

DUNGEON CALLINGS

BACKGROUNDS FROM BENEATH THE EARTH

SOME ADVENTURERS have backstories or callings that are directly related to the world below. The following are three such backgrounds: the Deep Hunter, Escapee from Below, and Imposter.

DEEP HUNTER

You are skilled at hunting and tracking big game in cavernous and underground environments. You have spent much of your training isolated and alone in the dark, honing all of your senses to note the slightest sound or feel the slightest impression in the loose rock and sand. You are relentless in your pursuit, for you know that your quarry will not be as forgiving as you.



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You may be a guardian of your community against the dangers in the rock or you may simply hunt for sport. You might even hire yourself as a guide for bored nobles or merchants who crave a bit of excitement hunting the peculiar and exotic monsters found underground. In any case, you are happiest outside of civilization, exploring the depths for new challenges.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Smith's tools, woodcarver's tools

Equipment: Bullseye lantern, hammer, shovel, 50 feet of hemp rope, 10 iron spikes, mess kit, traveler's clothes, and a pouch containing 5 gp.

FEATURE: DEEP LORE

You've spent so much time in the "wilderness" areas underground that you have a natural feel for it. You always have a sense of how deep you are and which direction is north, providing that you've traveled in these regions before. You are also generally aware of the physical and political geography of the region (e.g., "the old dwarf colony is this way and those tunnels are part of the wererat pack's hunting grounds"). You know where relatively safe places to camp are located and you can usually find fresh sources of water.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Deep Hunters tend to be loners, preferring to scout ahead rather than remain with their party. This isn't necessarily because they are anti-social, just that they prefer no distractions when looking out for dangerous threats. Deep Hunters do tend to enjoy hearing tales of home or the surface world in general, as they spend so much time in the deep that they want to know what's happened while they've been gone.

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d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I never go on a hunt without careful preparation and all the equipment I need.
- 2 I enjoy teaching others how to hunt.
- 3 I revel in the solitude of being alone; it is difficult for me to engage with or open up to others.
- 4 The chase is more fun than the kill.
- 5 I never let anything go to waste, whether it be rationing provisions or using every part of the kill.
- 6 I am frightened of being trapped—there must always be an exit available if things go wrong.
- 7 I am the protector of my band. It's a personal insult if something surprises and threatens the group.
- 8 I have an entertaining story for every scar on my body.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Fame.** I want to be recognized for how well I hunt. (Any)
- 2 **Guardian.** I use my skills to protect others. (Good)
- 3 **Improvement.** I always strive to be better to make my efforts more bountiful. (Any)
- 4 **Nature.** Hunting preserves the balance. (Neutral)
- 5 **Self-Reliance.** You shouldn't need to rely on others to feed, clothe, shelter, and protect you. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Strength.** The strong will always prevail over the weak. (Evil)

d6 Bond

- 1 I wish to capture or kill one particular creature who constantly evades me.
- 2 I will do anything to protect those who put their life in my hands.
- 3 I wish to keep an area free of dangerous creatures.
- 4 I owe my life to another hunter. I will do anything to repay that debt.
- 5 A monster got away with a trinket or relic that is important to me or a friend; I must find it.
- 6 Another hunter took credit for my kill; I must avenge the insult.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I have little tolerance for those who can't survive on their own.
- 2 I am obsessed with the hunt; once I've set my sights on a monster I'll stop at nothing to catch or kill it.
- 3 I need to be the best hunter in the group.
- 4 I exaggerate my own skills and constantly fear that I'll be discovered a fraud.
- 5 I once claimed a kill that was not mine and I'll do anything to protect that secret.
- 6 I know what we need to do to survive and am quick to dismiss contrary ideas.

ESCAPEE FROM BELOW

You've spent a long time in underground captivity before you were able to escape to the surface.

Whether you were born into captivity, were captured as a small child, or simply spent many years in captivity, you have grown accustomed to ways that aren't your own. You are now a stranger to your own people, having little comprehension of their social mores and replacing them with those you learned while underground.

One unfortunate side-effect of this background is that your peers tend to see you as insane, or at least less-than-fully in control of your faculties. As much as you don't understand them, they simply don't understand you; you don't wake and sleep with the sun, you eat strange foods, your sense of value is different (minerals rare to them are common to you and vice versa), and you often use words and phrases that they've never heard.

Skill Proficiencies: Perception, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Thieves' tools

Languages: One exotic language of your choice

Equipment: A set of thieves' tools, a ragged set of traveling clothes, a club or dagger, a memento from your captivity, a pouch containing 10 gp of exotic minting.

FEATURE: ALIEN CULTURE

Your long period of captivity has given you an incredible insight into the culture that held you. You understand their customs, traditions, religion,

political ties, and even, to an extent, how they think. You are considered a walking expert in this culture and can usually find or remember something useful for you or your group when faced with a challenge involving this culture.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Escapees from Below have problems trusting others, especially since the only people they could rely on were themselves; everyone else was out to harm them. Escapees often seem insane because they tend to approach situations from an alien mind-set and the hard lessons learned during their escape. Still, if an Escapee makes a friend then it is for life and the Escapee is fanatically loyal to them.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am intensely curious about the ways of others.
- 2 I constantly use words and expressions from my exotic language.
- 3 I am akin to a child when it comes to social interactions.
- 4 I burst into tears whenever confronted with a custom or tradition that I should know but don't.
- 5 I find myself gravitating towards and sympathetic of other outsiders to my home culture.
- 6 I don't like to talk about my experiences underground.
- 7 I try too hard sometimes to make friends.
- 8 I see danger in every shadow and around every corner.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Belonging.** I want nothing more than to feel like a part of the world above. (Lawful)
- 2 **Charity.** If I am fortunate enough to have more than I need then I will gladly share with others. (Good)
- 3 **Faith.** My hard life was a test; I shall not be found lacking. (Lawful)
- 4 **Friendship.** I know the value of true friendship; it can mean the difference between life and death. (Good)
- 5 **Liberty.** I persevered for so long to ensure that no one will control me again. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Wealth.** I have survived too long with nothing; it's time that I lived a life of luxury. (Evil)

d6 Bond

- 1 There was one friend who helped me escape the deep below but we got separated; I must find them again.
- 2 I will protect my new home at all costs.
- 3 There are things I miss about the culture that I escaped from and I'll gladly indulge in their customs when the opportunity presents itself.
- 4 I lost something very valuable to me when I escaped and I want to get it back.
- 5 I am extremely loyal to my friends.
- 6 I want revenge on the culture that enslaved me.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I tolerate no sympathy towards members of the culture that enslaved me; they all deserve death.
- 2 I can't allow myself to get too close to anyone; they'll all betray me in the end.
- 3 I am suspicious of "gifts." Everyone wants something in return.
- 4 I can't let go of some of the more unsavory aspects of the culture that enslaved me.
- 5 I'm brutally honest to a fault; I have no social graces.
- 6 I act like a caged animal whenever I stay in one place for too long.

IMPOSTER

You've returned to the surface after a long period of captivity and were welcomed with open arms by your friends and family in spite of your scars and aged appearance. You've been allowed to pick up the pieces of your life that you were forced to leave behind and re-establish old connections. The only problem is that it's not *your* life to which you've returned—you are an imposter.

During your time beneath the earth you'd met another person with your same general appearance. Whether you adopted their identity with their dying blessing or seized an opportunity for a better life for yourself you now hold yourself out as that person, mimicking their mannerisms and using the stories they told you to convince others that these are your memories. Any physical differences or lapses in memory are dismissed as peculiarities of the hard captivity you've endured.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Clothes appropriate to the new life, a valued trinket from the impersonated, a journal with encrypted notes about the impersonated's life, a disguise kit, and 15 gp.

ADOPTED IDENTITY

Regardless of the circumstances of your birth and the previous life you've led, you now pretend to live a different life. You don't necessarily have the qualifications of this new identity (although coincidental qualifications are often a deciding factor), but you fake it as best you can. Choose an adopted identity or randomly determine one on the following table.

d8 Adopted Identity

- 1 Scion of a prominent family
- 2 A valued teacher
- 3 A noted warrior
- 4 Wealthy merchant
- 5 Country squire
- 6 A lost pirate captain
- 7 A simple farmer or commoner
- 8 A temple scholar

FEATURE: UNEXPECTED ASSISTANCE

While you struggle to maintain the masquerade that you are who you say, there are a surprising number of people who are more than willing to help you through your lapses of memory or expertise as they truly want to believe that you are who you say. So long as you don't act completely out of character or get caught in an outrageous lie, you can usually find someone willing to cover for you. This cover is most commonly in the form of excuses for your "aberrant" behavior.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Imposters have two personalities: their true personality and the one that they've adopted. At first, it is often difficult for the Imposter to

play the role expected of them, but as time goes on the Imposter plays the new role so often that it starts to become part of their true personality. An Imposter is very cautious about whom they choose as friends, and they only share their secret with those they can completely trust.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I tend to keep my mouth shut for fear of revealing myself.
- 2 I often drown others with my friendliness because I believe that is what the original would have done.
- 3 I enjoy exploring new things, as it gives me a clean slate to imprint myself.
- 4 I'm constantly simmering due to the pressure I have to remain civil to "relations" I can't stand.
- 5 My speech and manners are often contrary to what would be expected of someone of my station.
- 6 If you threaten my masquerade then I will remove you.
- 7 I spend money freely as if I'm unaware of the costs to acquire it.
- 8 I am friendly but probing, trying to determine threats to my masquerade.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Family.** The person whose life I adopted begged me to fill the hole in their family. (Lawful)
- 2 **Happiness.** I hope to find true happiness through the life of another. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Power.** I never had the kind of authority that this new life grants me; I shall wield it wisely. (Lawful)
- 4 **Reparations.** The person whose life I adopted made mistakes that they want me to rectify in their place. (Neutral)
- 5 **Vengeance.** The person whose life I adopted wronged me. I shall make their friends and family pay from within. (Evil)
- 6 **Wealth.** This adopted life gives me the lifestyle that I've envied. (Evil)



d6 Bond

- 1 I value new friends; they don't threaten to expose me.
- 2 I will guard my new identity with my life.
- 3 I treat my impersonated's family as if they were my own.
- 4 There is a personal event that I am obligated to perform; I do not wish to go through with it, but everyone expects me to perform it.
- 5 There is one family member or friend who constantly challenges my adopted identity.
- 6 I am doing my best to win over a pet that was once close to the person whose life I adopted.

d6 Flaw

- 1 There is one thing about the person whose life I adopted that I cannot emulate; I do everything I can to work around it.
- 2 I'm unaware of a crime that the person whose life I adopted committed; it will surely come to haunt me.
- 3 There is someone who knows the truth; I will stop at nothing to silence them.
- 4 I've been reckless with my impersonation; it will lead not only to my ruin, but also those who believe my masquerade.
- 5 I have a habit that I must indulge in, even though the person whose life I adopted did not.
- 6 I wish to pursue a romantic interest that threatens to collapse the house of cards that I've built.

