frequently daydream.
- 2 I tend to pass judgment within the first few minutes unless evidence to the contrary is overwhelming.
- 3 I abuse substances to deal with the burden of my authority.
- 4 I assume everyone is guilty until they prove otherwise, and even then...
- 5 I consider those I preside over to be inferior.
- 6 I have no discernible sense of humor.

VARIANT JUDGE: CIRCUIT JUDGE

Rather than presiding over trials that are brought before you at a centralized location like a conventional judge, you have been tasked with moving from place to place within a certain jurisdiction to fulfill your duty. Usually, these are frontier regions or otherwise sparsely populated areas with scant resources, thus making a single center for justice in the region impractical. As such, it falls upon you to make a circuit through the area to see justice done wherever it is required. Upon arriving at such a place, you usually find that the local law enforcement has some quantity of disputes waiting for you to preside over. Due to the typical lack of legal expertise in these types of settings, the circuit judge is often tasked with rooting out the truth of matters personally, so it is common for a circuit judge to investigate matters themselves in order to reach a verdict.

If you choose the Circuit Judge variant of the Judge background, this background gives you proficiency in the Investigation skill instead of History.

METAPHYSICIAN

You are on a metaphysical journey of self discovery. You practice an esoteric set of ascetic and spiritual disciplines such as breathing control, meditation, body posturing, and deep introspection. Through these activities, you seek enlightenment and a metaphysical understanding of how reality itself functions. Your studies are deeply personal to you, though you may belong to a school of like minded individuals who also follow your same path. Regardless of who you are or who else is on your path, you use the special disciplines you have learned to understand the world around you and the people in it. Your understanding and the physical aspects of your practice have made you pliable, flexible, and balanced. The mental and spiritual aspects of your soul searching have given you insight into the very magic which one finds embedded in the fabric of the world.

Skill Proficiencies: Acrobatics, Arcana

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A pouch of incense, a tinderbox, a book on metaphysical studies, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: MEDITATION

During a long rest, you may readily enter a state of meditation and relaxation. For every hour you meditate, it counts as two hours of sleep. While in this state, you are functionally asleep, but you may wake yourself instantly at any moment without grogginess or other ill effect from waking suddenly. It is important to note that the duration of your long rests remains the same as standard, but meditation allows you to effectively spend less of the duration in actual repose. Additionally, this feature may be used in conjunction with other similar abilities, such as the Trance ability of Elves, but the benefits are not further increased in either case; the effects do not stack.



While meditating, you may experience lucid dreams which you can exert varying degrees of control over. This may be one of the primary ways in which you achieve enlightenment through your studies.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Do you have a particular goal you are trying to achieve through your studies? If so, how are you trying to achieve it? What lengths are you willing to go to in order to reach it? Are there any other seekers from your particular teachings who are also on your path? If so, what is your relationship with them? Where did you discover your teachings? Did you train at a school? Did you have a mentor? In either case, where are they now, and how do you relate to them? How has your journey and the things it has taught you affected who you are and how you behave? Has it shaped you as a person? In either case, how do you feel about that?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you become an adventurer to further your metaphysical journey somehow? Or did you stumble upon the path of your studies as you adventured for other reasons? What is your motivation for adventuring? Is it related to your studies, or is your quest for self discovery a separate task for you? Is your adventurer's life simply a side effect of your studies? Or is it perhaps entirely unrelated?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am patient and slow to anger.
- 2 Material wealth does not interest me.
- 3 My beliefs are correct. Others are mistaken.
- 4 Through study and practice, one can become truly enlightened.
- 5 The answers to all things lie within us.
- 6 I am easily distracted and lost in thought.
- 7 I love to discuss my journey with others.
- 8 I am more enlightened than most others.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Dogma.** The teachings, and therefore the path, are clear. (Lawful)
- 2 **Unpredictability.** Understanding only comes once you accept the unpredictability of life. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Growth.** My studies lead me to be a better person. (Good)
- 4 **Advantage.** I can exploit this path to my own advantage. (Evil)
- 5 **Peace.** I find peace in this path. (Any)
- 6 **Balance.** I assign neither condemnation nor commendation. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 All things are one, ultimately.
- 2 I am fiercely loyal to my school and those who believe as I do.
- 3 It is my job to spread my teachings far and wide.
- 4 I seek wisdom from one more enlightened than me.
- 5 If the wisdom of my path were to fall into the wrong hands, the consequences could be dire.
- 6 I alone hold a specific secret about existence. If anyone knew...

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am generally unwilling to accept other people's points of view.
- 2 I never stop talking about my studies and beliefs, even at inappropriate times.
- 3 My personal hygiene is often neglected in favor of my studies.
- 4 Nothing is my fault. Things just happen as they do.
- 5 Life is a river, and I can do nothing to change it.
- 6 I should not be trusted with money.

MILITIA

Most communities understand that in order to defend themselves, they must be able and willing to fight off those who might wish the community harm. Cities, towns, villages, or whatever form the community might take, often employ a militia to provide such defense in an emergency. A militia is drawn from the citizens and members of the community, so they are not typically professional soldiers



or a standing army, but rather civilians who are given some training and organization so that they can be ready to repel threats on short notice. As a member of a militia yourself, you are one such civilian with some of this type of training. While you may or may not be trained in the use of weapons and armor, you are regardless trained to use what skills you have to act quickly in an emergency and participate in defensive efforts at a moment's notice.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: Your choice of one type of gaming set, and your choice of one type of artisan's tools or musical instrument

Equipment: A shovel, a document asserting your legitimacy as a member of the militia, a gaming set of your choice, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: RESPECTED MINUTEMAN

As a member of the militia, you have learned not only how to mount a defense, but also how to quickly make the transition from being a relatively normal citizen to a combatant (and back). Your training has been such that you are able to don and doff armor (excluding shields) twice as quickly as normal so long as you are proficient with that armor's category.

Additionally, those in your community who recognize you as a member of the militia will typically give you a larger degree of respect than you might otherwise be entitled to, as you are known to provide protection for everyone when not everyone does so in return. You will normally receive the benefit of the doubt from your neighbors and fellow citizens, your word will generally carry a bit more weight than it otherwise might, and you might even be able to talk the local garrison or armory into lending you basic equipment with greater ease than others might experience.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What community's militia do you serve in? Do you enjoy that duty? How did you come to join the militia? Do you intend to do that forever or do you see it as a temporary responsibility? How do you regard your fellow militia members? How do you regard your neighbors who aren't part of the militia?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your duties in the militia give you a taste for adventure that inspired you to expand it into a more adventurous direction? Or did your adventurer's life land you in a situation where serving in the militia just seemed like a natural fit for you? Or maybe it was the only way you could think of to get out of some predicament.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Any good story needs some embellishment.
- 2 I am loud and boisterous.
- 3 A good meal is a sure way to convince me to do something.
- 4 I strive to be efficient at everything I do.
- 5 I give my trust easily to others.
- 6 I try to never be the first in line for any dangerous situation.
- 7 I try not to take life too seriously.
- 8 Patience is a virtue.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Duty.** It is the duty of every citizen to defend their home. (Lawful)
- 2 **Worthiness.** Those who will not fight to defend their homes deserve to be conquered. (Evil)
- 3 **Service.** I will fight so that others don't have to. (Good)
- 4 **Freedom.** Freedom is only deserved by those who will defend it. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Survival.** Self-preservation is a strong motivator to fight. (Neutral)
- 6 **Realism.** Sometimes you have to do things you don't want to do. It's just the way it is. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I've lived here all my life; of course I'll defend it.
- 2 If I don't protect this place, none of us are truly safe.
- 3 I volunteered to seem brave in front of someone I want to impress.
- 4 I've always enjoyed violence, and this is an outlet for it that won't get me in trouble.
- 5 Those brave souls who stand with me are my family.
- 6 One of my parents died in an attack by monsters. I won't let something like that happen again.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I get bored and wander off easily.
- 2 I think I'm much more important than I am.
- 3 I often think I'm qualified to do things that I have no business attempting.
- 4 Setbacks and obstacles always seem insurmountable to me.
- 5 I don't see the point in bonding with others.
- 6 I have a terrible temper, so I often fly off the handle over minor issues.

MINER

Some people spend a great deal of their time below ground, hammering and picking and digging, all in an effort to extract the valuable resources hidden within the ground beneath the feet of others. Miners come in all shapes and sizes and can run the gamut in terms of motivation, work ethics, and personalities. In general, miners are usually a tough lot made up of those with experience identifying, locating, and extracting ores, minerals, precious stones, and other treasures from the depths of the world.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: Vehicles (Land)

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A miner's pick, a shovel, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: MINER'S TRADE

As an experienced miner, you are able to reliably identify various types of common stone, gemstones, subterranean minerals, and raw ore (this typically does not extend to refined metals). Beyond simply identifying these substances, you are also familiar with where to look for them, what they are typically worth, and how best to extract them from the natural rock in which they occur. Additionally, you are familiar with the typical layout and principles involved in the construction of a mine, and while within one, you can always find your way to (or away from) the surface. At the GM's discretion, this may extend to other subterranean environments, though it is most effective in actual mines. Likewise, if you are vigilant, you are able to identify potentially unsafe sections of mines, such as those that are not well maintained and/or in danger of collapse.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Is there a particular place you usually mine? Do you mine for specific things? Or do you just take what you can get? Are you independent, or do you work for a mining company of some sort? How do you feel about your life as a miner? Do you aspire to greater things? Is this a dream job for you? What do you like most about mining? What do you like least about it? Do you typically work alone? If not, how do you feel about your partners?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your exploits as a miner lead you into a life of adventure? Perhaps because of something you found in the mines? Or did you learn to be a miner once you were already an adventurer? Did you add mining to your career path to supplement your income? To look for treasure? Or is it just a way of life for your people?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I feel safer below ground than above.
- 2 I don't have time for idle chit chat. There's work to be done!
- 3 Violence isn't the only answer, but it's usually at the top of my list.
- 4 I love telling stories, regardless of the audience.
- 5 I know money is important, but I try not to stress out about it.
- 6 I'm happy as long as I have a full belly.
- 7 I let no slight against me go unanswered.
- 8 I don't have time to explain myself to everyone who disagrees with me.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Order.** Everyone has their place in society, and this one is mine. (Lawful)
- 2 **Choice.** One must choose their place in life; no one should force another into toil. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Intimidation.** Accidents happen all the time down in a mine... especially to those who cross me. (Evil)
- 4 **Camaraderie.** Down in the mines, we have to look out for each other. (Good)
- 5 **Wealth.** A miner can make a good living in the right places. (Any)
- 6 **Work.** Hard work can be its own reward. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 The people sharing in the work with me down in the mines are like my family.
- 2 I became a miner to work off a debt that I owe.
- 3 One of my parents was a miner, so it was only natural that I followed in their footsteps.
- 4 I started from the bottom as a miner, but I hope to be the one running the show someday.
- 5 Where I come from, you're either a miner or you're a beggar. I'd rather be the one that gets to eat every day.
- 6 I only became a miner so I wouldn't get drafted into the army.



d6 Flaw

- 1 I see no reason to clean up after a day in the mines; I'm just going to get dirty again the next day.
- 2 I can't even remember how many times I've been called forgetful.
- 3 I've been a packrat all my life.
- 4 I have a hard time keeping my hands to myself.
- 5 Work hard, play way too hard to the point you get into frequent trouble. That's what I do, at least.
- 6 I'm careless with tools and equipment, especially if I've borrowed them.

MISSIONARY

Some religions place importance and priority on spreading their faith to others. Those who travel far and wide to undertake this holy effort are known as missionaries. The exact methods each missionary employs may vary, but they all seek to fulfill their mission of spreading the word of their faith wherever they feel that they can and should.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion, Religion

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A copy of your religion's holy text, a holy symbol, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: AID FROM THE FAITHFUL

As a missionary, you are generally held in high regard by those who belong to your same religion, as yours is a holy mission. As such, you and your party (so long as you are with them) can typically expect aid from other followers of your religion. Such aid can include food, lodging, simple supplies, and basic support, as long as the cost to the providers is something they can afford without excessive hardship (GM's discretion). If you and your party require protection, those of your religion will typically do their best to hide you or otherwise keep you safe, provided the risk to the provider is not too great and the threat does not originate from your own religious order.

Additionally, if you encounter a shrine, temple, or other place of worship that is dedicated to your religion, you can expect the clergy there to react favorably toward you as long as you are not on bad terms with them. This might include reasonable discounts on spellcasting services such as healing, and they are likely to be willing to share information and resources with you if you can demonstrate that you have a need for such things. They are likely to consider aiding you when you are in need as an act of devotion to their religion.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Which faith do you belong to? How did you come to belong to that religion? What methods do you prefer to use to accomplish your mission of spreading your faith? How do you relate to others of your faith? How do you feel about your missionary work?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Were you a missionary first, and that path led you into an interesting situation, which in turn led you to a life of adventure? If so, what was that situation, and what sort of adventure did you find yourself in? Or were you an adventurer who only incidentally discovered fulfillment in the life of a missionary? In that case, what led you to your faith, and more specifically, what led you to serve as an active bearer of your faith's message?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I speak boldly for all to hear.
- 2 I never let myself get intoxicated.
- 3 A journey is its own adventure, regardless of where it leads.
- 4 I like to discuss an issue at length before making any decisions.
- 5 Money represents resources, and resources are important to everyone. Don't squander what you have.
- 6 I'm not afraid of what happens after people die.
- 7 I enjoy meeting new people and seeing new places.
- 8 I don't mind sleeping under the stars if necessary.



d6 Ideal

- 1 **Choice.** People are free to choose what to believe; I simply give them one more option. (Chaos)
- 2 **Dogma.** There is only one true path to enlightenment. (Law)
- 3 **Logic.** It isn't important that you believe, merely that you understand why you should. (Neutral)
- 4 **Benevolence.** More than anything, what is important is that people believe in spreading the word of being good to one another. (Good)
- 5 **Dominance.** More than anything, what is important is that I come out on top. (Evil)
- 6 **Education.** People must be taught so that they can understand the truth I bring. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 Spreading the message I carry as far as I can is my most important priority.
- 2 If only the people of my homeland understood the truth I've learned, they might welcome me back.
- 3 After I left it, the temple I come from was destroyed by heretics.
- 4 I was sent to walk the path of the missionary to atone for a sin I committed.
- 5 I joined this religion because I didn't know what else to do with myself, but surprisingly, I found purpose in spreading the word.
- 6 I want everyone to speak my name with pride as they would any hero and legend of the faith.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I believe that there are none more devout than me; others are merely pretenders.
- 2 I am quick to anger and have a fiery temper.
- 3 I have no confidence in my own abilities.
- 4 I don't really know when to keep my mouth shut.
- 5 I wear my heart on my sleeve.
- 6 I insult people (subtly or not) to feel better about myself.

NOMAD

You come from a society where the people have no permanent homes. Instead, the community travels from place to place, usually in pursuit of the animals they hunt or their grazing livestock. Regardless of the exact reasoning, yours are a traveling people, and your background has taught you how to survive and even flourish while following a transient path with no long term place of residence.

Skill Proficiencies: Nature, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Your choice of one musical instrument

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A piece of jewelry meaningful to your people worth 2 gp, a map of migratory routes for a particular region important to you, a musical instrument you are proficient with, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: NOMADIC SURVIVAL

While traveling through terrain that is similar to the lands you are used to traversing in the course of your nomadic lifestyle (decide this with the GM's help), you always know the direction you are traveling. Additionally, you can reliably and accurately navigate such terrain without a map so long as you have gained some familiarity with the landmarks and features of the specific area you are traveling through. Such familiarity could come via the study of maps or by having discussions with people who are familiar with that area. You can also take from that land to gather food to eat and water to drink for yourself and up to five other people. This is sufficient to maintain at least a moderate level of healthy consumption as you travel.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What is the driving force behind your people's nomadic lifestyle? Do they follow the movements of animals for their livelihood? If so, what sort(s) of animals do your people pursue? How do your people feel about their way of life? How do you feel about it? If given a real chance to settle down somewhere, would you? Do you value a life on the move? How do you feel about non-nomadic people and their lifestyles?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you come across a path to adventure while pursuing your nomadic lifestyle? Did you find something interesting or dangerous that set you off on a quest that led into the life of adventure? Or did you lead a life of adventure first that eventually evolved into you living the life of a nomad, moving from place to place, following a natural path rather than settling down?



d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I would rather teach someone how to do something than do it for them.
- 2 I don't respect the opinions of people I don't consider my allies.
- 3 I try to make friends before I make enemies.
- 4 I find permanent structures quaint.
- 5 I love music and rhythm.
- 6 I sleep with my boots on and my bags packed. Just in case.
- 7 I prefer to let my deeds speak for me.
- 8 I am quite superstitious.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Tradition.** My people have always remained transient to survive, and so shall it remain. (Lawful)
- 2 **Mobility.** A rolling stone gathers no moss, and a moving target is always harder to hit. (Any)
- 3 **Anonymity.** If you don't stay in one place, you'll never have to worry about your reputation catching up with you. (Evil)
- 4 **Novelty.** New challenges, ideas, and experiences enrich society. (Good)
- 5 **Vicissitudes.** People stagnate if they stay in one place for too long. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Necessity.** I go where the food is. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 Eventually I'll find the person who murdered my parents.
- 2 There is someone I love in one of the towns I pass through from time to time.
- 3 The animals my people follow hold special spiritual significance to me.
- 4 I keep on the move so that I don't have to face my shameful past.
- 5 My dream is to see every corner of the world before I die.
- 6 I have a bitter rival amongst my people whom I hope to avoid.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I'm often told I don't know how to whisper.
- 2 I find humor in serious situations, usually at inappropriate times.
- 3 I'm a very literal person, and most jokes and figures of speech go over my head.
- 4 I frequently forget to pay my debts, and I often forget incurring them in the first place.
- 5 I am often very distracted by people I consider attractive.
- 6 I keep trying to convince people I'm right even after they agree with me.

PHILOSOPHER

Philosophers are people who spend their time contemplating and studying the nature of knowledge, reality, and existence. As one of these thinkers, you have spent long hours putting serious thought into such heady subjects, and in the process, you have gained deep insights into people, the world around you, the planes beyond, and other more abstract concepts that most people may not ever even bother to contemplate.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight and your choice of either Religion or History

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A notebook, a pen and ink, three sheets of parchment, a book written by another philosopher, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: VALUED THINKER

As a student of reality and the very nature of existence, you know the value of the big questions and how important it is for someone to pursue the relevant answers. While there aren't many who are willing to employ a philosopher to contemplate the world in exchange for money, you do often find that you are welcomed in places that put importance on education, learning, and deep thought. When you encounter institutions and cultures that place high value on the thoughtful, insightful, academic pursuit of learning about the self, knowledge, and existence, you are typically accepted with relatively open arms, provided you have not given the people in those enclaves reason to be distrustful or otherwise wary of you. This, of course, may require you to demonstrate your insights to someone of known esteem within the relevant group, but once you successfully do so, you are typically afforded greater access, leeway, and support than one might otherwise normally expect. The exact methods which these groups may use to test you is up to the GM, as is the degree and manner in which they treat you favorably if you successfully prove your credentials.



FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What is your character's personal philosophy? Has this changed over time? Where do you find the best insights? During certain activities? Certain times of day? Or do your insights come from some unknown source that you are also trying to understand? What are you willing to do in order to achieve further enlightenment?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your work as a philosopher cause you to question or investigate some mystery which ultimately launched you onto the path of an adventure? Or did you start off as an adventurer, and your strange quests led you to seriously contemplate the nature of things?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I'm always game for a lively debate.
- 2 Never go adventuring on an empty stomach.
- 3 I prefer to lead whenever possible.
- 4 I feel obligated to let everyone know about my philosophical ideas.
- 5 One learns the most about reality by experiencing as much as they can.
- 6 Dreams are worth fighting and sometimes dying for.
- 7 I have no interest in asking for help with anything.
- 8 Sarcasm is the soul of wit, as far as I'm concerned.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Relativism.** There are no absolutes; every point of view has its own truth. (Chaotic)
- 2 **Absolutism.** There is a single truth to reality, and it can be studied and understood. (Lawful)
- 3 **Tyranny.** Might makes right. (Evil)
- 4 **Utilitarianism.** The best action is the one that maximizes well-being and minimizes suffering. (Neutral)
- 5 **Neutrality.** All opinions and options should be equally considered, be they irrational or reasonable, harsh or benign, malicious or benevolent. (Neutral)
- 6 **Altruism.** The welfare of others is more important than self-interest. (Good)

d6 Bond

- 1 The school I attended gave me the educational foundation for my studies.
- 2 The truth I have experienced is a burden, but one I bear proudly.
- 3 My teacher was very wise and I owe much of who I am now to that person.
- 4 I was instructed not to return home until I learned the answer to a specific riddle.
- 5 If I can find the ancient texts I seek, I can prove that what I've learned is correct.
- 6 It is through the test of battle that I truly come to know myself and the world around me.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I whistle when I get nervous.
- 2 Strong drink is my weakness.
- 3 Everything is more interesting with a wager involved, even when I don't have the money.
- 4 I never make a good first impression.
- 5 Table manners are not my strong suit.
- 6 I complain about most things; even good turns must have some hidden downside.



PLANAR SCHOLAR

There are those who seek to understand the world. Then there are those who seek to understand all worlds. Every realm, every plane, exists within the confines of the multiverse, but also operates under its own rules (or lack thereof). As a planar scholar, you diligently seek to understand the planes and what makes them work. As to how and why? That varies from scholar to scholar.

Skill Proficiencies: Investigation and your choice of either Religion or Arcana

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A work-in-progress chart of the planes, a journal detailing your observations from various planes, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: STUDENT OF THE PLANES

You have a basic, working knowledge of the multiverse and its general arrangement, and you are aware that there are multiple planes beyond the one in which you were born. The amount you know about them is not determined by this, but this gives you a solid, baseline level of awareness and general information about the planes so that you are not clueless as to how the multiverse works.

Additionally, you are aware of the existence of other planar scholars performing similar activities as you out in the multiverse, so when you encounter others who share your interest in understanding the planes, they will typically react somewhat favorably to you and might also be inclined to share their knowledge with you if you are willing to do the same for them. Planar scholarship is not the most common of pursuits, so those with such a thirst for knowledge may jump at the chance to learn from another like mind, perhaps giving you some leverage when dealing with such individuals. Of course, not everyone (including you) may be willing to share such knowledge, which might also cause friction between such individuals.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Which planes have you visited? Is your interest in the planes grounded more in religious interest or arcane curiosity? Why are you interested in studying the planes at all? What do you hope to achieve through such study? Are you part of a larger organization of scholars, or do you study independently?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Presumably your studies into the nature of the planes caused you to stumble upon something which propelled you into the life of adventure, though it is entirely possible that you were an adventurer first, and your exciting lifestyle led you to discover your passion for planar scholarship.



d8 Personality Trait

- 1 The planes run on beliefs, and I will never compromise mine.
- 2 Happiness is an incomplete map and an unsolved mystery.
- 3 I would trade much for knowledge I don't yet possess.
- 4 The more locks on a door, the more I want to open it.
- 5 Patience is one of my virtues.
- 6 Rigorous study is my idea of a good time.
- 7 I want to meet new people and creatures and learn their cultures.
- 8 I try to write down everything about my experiences, both for myself and for future generations.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Help.** I want to learn all I can about existence so that I can help others. (Good)
- 2 **Power.** I want to learn all I can about existence so that I can gain the power to ruin it. (Evil)
- 3 **Order.** There is an order to the multiverse, and I intend to decipher it by learning the rules by which it operates. (Lawful)
- 4 **Potential.** There are infinite worlds and therefore infinite possibilities. (Chaotic)
- 5 **People.** The people who live throughout the planes are what truly interest me. (Any)
- 6 **Knowledge.** Through knowing the worlds around us, we can know ourselves. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 I lost someone close to me due to a freak portal's opening, and I intend to find them, wherever they ended up.
- 2 My mother left me with a mysterious riddle on her deathbed, and I believe that understanding the nature of the planes will help me solve it.
- 3 A fortune-teller told me that I'm destined to die sooner than later, so I hope that understanding the planes will help me avoid a terrible fate.
- 4 My siblings are well known in their professions, so I chose this path in order to compete with them.
- 5 The person who gave me this scar wasn't from this plane, and I want revenge.
- 6 I came here from some other plane when I was very young, and I want to learn about my origins.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I often get mixed up about how things work on whatever plane I'm currently on.
- 2 I take foolish risks in the pursuit of my studies.
- 3 I often use mind altering substances to gain insights into the nature of the planes.
- 4 I tend to forget that not everyone places the same value on my studies as I do.
- 5 Commerce and trade work differently on some planes, and I often get confused about it.
- 6 I'm terrible about remembering people's names.

VARIANT: PLANAR EXPLORER

Not all those who travel the planes intend to study how they are arranged and what makes them work. In some cases, these travelers are less interested in academic, analytical pursuits with the planes, but are instead simply interested in exploring the planes due to wanderlust, curiosity, or other similar drives to physically discover. If you choose the Planar Explorer variant of the Planar Scholar background, this background gives you proficiency in the Survival skill instead of Investigation. The Student of the Planes feature remains, though your approach to it is likely less academic and more exploratory in a literal sense, your observations consisting more of experiences than coming from experimentation.

PRISONER

At some point in your past, and for a substantial amount of time, you were incarcerated for a crime. While the exact details may vary from case to case, all prisoners have this in common, at least. Your time in prison taught you how such institutions work and gave you various skills that would help anyone make it through such an experience.

Skill Proficiencies: Sleight of Hand and your choice of either Stealth or Athletics

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A set of common clothes, a small knife, an easily concealed and inexpensive bauble or keepsake, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: TIME ON THE INSIDE

As a prisoner, you quickly learned how life inside a prison works. It didn't take you long to understand the various routines and tricks involved with surviving in such a place. As such, whenever you are in or dealing with a prison that you spend at least four hours studying, you always have at least some idea concerning the following (the GM has final discretion on what information is available to you, but these are some examples): how to find the major figures among the jailers and inmates, what general types of threats and hazards might be present to the occupants, the best way to contact the outside world, who might deal in contraband or be able to smuggle items in or out, and possible avenues to infiltrate or escape.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Where were you imprisoned? What crime made you a prisoner? Were you innocent and falsely accused of this crime? Or were you guilty? How long were you imprisoned? Were you released, or did you escape? In either case, what were the circumstances surrounding that? What was your time in prison like?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you end up in prison somewhere along the line in your adventuring career? Or did you get out of prison (legally or otherwise) and then set out on an adventure? In either case, how did that sequence of events play out, and how are they related?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I don't share food.
- 2 I always hide my money.
- 3 I don't mind eating out of the trash – I had worse in prison.
- 4 I'll tell the story of my time behind bars to anyone who wants to know.
- 5 I find it hard to trust anyone.
- 6 I'm fiercely loyal to my close friends.
- 7 I always keep at least one knife on me somewhere.
- 8 I prefer to dress well to forget the rags and chains I once wore.



d6 Ideal

- 1 **Supremacy.** Better to rule in hell than to serve in heaven. (Evil)
- 2 **Freedom.** Being locked up is the worst thing imaginable. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Justice.** The punishment should fit the crime. (Lawful)
- 4 **Redemption.** Punishment leads to rehabilitation. (Good)
- 5 **Pragmatism.** Be willing to consider all options to get what you need or you might not make it out alive. (Neutral)
- 6 **Identity.** Time in prison can really show you who you are. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I still owe a debt to the person that helped get me out of prison.
- 2 I was sent to prison with three partners, but two didn't make it out alive.
- 3 I promised some of my fellow inmates I would contact people on the outside for them. I still need to find most of them.
- 4 I stashed a hidden treasure before I was imprisoned, and I have not recovered it yet.
- 5 There was a doctor at the prison who saved my life.
- 6 The one responsible for me being sent to prison remained at large and turned out quite successful while I was incarcerated.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I'm plagued by nightmares and horrible memories.
- 2 I hoard even the most inconsequential of items.
- 3 I take foolish risks to remember I'm alive and free now.
- 4 I firmly believe no one's experiences have ever been worse than mine.
- 5 I became addicted to an illicit substance in prison.
- 6 I have masochistic tendencies.

VARIANT: SNITCH

Though potentially dangerous, you may have served as an informant for your jailers while you were incarcerated. Perhaps your fellow inmates did not know what you were up to, maybe you had protection, or perhaps you merely survived attempts on your life. No matter your story, if you choose the Snitch variant of the Prisoner background, replace the background's skill proficiencies with your choice of two from Perception, Sleight of Hand, and Stealth.

PROSTITUTE

The world's oldest profession, or so they say, but it has endured as long as it has due to the fact that there is always a demand for the services you offer. The exact circumstances of your employment may vary, such as your typical clientele, your personal ethics, where and when you work, and so forth, but the basic premise of your background remains the same: you engage in carnal activities in exchange for payment.

Skill Proficiencies: Performance, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise Kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A disguise kit, simple tools for grooming and contraception, a set of common or fine clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: UNSPOKEN ACCESS

Choose a particular segment of society, such as lower class, middle class, upper class, nobility, clergy, merchants, artisans, city watch, military, etc. This is the main segment of society you market yourself to. Whatever that segment of society is, you know the general ins and outs of dealing with them, and your profession opens certain doors for you. While in most circles, a prostitute may not be considered a welcome guest, you are nonetheless afforded a certain unspoken access to that societal segment. You may not be welcomed with open arms, and you may not get formal invitations to events and such, but folks might leave the back door open for you, or they might look the other way when you sidle up to the bar. You are somewhat expected to turn up at certain occasions and few people in those circles would question what you are doing there. You fill a certain niche among those people, and as such, you have that certain unspoken access to the class you service and the places and events they frequent.



FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What segment of society makes up your clientele of choice? How do you feel about your profession? Are you ashamed of the life you lead or do you take pride in it? How long do you plan to do this? Are you concerned with any possible legal or moral repercussions? Does your family know about your background? If so, what do they think?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your life as a prostitute lead you to a life of adventure? Or did your adventurous life land you in the life of a prostitute? Did something happen on the job to set you out on an unexpected quest? Did one of your clients say something that gave you the idea to start adventuring? Or did you perhaps realize that this was your calling as you made your way through the world on some adventure?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Enjoy what you can while you can.
- 2 Free food tastes better than the kind you pay for.
- 3 I live to be adored.
- 4 Everyone has their secrets, and I am so curious.
- 5 I enjoy traveling whenever I have the chance.
- 6 I hate to be seen when not at my best.
- 7 Live and let live.
- 8 I often feel alone, even in a crowded room.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Necessity.** Everyone's got to eat somehow. (Any)
- 2 **Nature.** It's in the nature of all living things, so why be ashamed? (Neutral)
- 3 **Joy.** The world needs more joy in it, and I'm proud to do my part. (Good)
- 4 **Predator.** The best predators are the ones who masquerade as prey. (Evil)
- 5 **Conduct.** I adhere strictly to my own rules about what I will and won't do on the job. (Lawful)
- 6 **Sensation.** Why not make a living doing what I enjoy? (Chaotic)

d6 Bond

- 1 My family doesn't know about my work, but I do this to support them.
- 2 I'll never forget my first client.
- 3 This is just a temporary means to better my place in the world.
- 4 I work for a specific establishment.
- 5 I keep in touch with my favorite clients.
- 6 One of my clients will go to great lengths to conceal our association.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I have a weakness for jewelry and other fine accessories.
- 2 I reach for whatever substance I can to keep from feeling how I truly feel.
- 3 I cannot keep a secret.
- 4 I tend to say the first thing that pops into my head, even if it is inappropriate.
- 5 I lie compulsively.
- 6 I don't feel like I deserve to be happy.

REVOLUTIONARY

History is replete with stories of strife and upheaval. One of the main contributors to this fact occurs whenever political organizations and governments are challenged by opposing groups. Typically, these opposing groups are attempting to overthrow or drastically change the existing power structure and how it operates. Perhaps the government is wise and benevolent, but a hostile force intends to seize power. Or perhaps it is the government that is seen as tyrannical, and the opposition is made up of good freedom fighters struggling to topple the evil overlords. In any case, regardless of the circumstances, you are one of these revolutionaries, and your experience fighting the good fight against the powers that be has shaped who you are.



Skill Proficiencies: History, Persuasion

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A set of common clothes, several leaflets concerning your cause, a written manifesto, a hammer and six nails, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: SIBLINGS IN ARMS

No revolution is fought alone, and as such, those who are part of your cause tend to work together and help each other whenever they can. You're all in this mess together, after all, right? When dealing with fellow members of your revolutionary movement (and provided that they recognize you as an ally and do not see you as a danger to them), you can expect them to provide you with at least basic aid, such as a meal or two, a place to hide or sleep, temporary shelter from your common enemies, helpful information or advice, and maybe even basic weapons or other simple supplies. The GM decides just how helpful each instance of this feature is on a case by case basis, but typically these compatriots will be reluctant to risk their lives for you without some other compelling motive.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Who is the leader of your movement? Is it you or someone else? What is your relationship with other members of your cause like? What are you willing to do for the cause? What will you do once your cause succeeds? Or has it already won its fight? Or did the revolution fail? What is the revolution you belong to ultimately trying to accomplish?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you come to be a revolutionary somehow along the way as you adventured? Or were you involved in a revolution first and then fell into the life of adventure as you pursued that course?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 If you're not with me, you're against me.
- 2 I know when to keep my mouth shut.
- 3 I don't care much about creature comforts.
- 4 I tend to fall into and out of love easily.
- 5 I am anxious around strangers.
- 6 If I don't understand something, I'm not afraid to ask questions.
- 7 I am my own worst critic.
- 8 I take my privacy extremely seriously.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Hope.** Never let go of the dream that we can change the world for the better. (Good)
- 2 **Faith.** With dedication and belief, seemingly impossible things can be achieved. (Any)
- 3 **Manipulation.** Committed fanatics often make the best minions to serve your ends. (Evil)
- 4 **Reason.** This movement was inevitable. It's simply common sense, given the circumstances. (Neutral)
- 5 **Rebellion.** Fight the power! Resist the status quo! (Chaotic)
- 6 **Order.** There is a best and right way that things should work, and I will help see it established. (Lawful)

d6 Bond

- 1 I was pulled into the cause by someone I love.
- 2 I joined the cause because I wanted to be a part of something bigger than myself.
- 3 I know I probably won't live to see the revolution's success, but perhaps my children will see it.
- 4 This revolution has torn my family apart and divided us.
- 5 I was left for dead by people I thought were my allies; I will have my revenge.
- 6 I never want to see that hellhole of a place I was born in again.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I usually forget that other things beyond my cause can be important, too.
- 2 If I borrow something, it's probably never coming back.
- 3 I am not above paying for company, and in fact, I often do.
- 4 When I speak, I don't really ever think about who might hear me.
- 5 I sometimes try to make noteworthy, epic statements or speeches at inopportune times.
- 6 I crack one-liners constantly. Some are winners, but many are not.



SERVANT

You are (or were) the personal servant to someone with wealth and power. How wealthy and how powerful they are might be relative, but in any case, they are wealthier and more powerful than you, as you are bound to serve them by employment or other obligation. The duties you perform for those you serve may or may not be to your liking, but in any case, when you are on errands and tasks for your masters, those who know whom you serve might be more inclined to stand aside and leave you be or even assist you from time to time in order to curry favor.

Skill Proficiencies: Your choice of either Stealth or Performance and your choice of either Insight or Sleight of Hand

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A piece of jewelry worth 2 gp, a copper mug, a set of fine or common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: IMPORTANT ERRANDS

As you are in the service to someone with some degree of wealth and power, it is possible that the reputation of your master is known somewhat publicly. When you encounter people who know and respect or fear your master, if you are able to convince them that you are on official business for that person, there is a good chance that those people will leave you to your errands unmolested, so as to avoid the ire of your master. In some cases, certain individuals might even go so far as to help you with your task in an attempt to curry favor with your master. This might even work if you no longer serve your erstwhile master, so long as you can make people believe that you are actually still in their employ. The specific effects of this feature are at the GM's discretion on a case by case basis, but the GM is encouraged to provide an appropriate range of responses depending on the situations so that this feature is appropriately useful.



FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: Are you currently in service to someone or something? If so, who are they? If not, whom have you served previously? What kind of servant were/are you? What function did you serve for your master? How do/did you feel about those you served? Is being a servant something you resent, or do you enjoy it?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your life as a servant lead you into a life of adventure? If so, what circumstances led to that? Or did you enter into service to someone somewhere along the line during your existing life of adventure?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am very serious and don't have much use for light-heartedness.
- 2 I seldom forget a face or a name.
- 3 I prefer to watch and listen rather than speaking.
- 4 I would sooner die than forgive or forget a debt.
- 5 Style is more important than substance.
- 6 I value deeds far more than I value words.
- 7 I don't trust anyone who is selling something.
- 8 I love numbers and meticulously tracking things.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Hierarchy.** Everyone has their place in society. (Lawful)
- 2 **Ambition.** Serve while you must until you can supplant your master. (Evil)
- 3 **Service.** It is through service to others that we better ourselves. (Good)
- 4 **Practicality.** Make a living however you can; there is no shame in that. (Neutral)
- 5 **Contentedness.** There is a certain freedom when you aren't the one responsible for making decisions. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Perspective.** Everyone is a servant to someone or something. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I come from a long line of servants, and we have always served the same family.
- 2 I was forced into servitude to avoid a worse punishment for a crime I committed.
- 3 I opted to become a servant rather than suffer the punishment for a false accusation against me.
- 4 I became a servant just to get close to someone I loved from afar.
- 5 I became a servant to get close to a particular person so that I could more easily ruin them.
- 6 I take great joy in knowing that others are better off as a result of my hard work.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am terrible at keeping track of time.
- 2 I habitually embellish my stories and sometimes blatantly lie.
- 3 Intoxicants are the only things that give me relief from the stress of living.
- 4 I never take responsibility for any problems, even if they are legitimately my fault.
- 5 I take credit for other people's work.
- 6 I am certain that I am the best at what I do, despite any evidence to the contrary.

SHEPHERD

A common means of making a living in rural areas is to tend a flock or herd of sheep or other animals and live off the resources and goods which the animals provide. Those who care for and watch over such a herd, ensuring its overall well being and safety from predators, are commonly known as shepherds, and they can typically be found anywhere such animals thrive. Shepherds must know their animals and how to care for them, but they must also be vigilant against the myriad dangers which lurk, waiting to prey on the flock.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: Your choice of one musical instrument and either Leatherworker's Tools or Weaver's Tools

Equipment: A simple staff, a musical instrument, an animal harness or lead, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: WATCHFUL EYE

You are used to watching over your flock while it rests, always vigilant to keep it safe from predators, even while you are resting yourself. During a long rest, you can keep watch without penalty while sleeping for up to four hours. You may choose to sleep or keep watch for longer than this, of course, but you cannot do both at the same time for more than 4 hours per long rest.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: What sort of animals did you tend to? Did you enjoy that lifestyle? Did you yearn for more, or did you prefer the simplicity of it all? Do you come from a long line of shepherds or was this just the least bad option for you? How far from home did you travel while shepherding? If you had the chance to go back to that life, would you? What did your animals mean to you?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. The life of a shepherd is not typically one of adventure, so did adventure pull you in while you were

watching the animals? Did you willingly jump at the chance to escape a life of drudgery? Or maybe you stumbled upon something important while the sheep were grazing, and now you must set out on a quest as a result.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I avoid big cities if I can help it.
- 2 I trust animals more than I trust people.
- 3 I look for the good in every situation.
- 4 I like nothing more than swapping stories.
- 5 Dancing helps me clear my head.
- 6 I don't understand why everyone is always in such a hurry.
- 7 I like to be helpful and useful whenever possible.
- 8 I'm always humming or whistling whatever tune is stuck in my head at that moment.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Protection.** Protect the flock from predators, literally and figuratively. (Good)
- 2 **Leadership.** The sheep will follow the shepherd all the way to the slaughter. (Evil)
- 3 **Consistency.** A flock is often confused by needless change. (Lawful)
- 4 **Innovation.** There's always a better way, you just have to keep trying until you find it... but never stop trying. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Practicality.** The best way to be a shepherd is simply to do whatever works best in any given situation. (Neutral)
- 6 **Utilization.** A flock without a shepherd is a waste of potential. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I follow in the footsteps of my ancestors.
- 2 Never again will I lose my flock to predators. Once was enough.
- 3 No matter how far I ranged, I always missed my first home.
- 4 I don't care about glory, but I don't want to be forgotten.
- 5 It's easier to hide my secret when I don't have to be around people.
- 6 Home is where you make it.



d6 Flaw

- 1 I can't help but point out mistakes others make when I notice them.
- 2 I am painfully shy around people I find attractive.
- 3 I shout when I get excited, even at inopportune times.
- 4 I have a tendency to try to hog all of the attention.
- 5 I've never met a challenge I wouldn't accept.
- 6 I automatically assume everyone I meet is much less clever than I am.

SOCIALITE

You are a person who is well known in fashionable society and is fond of social activities and entertainment. Whatever your motivations, you have spent a great deal of your time in social situations and gatherings where status and appearances are everything, and rumors and favors are practically currency. Many socialites are social climbers and work hard to jockey for position amongst their peers, but some are merely part of the game by circumstance or necessity, participating in the dance (sometimes literally) simply to remain relevant enough to survive in a cutthroat society.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion and your choice of either Insight or Performance

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A set of personalized stationary, an ink pen, a set of fine clothes, and a pouch containing 15 gp.

FEATURE: SOCIAL NETWORK

As a socialite, your stock and trade is largely made up of the network of other socialites who move in the same circles as you. Work with the GM to determine what your social network looks like, what sorts of people make it up, and roughly how many individuals there might be within it, as well as generally where they might typically be found.

If you are able to successfully contact one of the contacts in your social network, you can ask them to share information or gossip, and if it is something they possess or have the means of acquiring (at the GM's discretion), they are likely to provide it to you. Bear in mind, not all information comes free, however, and some parts of your social network may sometimes require payment (in kind or otherwise) in exchange for the information or favors you seek.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: From where do you hail? Is it the same place you engage in the socialite lifestyle? If not, what brought you to this new place? What sort of company do you keep in your social network? Are you

generally successful as a socialite? Or are you somewhat of a struggling participant in the game? What is your reputation like among other socialites?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your experiences as a socialite give you reason or cause to enter into the arena of adventure? Or were you an adventurer first, and your exploits along the way steered you into the life of a socialite?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I wouldn't be caught dead wearing anything but the finest clothes available.
- 2 I'm very particular about the music I like.
- 3 It's important to have good manners even in dire situations.
- 4 I measure people's worth solely in how useful they are to me.
- 5 I will at least entertain any serious offer to do business.
- 6 I enjoy dancing, regardless of my skill at it.
- 7 I am generous to my friends and ruthless to my foes.
- 8 I am gracious, even in defeat or disgrace.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Manipulation.** Handled properly, anyone can be a tool to serve my purposes. (Evil)
- 2 **Worthiness.** I will earn my place in society, just like everyone else. (Lawful)
- 3 **Support.** It's good to have friends who can support you, and it's only right to support them, too. (Good)
- 4 **Fluidity.** Position and status are fleeting, as are alliances and rivalries. One must keep an open mind and be ready to adapt to change if they hope to succeed. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Relativism.** Everyone has their motivations, but I'm not sure any of them are necessarily better than any others. (Neutral)
- 6 **Glory.** Cover me in glory! I want my name to be known far and wide. (Any)



d6 Bond

- 1 This is in my blood. I come from a long line of socialites.
- 2 I suffered a great embarrassment at the hands of a rival, and I will have my revenge.
- 3 I cannot return home without facing the great shame which caused me to leave in the first place.
- 4 My family's status is due to a dirty secret I will do anything to keep out of the public eye.
- 5 My parents are kind, generous people, and I owe my success to their stellar reputations.
- 6 I come from humble beginnings, but I want to end up on top when all is said and done.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am extremely impatient.
- 2 I always make sure to get the last word, even if it results in an awkward situation.
- 3 I have a tendency to share secrets when trying to impress someone.
- 4 If there is a way to make sure someone else takes the blame for a problem, I'll do my best to ensure that happens.
- 5 All of my stories are ridiculously exaggerated.
- 6 I am too proud to ask for help with anything.

TAX COLLECTOR

They say that the only certainties in life are death and taxes. In the case of the latter, the various governments which levy those taxes must have someone to collect those funds from their citizens. These tax collectors may travel near or far depending on the setting, but they are all skilled in persuading, coaxing, cajoling, and coercing people into turning over some of their money in order to fulfill their civic duty in the form of paying their taxes.

Skill Proficiencies: Intimidation, Persuasion

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A ledger for tracking your collections, a leather money belt, a document verifying your authority to collect taxes, a set of traveler's or fine clothes, and a pouch containing 15 gp.

FEATURE: UNPOPULAR, BUT OFFICIAL

You have a reputation within your jurisdiction as a tax collector. When dealing with agents of the government you serve, you are sometimes (at the GM's discretion) afforded a bit of extra leeway when they recognize you as a civil servant to the same powers whom they serve. Additionally, citizens who fall under your jurisdiction will typically give you a wide

berth, preferring to avoid you and your activities rather than engaging with you, for fear that incidental contact with you might result in their purses being lightened by the few coins they might happen to owe to the governing body.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How much and how far are you used to traveling to collect taxes? What is your preferred approach to your duty? Do you enjoy your job? How do you feel about the people you collect from? What lengths are you willing to go to in order to collect taxes from those who are unwilling? How do you feel about the government you serve?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your activities as a tax collector lead you into a life of adventure? Or did your adventures set you onto the path of a collector of taxes? Are you questing for something that will help you with your job? Were you pulled into adventure while trying to fulfill your duty? Or perhaps your adventures put you in a position where you must collect taxes for some reason. Are you in charge of a territory and must personally collect the taxes you chose to levy?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Happiness is a full belly and warm feet.
- 2 I was once chased by a dog thiiiiiiis big, I swear!
- 3 Everyone has their story, and I like to hear them all.
- 4 The only thing better than gold is more gold.
- 5 I've never met a stranger.
- 6 I have impeccable manners at all times.
- 7 I love to travel to new places and see new things.
- 8 I've been known to roll my eyes at foolish people.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Greater Good.** When everyone contributes to the community, the greater good can thrive. (Good)
- 2 **Greed.** Any excuse to take money from others is fine by me. (Evil)
- 3 **Duty.** Everyone must pay their due. (Lawful)
- 4 **Change.** Change is necessary, but unfortunately, lasting change doesn't come free. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Indifference.** No, I don't care what the money is being used for, and neither should you. (Neutral)
- 6 **Currency.** Money makes the world go 'round. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I started collecting taxes as a punishment for a crime I committed.
- 2 No one likes a tax collector. I take comfort in coin.
- 3 I hope that if I keep this up, they will never find out who I really am.
- 4 I'll never forget that time I got robbed. Or any of the other times.
- 5 Where I'm from, the tax collector is a sacred duty.
- 6 I met the love of my life while making my rounds collecting taxes.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I take offense to the smallest slights.
- 2 It takes a monumental effort for me to trust anyone.
- 3 I assume everyone feels the same way I do about things.
- 4 Every word I say is a half truth if it isn't an outright lie.
- 5 I complain about even minor inconveniences.
- 6 I'm convinced that I'm the only competent one wherever I find myself.

TREASURE HUNTER

There is hidden treasure out there in the world, and you're just the one to find it. Whether you work in someone else's employ or if you work independently, your calling is to seek out noteworthy treasure in the world and acquire it: perhaps legally, perhaps not. That is up to you. You may focus on particular types or kinds of treasure, showing something of a preference or specialty as you build your collection, or you might just be interested in selling what you find to the highest bidder to raise money for your own purposes. Regardless of your preferences and motivations, you seek to find hidden treasures, and you use all of the tools at your disposal to research and locate them, identify them, and ultimately take possession of them.

Skill Proficiencies: Arcana, History

Tool Proficiencies: Thieves' Tools

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A grappling hook and 50 feet of silk rope, a crowbar, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.



FEATURE: LEADS

In your career as a treasure hunter, you have developed a network of individuals, or perhaps even part of an organization, which provides you with leads to treasures which you might potentially hunt. You may be able to contact these people for information about a particular treasure you seek, but more typically, they will periodically pass along information about new treasures to seek which you may not have been aware of previously.

Additionally, these contacts can often help put you in touch with people who would be interested in acquiring the treasures you find, assuming your goal is not to keep them or use them for some other purpose. If you find particularly interesting treasures, your contacts can usually help you locate someone to take them off your hands.

The player and GM should work together to determine who these contacts are and how they typically communicate with the treasure hunter.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How did you get started as a treasure hunter? Did you have someone introduce you to this lifestyle? Do you have a particular type of treasure that you prefer to pursue? What do you do with the treasures once you find them? Do you work for someone else? Are you willing to steal (or worse) to get your hands on your quarry? Are you willing to share what you find? What is your primary motivation for doing all this?

Chances are that your adventuring role and your treasure hunter role overlap quite a bit, as both professions share many natural synergies. If for some reason they don't in your case, be sure to explore how your treasure hunting background is distinct from the reasons you are an adventurer.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I can't resist a good mystery.
- 2 If you can't do it with style, it's not worth doing.
- 3 I don't like to leave anything unfinished.
- 4 I always try to be friendly.
- 5 I have been described as boorish on more than one occasion.
- 6 I am extremely impatient.
- 7 I don't like to do anything without a plan in place.
- 8 No risk, no reward.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Acquisition.** I will simply take whatever I want. (Evil)
- 2 **Collection.** I want to collect every noteworthy treasure I hear about. (Any)
- 3 **Preservation.** I want to keep these artifacts from falling into the wrong hands. (Good)
- 4 **Ownership.** It's not enough that I find these items. I insist that they go to their rightful owners, which might include me. (Lawful)
- 5 **Liberation.** Possession and ownership are illusions. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Expertise.** I want to be the best at what I do. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 The entire focus of my career is to learn everything I can about one particular artifact.
- 2 One of my parents was a treasure hunter who taught me everything I know.
- 3 One more big score, then I can retire.
- 4 I work for an organization who seeks unique treasures for a particular purpose.
- 5 My partner was killed during one of our expeditions, and I've never forgiven myself for it.
- 6 I made a promise to someone I love that I would find the ultimate treasure.

d6 Flaw

- 1 Kleptomania? Me? Well...
- 2 I constantly embellish my own accomplishments.
- 3 I have no idea how to keep a secret.
- 4 Once I start hunting for an object, I pursue it obsessively.
- 5 I spend money like water.
- 6 I tend to complain about everything.

VARIANT TREASURE HUNTER: BAGMAN

While it is true you are a treasure hunter, your particular expertise is more geared toward the taking aspect of the hunt rather than the finding. While you are still skilled in recognizing objects of magical importance and the like, by choice or by happenstance, you tend to devote more of your time toward actually physically acquiring those objects than you do toward studying the histories of them. If you choose the Bagman variant of the Treasure Hunter background, you may choose to forego proficiency in History and instead replace it with proficiency in Sleight of Hand.

UNDERTAKER

Most people don't like to think about mortality, but to the undertaker, such matters literally make up their livelihood. All things that live must die eventually, and when that happens to people, someone has to take care of what happens next. Those unpleasant, yet necessary, duties often fall to an undertaker. These men and women fulfill a variety of functions, including the digging of graves, preparing bodies for traditional and/or practical funerals, building coffins, or preparing other methods of dispositioning corpses such as constructing funeral pyres or tombs. In this way, most undertakers are skilled in the tools of the trade, which includes the means to build coffins and similar, as well as the tools needed to cosmetically prepare a body to be viewed by loved ones prior to burial.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine, Religion

Tool Proficiencies: Carpenter's Tools, Disguise Kit

Equipment: A shovel, heavy duty needle and thread, a disguise kit, a set of common or traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: NO SHORTAGE OF WORK

People die. That's no surprise. As such, it's equally unsurprising that most places an undertaker goes may very well have need of his services at any given time. While few people are ever truly glad to see the undertaker at their doorstep, most towns and settlements rely on the services of such individuals to manage the logistics of dealing with the deceased. For this reason, the ruling bodies of such locales usually consider them a welcome sight and are typically willing to pay to have such services rendered when an undertaker sets up shop or passes through the region. You should have little trouble finding work as an undertaker at the villages, towns, and cities you encounter.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How did you become an undertaker? Did you grow up into it as the family business? Or did you come upon it by other means? Are you the traveling/nomadic sort or undertaker, plying your trade where you can, or have you set up shop more permanently somewhere? How do you feel about the work you do? How does that affect your opinions toward the living and the dead? Do you take pride in your work? Do you resent the stigma attached to it?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you become an undertaker as a result of something that happened during your adventures, or did your profession lead you into an adventure, perhaps unexpectedly? Perhaps a mysterious death pulled you into

a foul plot which you're working to help solve, or perhaps your work helping a war-ravaged town deal with their dead relatives instilled in you a sense of duty and pride for this kind of work? Are you on a quest that came to you through the trade of undertaking? Or perhaps you have become an undertaker to deal with the bodies that are left in your wake as a result of your adventuring career.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Nothing matters: we all end up dead in the end.
- 2 Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.
- 3 Whatever I count, I count it twice, just to be sure.
- 4 There's no excuse for being sloppy.
- 5 If you don't get it right the first time, throw it away and start over.
- 6 I never forget a face, living or dead.
- 7 I prefer to let my actions speak for me rather than my words.
- 8 Look on the bright side: we're still alive.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Legacy.** I hope to be remembered for my good deeds when I'm gone. (Good)
- 2 **Ambivalence.** It's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it. (Neutral)
- 3 **Manipulation.** It's amazing how easily you can exploit the living by simply reminding them of their own mortality. (Evil)
- 4 **Dogma.** Everyone has their own beliefs, and one must honor those beliefs when preparing someone for their eternal rest. (Lawful)
- 5 **Irreverence.** I get the job done. It shouldn't matter how I do it. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Quality.** Doing the job well is its own reward. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 The worth of my life will be judged by what people say about me when I'm gone.
- 2 I will never forget the first person I buried.
- 3 Undertaking is a family tradition that I'm expected to uphold.
- 4 A seer foretold the time and place of my death.
- 5 I want to be somebody, but right now I'm just a lowly undertaker.
- 6 I lost someone I loved to an untimely death, and I'll do anything to speak to them again.

d6 Flaw

- 1 My sense of humor is as dead as the bodies I deal with.
- 2 Because I deal with death every day, I often forget about the value of life.
- 3 Being confronted by my own mortality constantly causes me to cope through reckless hedonism.
- 4 I loathe being alone with the dead. I avoid it if at all possible.
- 5 I loot things from the bodies I prepare; they aren't going to use it anymore.
- 6 I am always afraid the ghosts of those I bury will come back to haunt me.

VARIANT UNDERTAKER: CORONER

Some undertakers cleave closer to investigators than gravediggers and call themselves coroners. If you choose the Coroner variant of the Undertaker background, this background gives you proficiency in the Investigation skill instead of Religion.

URBAN GUIDE

Cities can be crowded, hectic settings rife with dangerous people and places. As such, it is often prudent for individuals who are not familiar with cities, or at least ones they don't know well, to hire an urban guide. Whether it's simply to help get a package or message from point A to B or whether it's a weeklong job that involves effectively showing a newcomer all the ins and outs of a town, urban guides are often the ones such people turn to for help when they need someone to navigate the treacherous paths and secrets that some cities present.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: Forgery Kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A small collection of maps for the cities you are most familiar with, documents proving your citizenship (legitimate or not) in a particular city, a set of common or traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: FAMILIAR WITH CITIES

Work with the GM to determine which cities you are experienced with. While in these cities, you can (with relative ease) always find landmarks and other specific locations within those cities, which also means that you virtually never get lost while navigating such places. Additionally, while within a city you are familiar with, you usually know where to find key figures and organization within the city at any given time, though such information might require you to ask around a bit (at the GM's

discretion). Regardless of the amount of effort it might take to get that information, you can almost always succeed in locating such people relatively quickly and accurately so that you can seek out or avoid them as you see fit. You must spend at least a few days exploring a new city in order for you to be considered experienced with that city for the purposes of this feature.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How long have you been an urban guide? What cities do you tend to frequent? Do you enjoy your work? Are you selective about your clients? Do you work for yourself or for someone else? How do you feel about that in either case?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did your exploits as an adventurer lead you into a situation where becoming an urban guide just made sense? Did you find yourself guiding a party through cities often enough to make a living doing it? Or did you start off as an urban guide and that work somehow led you into adventure? If so, how did that come about?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I know where all the best taverns are, and I frequent them whenever I can.
- 2 I'll strike up a conversation with anyone I find attractive.
- 3 I want everything I do to look heroic if someone is watching.
- 4 As far as I'm concerned, the less that people notice me, the better.
- 5 Wherever I go, I always have an escape plan.
- 6 One city is like any other. There's no reason to get attached to one in particular.
- 7 I am fascinated by people, and I love to just watch them go about their lives.
- 8 I will go out of my way to be kind to animals I come across.



WILDERNESS GUIDE

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Victimization.** Any number of nefarious individuals in a city would be happy to have new marks and fresh meat delivered to them. (Evil)
- 2 **Protection.** If I can help people get safely through a dangerous city, I'm happy to help. (Good)
- 3 **Efficiency.** People need to get from one place to another quickly to keep things running smoothly, and nothing should hinder that. (Lawful)
- 4 **Liberty.** The freedom to move through a city unhindered is everyone's right. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Impartiality.** People might be good or evil, but the city is just the city. The city doesn't care who you are or what you want. The city treats everyone the same, even if its citizens don't. (Neutral)
- 6 **Patience.** With enough time and practice, anyone can learn to get by in a big city. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 My parents are government officials in my home city and want me to follow in their footsteps.
- 2 The first place I visit when arriving in a city is the temple of my chosen deity (if one exists).
- 3 I used to be a part of a violent gang, but I have left that life behind. They have not forgotten me, though.
- 4 I intend to visit and learn about every city I can before I die.
- 5 The love of my life skips from city to city seemingly on a whim, so I am always on the lookout for that person.
- 6 My home city was ravaged by a magical disaster that I narrowly escaped.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I easily confuse people with each other. Faces all look much the same to me.
- 2 When the going gets tough, I get drinking. Hard.
- 3 I actively try to avoid chores and other monotonous work however I can.
- 4 If I make a mistake, I always blame the circumstances, not myself.
- 5 I laugh nervously in uncomfortable situations.
- 6 Whenever I'm around someone I don't like, I mutter under my breath and can't help but give them dirty looks.

The wilderness can be a dangerous place, especially to those who aren't familiar with the obstacles and perils one may face in such environments. That said, when such inexperienced people have need to travel long distances through the wilderness, the wiser travelers look for the aid of a wilderness guide to see them through the awaiting dangers. As a wilderness guide, you are skilled and experienced at navigating the wilds and avoiding the pitfalls which lie in wait to prey upon the hapless and unsuspecting who are not well versed enough in the wilderness's nuances to safely traverse it. They look to you to see them safely through the wilderness, and that spells opportunity for you.

Skill Proficiencies: Nature, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Your choice of Herbalism Kit or Navigator's Tools

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A set of maps for the area you are most familiar with traversing, a walking stick, a small knife, a set of traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: SURVIVING THE WILD

Work with the GM to determine which type(s) of wilderness biomes you are experienced with. While in these biomes, you are able to find enough food and water (presuming it exists) to feed yourself and up to six other people each day.

Additionally, you are almost always able to find the least dangerous location in your immediate area to take a rest or make camp when in a wilderness biome you are familiar with. This does not guarantee safety for you or those following you, but it will typically provide some degree of security and safety that others less skilled at traversing the wilderness may not find.

Also, you can spend at least an hour to build or supervise the construction of shelter in a wilderness biome that you are familiar with. Such shelter will provide at least some protection from the elements and the dangers of the wilderness. The longer spent on making such shelter, the more effective it should prove to be (GM's discretion). The GM should consider such shelter and safe locations when determining what, if any, dangers might befall a party in the wilderness, as well as how those potential dangers are presented.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How did you learn to guide others through the wilderness? Is it something you learned on your own, or did you have a teacher? Are there particular areas you tend to stick to, or do you travel far and wide? Do you enjoy your work? You understand nature and

the wilderness, but how do you feel about it?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you start off onto a life of adventure early and happen upon the life of a wilderness guide along the way? Or did you begin as a wilderness guide and find the call for adventure as part of one of your jobs? Or maybe you sought adventure between jobs to occupy your down time. What circumstances led you into the wilderness and beyond?

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Animals aren't shy about their sexuality, so why should I be?
- 2 I prefer the solitude of a quiet glade to the clamor of a city street.
- 3 If you're providing food, I'll at least listen to what you have to say.
- 4 Possessions and money are somewhat necessary, but they are all fleeting things.
- 5 If you're going to do something, do it as well as you possibly can.
- 6 A little hard work and sweat never killed anyone.
- 7 I like to stay quiet so as not to draw attention to myself.
- 8 I prefer to do things for myself whenever possible.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Implication.** It would be a shame if you didn't cooperate with me while we're out so far from civilization. Something bad could happen, and no one would ever know. (Evil)
- 2 **Protection.** Those who can should protect those who can't. (Good)
- 3 **Access.** The freedom to travel without restriction is fundamental to happiness. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Obligation.** If someone hires me to take them through the wilderness, I'll let nothing stop me from making that happen: the agreement must be honored. (Lawful)
- 5 **Merit.** If I can defeat or avoid the dangers of the wilderness, then I deserve to do so; I earned my mastery. (Any)
- 6 **Balance.** Nature is a powerful, balanced force, and the best we can hope to achieve is to pass through it unnoticed without disturbing the balance it embodies. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 I never knew my mother, and I fled from my father's home over a disagreement.
- 2 My mentor disappeared while investigating ancient ruins, and I have vowed to find her.
- 3 Every trek through the wilderness is a test of my worthiness to exist.
- 4 I lost a sibling to the wilderness when I was a child. Never again will I lose someone to the wiles of nature.
- 5 I hope to understand myself better by understanding the way nature works.
- 6 I have a friendly rivalry with a few other wilderness guides.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I will never ask for directions, no matter how lost I am.
- 2 I have no concept of proper manners beyond those you find in the wilderness.
- 3 I have a violent temper that causes its fair share of problems.
- 4 I am terribly impatient.
- 5 I take foolish risks just to see what will happen.
- 6 I swear and curse like an expert.

WIZARD'S ASSISTANT

Every good wizard needs an assistant: someone to clean the equipment, take notes on experiments, organize spellbooks, prepare, feed, and care for test subjects, fetch components, and just generally handle the mundane tasks which come along with being a practicing wizard. That assistant is you. Or at least it was. Either way, you have experience with the business of being a wizard, though you may or may not have actual magical talent yourself. You've certainly been around it, you know at least generally what it takes to be a wizard, and you're familiar with the daily activities of wizard studies.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Arcana

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism Kit or Alchemist's Supplies

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: An ink pen, a notebook, a tinderbox, a set of common clothes, and a pouch containing 10 gp.

FEATURE: FAMILIAR WITH WIZARDRY

As a wizard's assistant, you have a working knowledge of the daily activities and chores associated with wizardly pursuits. As such, you have no trouble finding such work or otherwise assisting wizards with their arcane studies. This could open opportunities for you as you travel and encounter other wizards who might find value in a temporary assistant, especially if they find themselves short-handed.

Additionally, many of your responsibilities often involve research. When you need a piece of lore or information regarding wizards, their practices, or the principles which their schools are based upon, if you don't already know the information, you probably know who to talk to or where to look for it in order to uncover that information. It is up to the GM's discretion how easily (or possible) it may be to locate a source to provide the information, not to mention the difficulty involved with actually getting the information out of the source. Seeking such information could be the basis for at least some of your adventure.

FLESHING THINGS OUT

Some questions to consider when determining how this background applies to your character: How many masters have you had? Who were they and how did they treat you? Do you enjoy your job? How long have you been doing this? What caused you to take this job in the first place? Why have you stayed? What do you like about the job? What do you hate about the job? How do you feel about wizards and the work they do?

You should also consider what caused you to take up the role of an adventurer. Did you set out on a quest at the behest of your master? Or did you take up adventuring to leave the life of thankless labor behind? Or maybe your life of adventure delivered you to the doorstep of a wizard who took you in and employed you as his assistant.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Curiosity killed the cat, but it only singed me.
- 2 Magic is beautiful and fascinating.
- 3 Hard work is its own reward.
- 4 Hands on is better than just watching.
- 5 I consider this kind of work beneath me.
- 6 I've named all of the lab rats.
- 7 I always volunteer for the hardest jobs.
- 8 I just want to be left alone so I can read the books.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Indifference.** It's a dirty job, but it pays well. (Neutral)
- 2 **Service.** I just want to help. (Good)
- 3 **Ambition.** I will watch and learn until I can take the power for my own. (Evil)
- 4 **Rigor.** With proper methods and an orderly approach, one can learn much. (Lawful)
- 5 **Innovation.** Discovery requires inspiration from unexpected places. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Knowledge.** I will learn all I can by watching. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 Someday soon, the student will become the master.
- 2 My master is my hero and mentor.
- 3 I am not my master's only apprentice.
- 4 I am secretly here to spy on my master for someone else.
- 5 I made a catastrophic error and got away with it.
- 6 I'm hoping to discover a powerful secret.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I don't believe I'm worthy of greatness.
- 2 I constantly scheme and plot to get ahead.
- 3 I'm terrified I'll make a mistake.
- 4 I believe I can do things that are truly beyond my ken.
- 5 I volunteer for activities without thinking them through.
- 6 If I make a mistake, I go out of my way to hide it or blame someone else.



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