

CHAPTER 4: PERSONALITY AND BACKGROUND

CHARACTERS ARE DEFINED BY MUCH MORE THAN their race and class. They're individuals with their own stories, interests, connections, and capabilities beyond those that class and race define. This chapter expounds on the details that distinguish characters from one another, including the basics of name and physical description, the rules of backgrounds and languages, and the finer points of personality and alignment.

CHARACTER DETAILS

Your character's name and physical description might be the first things that the other players at the table learn about you. It's worth thinking about how these characteristics reflect the character you have in mind.

NAME

Your character's race description includes sample names for members of that race. Put some thought into your name even if you're just picking one from a list.

SEX

You can play a male or female character without gaining any special benefits or hindrances. Think about how your character does or does not conform to the broader culture's expectations of sex, gender, and sexual behavior. For example, a male drow cleric defies the traditional gender divisions of drow society, which could be a reason for your character to leave that society and come to the surface.

TIKA AND ARTEMIS: CONTRASTING CHARACTERS

The details in this chapter make a big difference in setting your character apart from every other character. Consider the following two human fighters.

Hailing from the Dragonlance setting, Tika Waylan was a brash teenager who had a rough childhood. The daughter of a thief, she ran away from home and practiced her father's trade on the streets of Solace. When she tried to rob the proprietor of the Inn of the Last Home, he caught her and took her under his wing, giving her a job as a barmaid. But when the dragonarmies laid waste to the town of Solace and destroyed the inn, necessity forced Tika into adventure alongside the friends she'd known from her childhood. Her skill as a fighter (a frying pan remains one of her favorite weapons) combined with her history on the streets gave her skills invaluable in her adventuring career.

Artemis Entreri grew up on the streets of Calimport in the Forgotten Realms. He used his wits, strength, and agility to carve out his own territory in one of the city's hundreds of poor shanty towns. After several years, he attracted the notice of one of the most powerful thieves' guilds in the city, and he ascended the ranks of the guild quickly despite his youth. Artemis became the favored assassin of one of the city's pashas, who sent him to far-off Icewind Dale to recover some stolen gems. He's a professional killer, constantly challenging himself to improve his skills.

Tika and Artemis are both human and both fighters (with some experience as rogues), possessing similarly high Strength and Dexterity scores, but there the similarity ends.

You don't need to be confined to binary notions of sex and gender. The elf god Corellon Larethian is often seen as androgynous or hermaphroditic, for example, and some elves in the multiverse are made in Corellon's image. You could also play a female character who presents herself as a man, a man who feels trapped in a female body, or a bearded female dwarf who hates being mistaken for a male. Likewise, your character's sexual orientation is for you to decide.

HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

You can decide your character's height and weight, using the information provided in your race description or on the Random Height and Weight table. Think about what your character's ability scores might say about his or her height and weight. A weak but agile character might be thin. A strong and tough character might be tall or just heavy.

If you want to, you can roll randomly for your character's height and weight using the Random Height and Weight table. The dice roll given in the Height Modifier column determines the character's extra height (in inches) beyond the base height. That same number multiplied by the dice roll or quantity given in the Weight Modifier column determines the character's extra weight (in pounds) beyond the base weight.

RANDOM HEIGHT AND WEIGHT

Race	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Human	4'8"	+2d10	110 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Dwarf, hill	3'8"	+2d4	115 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Dwarf, mountain	4'	+2d4	130 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Elf, high	4'6"	+2d10	90 lb.	× (1d4) lb.
Elf, wood	4'6"	+2d10	100 lb.	× (1d4) lb.
Elf, drow	4'5"	+2d6	75 lb.	× (1d6) lb.
Halfling	2'7"	+2d4	35 lb.	× 1 lb.
Dragonborn	5'6"	+2d8	175 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Gnome	2'11"	+2d4	35 lb.	× 1 lb.
Half-elf	4'9"	+2d8	110 lb.	× (2d4) lb.
Half-orc	4'10"	+2d10	140 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Tiefling	4'9"	+2d8	110 lb.	× (2d4) lb.

For example, as a human, Tika has a height of 4 feet 8 inches plus 2d10 inches. Her player rolls 2d10 and gets a total of 12, so Tika stands 5 feet 8 inches tall. Then the player uses that same roll of 12 and multiplies it by 2d4 pounds. Her 2d4 roll is 3, so Tika weighs an extra 36 pounds (12 × 3) on top of her base 110 pounds, for a total of 146 pounds.

OTHER PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

You choose your character's age and the color of his or her hair, eyes, and skin. To add a touch of distinctiveness, you might want to give your character an unusual or memorable physical characteristic, such as a scar, a limp, or a tattoo.

TIKA AND ARTEMIS: CHARACTER DETAILS

Consider how the names Tika Waylan and Artemis Entreri set these characters apart from each other and reflect their personalities. Tika is a young woman determined to prove that she's not just a kid any more, and her name makes her sound young and ordinary. Artemis Entreri comes from an exotic land and carries a more mysterious name.

Tika is nineteen years old at the start of her adventuring career and has auburn hair, green eyes, fair skin with freckles, and a mole on her right hip. Artemis is a small man, compact and all wiry muscle. He has angular features and high cheekbones, and he always seems in need of a shave. His raven-black hair is thick and full, but his eyes are gray and lifeless—betraying the emptiness of his life and soul.

ALIGNMENT

A typical creature in the worlds of **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** has an alignment, which broadly describes its moral and personal attitudes. Alignment is a combination of two factors: one identifies morality (good, evil, or neutral), and the other describes attitudes toward society and order (lawful, chaotic, or neutral). Thus, nine distinct alignments define the possible combinations.

These brief summaries of the nine alignments describe the typical behavior of a creature with that alignment. Individuals might vary significantly from that typical behavior, and few people are perfectly and consistently faithful to the precepts of their alignment.

Lawful good (LG) creatures can be counted on to do the right thing as expected by society. Gold dragons, paladins, and most dwarves are lawful good.

Neutral good (NG) folk do the best they can to help others according to their needs. Many celestials, some cloud giants, and most gnomes are neutral good.

Chaotic good (CG) creatures act as their conscience directs, with little regard for what others expect. Copper dragons, many elves, and unicorns are chaotic good.

Lawful neutral (LN) individuals act in accordance with law, tradition, or personal codes. Many monks and some wizards are lawful neutral.

Neutral (N) is the alignment of those who prefer to steer clear of moral questions and don't take sides,

doing what seems best at the time. Lizardfolk, most druids, and many humans are neutral.

Chaotic neutral (CN) creatures follow their whims, holding their personal freedom above all else. Many barbarians and rogues, and some bards, are chaotic neutral.

Lawful evil (LE) creatures methodically take what they want, within the limits of a code of tradition, loyalty, or order. Devils, blue dragons, and hobgoblins are lawful evil.

Neutral evil (NE) is the alignment of those who do whatever they can get away with, without compassion or qualms. Many drow, some cloud giants, and yugoloths are neutral evil.

Chaotic evil (CE) creatures act with arbitrary violence, spurred by their greed, hatred, or bloodlust. Demons, red dragons, and orcs are chaotic evil.

ALIGNMENT IN THE MULTIVERSE

For many thinking creatures, alignment is a moral choice. Humans, dwarves, elves, and other humanoid races can choose whether to follow the paths of good or evil, law or chaos. According to myth, the good-aligned gods who created these races gave them free will to choose their moral paths, knowing that good without free will is slavery.

The evil deities who created other races, though, made those races to serve them. Those races have strong inborn tendencies that match the nature of their gods. Most orcs share the violent, savage nature of the orc god, Gruumsh, and are thus inclined toward evil. Even if an orc chooses a good alignment, it struggles against its innate tendencies for its entire life. (Even half-orcs feel the lingering pull of the orc god's influence.)

Alignment is an essential part of the nature of celestials and fiends. A devil does not choose to be lawful evil, and it doesn't tend toward lawful evil, but rather it is lawful evil in its essence. If it somehow ceased to be lawful evil, it would cease to be a devil.

Most creatures that lack the capacity for rational thought do not have alignments—they are **unaligned**. Such a creature is incapable of making a moral or ethical choice and acts according to its bestial nature. Sharks are savage predators, for example, but they are not evil; they have no alignment.

DWARVISH SCRIPT: SAMPLE ALPHABET

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
<	T	J	Y	z	W	U	+	1	J	>	Y	P
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
z	h	l	i	l	s	p	4	U	1	z	U	z

LANGUAGES

Your race indicates the languages your character can speak by default, and your background might give you access to one or more additional languages of your choice. Note these languages on your character sheet.

Choose your languages from the Standard Languages table, or choose one that is common in your campaign. With your DM's permission, you can instead choose a language from the Exotic Languages table or a secret language, such as thieves' cant or the tongue of druids.

Some of these languages are actually families of languages with many dialects. For example, the Primordial language includes the Auran, Aquan, Ignan, and Terran dialects, one for each of the four elemental planes. Creatures that speak different dialects of the same language can communicate with one another.

STANDARD LANGUAGES

Language	Typical Speakers	Script
Common	Humans	Common
Dwarvish	Dwarves	Dwarvish
Elvish	Elves	Elvish
Giant	Ogres, giants	Dwarvish
Gnomish	Gnomes	Dwarvish
Goblin	Goblinoids	Dwarvish
Halfling	Halflings	Common
Orc	Orcs	Dwarvish

EXOTIC LANGUAGES

Language	Typical Speakers	Script
Abyssal	Demons	Infernal
Celestial	Celestials	Celestial
Draconic	Dragons, dragonborn	Draconic
Deep Speech	Mind flayers, beholders	—
Infernal	Devils	Infernal
Primordial	Elementals	Dwarvish
Sylvan	Fey creatures	Elvish
Undercommon	Underdark traders	Elvish

ELVISH SCRIPT: SAMPLE ALPHABET

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

TIKA AND ARTEMIS: ALIGNMENT

Tika Waylan is neutral good, fundamentally good-hearted and striving to help others where she can. Artemis is lawful evil, unconcerned with the value of sentient life but at least professional in his approach to murder.

As an evil character, Artemis is not an ideal adventurer. He began his career as a villain, and only cooperates with heroes when he must—and when it's in his own best interests. In most games, evil adventurers cause problems in groups alongside others who don't share their interests and objectives. Generally, evil alignments are for villains and monsters.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Fleshing out your character's personality—the array of traits, mannerisms, habits, beliefs, and flaws that give a person a unique identity—will help you bring him or her to life as you play the game. Four categories of characteristics are presented here: personality traits, ideals, bonds, and flaws. Beyond those categories, think about your character's favorite words or phrases, tics and habitual gestures, vices and pet peeves, and whatever else you can imagine.

Each background presented later in this chapter includes suggested characteristics that you can use to spark your imagination. You're not bound to those options, but they're a good starting point.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Give your character two personality traits. Personality traits are small, simple ways to help you set your character apart from every other character. Your personality traits should tell you something interesting and fun about your character. They should be self-descriptions that are specific about what makes your character stand out. "I'm smart" is not a good trait, because it describes a lot of characters. "I've read every book in Candlekeep" tells you something specific about your character's interests and disposition.

Personality traits might describe the things your character likes, his or her past accomplishments, things your character dislikes or fears, your character's self-attitude or mannerisms, or the influence of his or her ability scores.

TIKA AND ARTEMIS: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Tika and Artemis have distinct personality traits. Tika Waylan dislikes boastfulness and has a fear of heights resulting from a bad fall during her career as a thief. Artemis Entreri is always prepared for the worst and moves with a quick, precise confidence.

Consider their ideals. Tika Waylan is innocent, almost childlike, believing in the value of life and the importance of appreciating everyone. Neutral good in alignment, she cleaves to ideals of life and respect. Artemis Entreri never allows his emotions to master him, and he constantly challenges himself to improve his skills. His lawful evil alignment gives him ideals of impartiality and a lust for power.

Tika Waylan's bond is to the Inn of the Last Home. The inn's proprietor gave her a new chance at life, and her friendship with her adventuring companions was forged during her time working there. Its destruction by the marauding dragonarmies gives Tika a very personal reason to hate them with a fiery passion. Her bond might be phrased as "I will do whatever it takes to punish the dragonarmies for the destruction of the Inn of the Last Home."

Artemis Entreri's bond is a strange, almost paradoxical relationship with Drizzt Do'Urden, his equal in swordplay and grim determination. In his first battle with Drizzt, Artemis recognized something of himself in his opponent, some indication that if his life had gone differently, he might have led a life more like the heroic drow's. From that moment, Artemis is more than a criminal assassin—he is an antihero, driven by his rivalry with Drizzt. His bond might be phrased as "I will not rest until I have proved myself better than Drizzt Do'Urden."

Each of these characters also has an important flaw. Tika Waylan is naive and emotionally vulnerable, younger than her companions and annoyed that they still think of her as the kid they knew years ago. She might even be tempted to act against her principles if she's convinced that a particular achievement would demonstrate her maturity. Artemis Entreri is completely walled off from any personal relationship and just wants to be left alone.

A useful place to start thinking about personality traits is to look at your highest and lowest ability scores and define one trait related to each. Either one could be positive or negative: you might work hard to overcome a low score, for example, or be cocky about your high score.

DRACONIC SCRIPT: SAMPLE ALPHABET

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
≡	𐀀	𐀁	𐀂	𐀃	𐀄	𐀅	𐀆	𐀇	𐀈	𐀉	𐀊	𐀋
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
𐀌	𐀍	𐀎	𐀏	𐀐	𐀑	𐀒	𐀓	𐀔	𐀕	𐀖	𐀗	𐀘

IDEALS

Describe one ideal that drives your character. Your ideals are the things that you believe in most strongly, the fundamental moral and ethical principles that compel you to act as you do. Ideals encompass everything from your life goals to your core belief system.

Ideals might answer any of these questions: What are the principles that you will never betray? What would prompt you to make sacrifices? What drives you to act and guides your goals and ambitions? What is the single most important thing you strive for?

You can choose any ideals you like, but your character's alignment is a good place to start defining them. Each background in this chapter includes six suggested ideals. Five of them are linked to aspects of alignment: law, chaos, good, evil, and neutrality. The last one has more to do with the particular background than with moral or ethical perspectives.

BONDS

Create one bond for your character. Bonds represent a character's connections to people, places, and events in the world. They tie you to things from your background. They might inspire you to heights of heroism, or lead you to act against your own best interests if they are threatened. They can work very much like ideals, driving a character's motivations and goals.

Bonds might answer any of these questions: Whom do you care most about? To what place do you feel a special connection? What is your most treasured possession?

Your bonds might be tied to your class, your background, your race, or some other aspect of your character's history or personality. You might also gain new bonds over the course of your adventures.

FLAWS

Finally, choose a flaw for your character. Your character's flaw represents some vice, compulsion, fear, or weakness—in particular, anything that someone else could exploit to bring you to ruin or cause you to act against your best interests. More significant than negative personality traits, a flaw might answer any of these questions: What enrages you? What's the one person, concept, or event that you are terrified of? What are your vices?

INSPIRATION

Inspiration is a rule the Dungeon Master can use to reward you for playing your character in a way that's true to his or her personality traits, ideal, bond, and flaw. By using inspiration, you can draw on your personality trait of compassion for the downtrodden to give you an edge in negotiating with the Beggar Prince. Or inspiration can let you call on your bond to the defense of your home village to push past the effect of a spell that has been laid on you.

GAINING INSPIRATION

Your DM can choose to give you inspiration for a variety of reasons. Typically, DMs award it when you play out your personality traits, give in to the drawbacks presented by a flaw or bond, and otherwise portray your character in a compelling way. Your DM will tell you how you can earn inspiration in the game.

You either have inspiration or you don't—you can't stockpile multiple "inspirations" for later use.

USING INSPIRATION

If you have inspiration, you can expend it when you make an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check. Spending your inspiration gives you advantage on that roll.

Additionally, if you have inspiration, you can reward another player for good roleplaying, clever thinking, or simply doing something exciting in the game. When another player character does something that really contributes to the story in a fun and interesting way, you can give up your inspiration to give that character inspiration.

BACKGROUNDS

Every story has a beginning. Your character's background reveals where you came from, how you became an adventurer, and your place in the world. Your fighter might have been a courageous knight or a grizzled soldier. Your wizard could have been a sage or an artisan. Your rogue might have gotten by as a guild thief or commanded audiences as a jester.

Choosing a background provides you with important story cues about your character's identity. The most important question to ask about your background is *what changed?* Why did you stop doing whatever your background describes and start adventuring? Where did you get the money to purchase your starting gear, or, if you come from a wealthy background, why don't you have *more* money? How did you learn the skills of your class? What sets you apart from ordinary people who share your background?

TIKA AND ARTEMIS: BACKGROUNDS

Tika Waylan and Artemis Entreri both lived their earliest years as street urchins. Tika's later career as a barmaid didn't really change her, so she might choose the urchin background, gaining proficiency in the Sleight of Hand and Stealth skills, and learning the tools of the thieving trade. Artemis is more defined by his criminal background, giving him skills in Deception and Stealth, as well as proficiency with the tools of thievery and poison.

The sample backgrounds in this chapter provide both concrete benefits (features, proficiencies, and languages) and roleplaying suggestions.

PROFICIENCIES

Each background gives a character proficiency in two skills. Skills are described in chapter 7.

In addition, most backgrounds give a character proficiency with one or more tools. Tools and tool proficiencies are detailed in chapter 5.

If a character would gain the same proficiency from two different sources, he or she can choose a different proficiency of the same kind (skill or tool) instead.

LANGUAGES

Some backgrounds also allow characters to learn additional languages beyond those given by race. See "Languages" earlier in this chapter.

EQUIPMENT

Each background provides a package of starting equipment. If you use the optional rule from chapter 5 to spend coin on gear, you do not receive the starting equipment from your background.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

A background contains suggested personal characteristics based on your background. You can pick characteristics, roll dice to determine them randomly, or use the suggestions as inspiration for characteristics of your own creation.

CUSTOMIZING A BACKGROUND

You might want to tweak some of the features of a background so it better fits your character or the campaign setting. To customize a background, you can replace one feature with any other one, choose any two skills, and choose a total of two tool proficiencies or languages from the sample backgrounds. You can either use the equipment package from your background or spend coin on gear as described in chapter 5. (If you spend coin, you can't also take the equipment package suggested for your class.) Finally, choose two personality



traits, one ideal, one bond, and one flaw. If you can't find a feature that matches your desired background, work with your DM to create one.

ACOLYTE

You have spent your life in the service of a temple to a specific god or pantheon of gods. You act as an intermediary between the realm of the holy and the mortal world, performing sacred rites and offering sacrifices in order to conduct worshipers into the presence of the divine. You are not necessarily a cleric—performing sacred rites is not the same thing as channeling divine power.

Choose a god, a pantheon of gods, or some other quasi-divine being from among those listed in appendix B or those specified by your DM, and work with your DM to detail the nature of your religious service.

Were you a lesser functionary in a temple, raised from childhood to assist the priests in the sacred rites? Or were you a high priest who suddenly experienced a call to serve your god in a different way? Perhaps you were the leader of a small cult outside of any established temple structure, or even an occult group that served a fiendish master that you now deny.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Religion

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A holy symbol (a gift to you when you entered the priesthood), a prayer book or prayer wheel, 5 sticks of incense, vestments, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 15 gp

FEATURE: SHELTER OF THE FAITHFUL

As an acolyte, you command the respect of those who share your faith, and you can perform the religious ceremonies of your deity. You and your adventuring companions can expect to receive free healing and care at a temple, shrine, or other established presence of your faith, though you must provide any material components needed for spells. Those who share your religion will support you (but only you) at a modest lifestyle.

You might also have ties to a specific temple dedicated to your chosen deity or pantheon, and you have a residence there. This could be the temple where you used to serve, if you remain on good terms with it, or a temple where you have found a new home. While near your temple, you can call upon the priests for assistance, provided the assistance you ask for is not hazardous and you remain in good standing with your temple.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Acolytes are shaped by their experience in temples or other religious communities. Their study of the history and tenets of their faith and their relationships to temples, shrines, or hierarchies affect their mannerisms and ideals. Their flaws might be some hidden hypocrisy or heretical idea, or an ideal or bond taken to an extreme.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I idolize a particular hero of my faith, and constantly refer to that person's deeds and example.
- 2 I can find common ground between the fiercest enemies, empathizing with them and always working toward peace.
- 3 I see omens in every event and action. The gods try to speak to us, we just need to listen.
- 4 Nothing can shake my optimistic attitude.
- 5 I quote (or misquote) sacred texts and proverbs in almost every situation.
- 6 I am tolerant (or intolerant) of other faiths and respect (or condemn) the worship of other gods.
- 7 I've enjoyed fine food, drink, and high society among my temple's elite. Rough living grates on me.
- 8 I've spent so long in the temple that I have little practical experience dealing with people in the outside world.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Tradition.** The ancient traditions of worship and sacrifice must be preserved and upheld. (Lawful)
- 2 **Charity.** I always try to help those in need, no matter what the personal cost. (Good)
- 3 **Change.** We must help bring about the changes the gods are constantly working in the world. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Power.** I hope to one day rise to the top of my faith's religious hierarchy. (Lawful)
- 5 **Faith.** I trust that my deity will guide my actions. I have faith that if I work hard, things will go well. (Lawful)
- 6 **Aspiration.** I seek to prove myself worthy of my god's favor by matching my actions against his or her teachings. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I would die to recover an ancient relic of my faith that was lost long ago.
- 2 I will someday get revenge on the corrupt temple hierarchy who branded me a heretic.
- 3 I owe my life to the priest who took me in when my parents died.
- 4 Everything I do is for the common people.
- 5 I will do anything to protect the temple where I served.
- 6 I seek to preserve a sacred text that my enemies consider heretical and seek to destroy.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I judge others harshly, and myself even more severely.
- 2 I put too much trust in those who wield power within my temple's hierarchy.
- 3 My piety sometimes leads me to blindly trust those that profess faith in my god.
- 4 I am inflexible in my thinking.
- 5 I am suspicious of strangers and expect the worst of them.
- 6 Once I pick a goal, I become obsessed with it to the detriment of everything else in my life.

CHARLATAN

You have always had a way with people. You know what makes them tick, you can tease out their hearts' desires after a few minutes of conversation, and with a few leading questions you can read them like they were children's books. It's a useful talent, and one that you're perfectly willing to use for your advantage.

You know what people want and you deliver, or rather, you promise to deliver. Common sense should steer people away from things that sound too good to be true, but common sense seems to be in short supply when you're around. The bottle of pink-colored liquid will surely cure that unseemly rash, this ointment—nothing more than a bit of fat with a sprinkle of silver dust—can restore youth and vigor, and there's a bridge in the city that just happens to be for sale. These marvels sound implausible, but you make them sound like the real deal.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Sleight of Hand

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit, forgery kit

Equipment: A set of fine clothes, a disguise kit, tools of the con of your choice (ten stoppered bottles filled with colored liquid, a set of weighted dice, a deck of marked cards, or a signet ring of an imaginary duke), and a belt pouch containing 15 gp

FAVORITE SCHEMES

Every charlatan has an angle he or she uses in preference to other schemes. Choose a favorite scam or roll on the table below.

d6 Scam

- 1 I cheat at games of chance.
- 2 I shave coins or forge documents.
- 3 I insinuate myself into people's lives to prey on their weakness and secure their fortunes.
- 4 I put on new identities like clothes.
- 5 I run sleight-of-hand cons on street corners.
- 6 I convince people that worthless junk is worth their hard-earned money.

FEATURE: FALSE IDENTITY

You have created a second identity that includes documentation, established acquaintances, and disguises that allow you to assume that persona. Additionally, you can forge documents including official papers and personal letters, as long as you have seen an example of the kind of document or the handwriting you are trying to copy.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Charlatans are colorful characters who conceal their true selves behind the masks they construct. They reflect what people want to see, what they want to believe, and how they see the world. But their true selves are sometimes plagued by an uneasy conscience, an old enemy, or deep-seated trust issues.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I fall in and out of love easily, and am always pursuing someone.
- 2 I have a joke for every occasion, especially occasions where humor is inappropriate.
- 3 Flattery is my preferred trick for getting what I want.
- 4 I'm a born gambler who can't resist taking a risk for a potential payoff.
- 5 I lie about almost everything, even when there's no good reason to.
- 6 Sarcasm and insults are my weapons of choice.
- 7 I keep multiple holy symbols on me and invoke whatever deity might come in useful at any given moment.
- 8 I pocket anything I see that might have some value.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Independence.** I am a free spirit—no one tells me what to do. (Chaotic)
- 2 **Fairness.** I never target people who can't afford to lose a few coins. (Lawful)
- 3 **Charity.** I distribute the money I acquire to the people who really need it. (Good)
- 4 **Creativity.** I never run the same con twice. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Friendship.** Material goods come and go. Bonds of friendship last forever. (Good)
- 6 **Aspiration.** I'm determined to make something of myself. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I fleeced the wrong person and must work to ensure that this individual never crosses paths with me or those I care about.
- 2 I owe everything to my mentor—a horrible person who's probably rotting in jail somewhere.
- 3 Somewhere out there, I have a child who doesn't know me. I'm making the world better for him or her.
- 4 I come from a noble family, and one day I'll reclaim my lands and title from those who stole them from me.
- 5 A powerful person killed someone I love. Some day soon, I'll have my revenge.
- 6 I swindled and ruined a person who didn't deserve it. I seek to atone for my misdeeds but might never be able to forgive myself.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I can't resist a pretty face.
- 2 I'm always in debt. I spend my ill-gotten gains on decadent luxuries faster than I bring them in.
- 3 I'm convinced that no one could ever fool me the way I fool others.
- 4 I'm too greedy for my own good. I can't resist taking a risk if there's money involved.
- 5 I can't resist swindling people who are more powerful than me.
- 6 I hate to admit it and will hate myself for it, but I'll run and preserve my own hide if the going gets tough.

CRIMINAL

You are an experienced criminal with a history of breaking the law. You have spent a lot of time among other criminals and still have contacts within the criminal underworld. You're far closer than most people to the world of murder, theft, and violence that pervades the underbelly of civilization, and you have survived up to this point by flouting the rules and regulations of society.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Stealth

Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set, thieves' tools

Equipment: A crowbar, a set of dark common clothes including a hood, and a belt pouch containing 15 gp

CRIMINAL SPECIALTY

There are many kinds of criminals, and within a thieves' guild or similar criminal organization, individual members have particular specialties. Even criminals who operate outside of such organizations have strong preferences for certain kinds of crimes over others. Choose the role you played in your criminal life, or roll on the table below.

d8 Specialty

- 1 Blackmailer
- 2 Burglar
- 3 Enforcer
- 4 Fence

d8 Specialty

- 5 Highway robber
- 6 Hired killer
- 7 Pickpocket
- 8 Smuggler

FEATURE: CRIMINAL CONTACT

You have a reliable and trustworthy contact who acts as your liaison to a network of other criminals. You know how to get messages to and from your contact, even over great distances; specifically, you know the local messengers, corrupt caravan masters, and seedy sailors who can deliver messages for you.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Criminals might seem like villains on the surface, and many of them are villainous to the core. But some have an abundance of endearing, if not redeeming, characteristics. There might be honor among thieves, but criminals rarely show any respect for law or authority.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I always have a plan for what to do when things go wrong.
- 2 I am always calm, no matter what the situation. I never raise my voice or let my emotions control me.
- 3 The first thing I do in a new place is note the locations of everything valuable—or where such things could be hidden.
- 4 I would rather make a new friend than a new enemy.
- 5 I am incredibly slow to trust. Those who seem the fairest often have the most to hide.
- 6 I don't pay attention to the risks in a situation. Never tell me the odds.
- 7 The best way to get me to do something is to tell me I can't do it.
- 8 I blow up at the slightest insult.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Honor.** I don't steal from others in the trade. (Lawful)
- 2 **Freedom.** Chains are meant to be broken, as are those who would forge them. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Charity.** I steal from the wealthy so that I can help people in need. (Good)
- 4 **Greed.** I will do whatever it takes to become wealthy. (Evil)
- 5 **People.** I'm loyal to my friends, not to any ideals, and everyone else can take a trip down the Styx for all I care. (Neutral)
- 6 **Redemption.** There's a spark of good in everyone. (Good)

d6 Bond

- 1 I'm trying to pay off an old debt I owe to a generous benefactor.
- 2 My ill-gotten gains go to support my family.
- 3 Something important was taken from me, and I aim to steal it back.
- 4 I will become the greatest thief that ever lived.
- 5 I'm guilty of a terrible crime. I hope I can redeem myself for it.
- 6 Someone I loved died because of I mistake I made. That will never happen again.



d6 Flaw

- 1 When I see something valuable, I can't think about anything but how to steal it.
- 2 When faced with a choice between money and my friends, I usually choose the money.
- 3 If there's a plan, I'll forget it. If I don't forget it, I'll ignore it.
- 4 I have a "tell" that reveals when I'm lying.
- 5 I turn tail and run when things look bad.
- 6 An innocent person is in prison for a crime that I committed. I'm okay with that.

VARIANT CRIMINAL: SPY

Although your capabilities are not much different from those of a burglar or smuggler, you learned and practiced them in a very different context: as an espionage agent. You might have been an officially sanctioned agent of the crown, or perhaps you sold the secrets you uncovered to the highest bidder.



ENTERTAINER

You thrive in front of an audience. You know how to entrance them, entertain them, and even inspire them. Your poetics can stir the hearts of those who hear you, awakening grief or joy, laughter or anger. Your music raises their spirits or captures their sorrow. Your dance steps captivate, your humor cuts to the quick. Whatever techniques you use, your art is your life.

Skill Proficiencies: Acrobatics, Performance

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit, one type of musical instrument

Equipment: A musical instrument (one of your choice), the favor of an admirer (love letter, lock of hair, or trinket), a costume, and a belt pouch containing 15 gp

ENTERTAINER ROUTINES

A good entertainer is versatile, spicing up every performance with a variety of different routines. Choose one to three routines or roll on the table below to define your expertise as an entertainer.

d10	Entertainer Routine	d10	Entertainer Routine
1	Actor	6	Instrumentalist
2	Dancer	7	Poet
3	Fire-eater	8	Singer
4	Jester	9	Storyteller
5	Juggler	10	Tumbler

FEATURE: BY POPULAR DEMAND

You can always find a place to perform, usually in an inn or tavern but possibly with a circus, at a theater, or even in a noble's court. At such a place, you receive free lodging and food of a modest or comfortable standard (depending on the quality of the establishment), as long as you perform each night. In addition, your performance makes you something of a local figure. When strangers recognize you in a town where you have performed, they typically take a liking to you.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Successful entertainers have to be able to capture and hold an audience's attention, so they tend to have flamboyant or forceful personalities. They're inclined toward the romantic and often cling to high-minded ideals about the practice of art and the appreciation of beauty.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I know a story relevant to almost every situation.
- 2 Whenever I come to a new place, I collect local rumors and spread gossip.
- 3 I'm a hopeless romantic, always searching for that "special someone."
- 4 Nobody stays angry at me or around me for long, since I can defuse any amount of tension.
- 5 I love a good insult, even one directed at me.
- 6 I get bitter if I'm not the center of attention.
- 7 I'll settle for nothing less than perfection.
- 8 I change my mood or my mind as quickly as I change key in a song.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Beauty.** When I perform, I make the world better than it was. (Good)
- 2 **Tradition.** The stories, legends, and songs of the past must never be forgotten, for they teach us who we are. (Lawful)
- 3 **Creativity.** The world is in need of new ideas and bold action. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Greed.** I'm only in it for the money and fame. (Evil)
- 5 **People.** I like seeing the smiles on people's faces when I perform. That's all that matters. (Neutral)
- 6 **Honesty.** Art should reflect the soul; it should come from within and reveal who we really are. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 My instrument is my most treasured possession, and it reminds me of someone I love.
- 2 Someone stole my precious instrument, and someday I'll get it back.
- 3 I want to be famous, whatever it takes.
- 4 I idolize a hero of the old tales and measure my deeds against that person's.
- 5 I will do anything to prove myself superior to my hated rival.
- 6 I would do anything for the other members of my old troupe.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I'll do anything to win fame and renown.
- 2 I'm a sucker for a pretty face.
- 3 A scandal prevents me from ever going home again. That kind of trouble seems to follow me around.
- 4 I once satirized a noble who still wants my head. It was a mistake that I will likely repeat.
- 5 I have trouble keeping my true feelings hidden. My sharp tongue lands me in trouble.
- 6 Despite my best efforts, I am unreliable to my friends.

VARIANT ENTERTAINER: GLADIATOR

A gladiator is as much an entertainer as any minstrel or circus performer, trained to make the arts of combat into a spectacle the crowd can enjoy. This kind of flashy combat is your entertainer routine, though you might also have some skills as a tumbler or actor. Using your By Popular Demand feature, you can find a place to perform in any place that features combat for entertainment—perhaps a gladiatorial arena or secret pit fighting club. You can replace the musical instrument in your equipment package with an inexpensive but unusual weapon, such as a trident or net.

FOLK HERO

You come from a humble social rank, but you are destined for so much more. Already the people of your home village regard you as their champion, and your destiny calls you to stand against the tyrants and monsters that threaten the common folk everywhere.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: One type of artisan's tools, vehicles (land)

Equipment: A set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), a shovel, an iron pot, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

DEFINING EVENT

You previously pursued a simple profession among the peasantry, perhaps as a farmer, miner, servant, shepherd, woodcutter, or gravedigger. But something happened that set you on a different path and marked you for greater things. Choose or randomly determine a defining event that marked you as a hero of the people.

d10 Defining Event

- 1 I stood up to a tyrant's agents.
- 2 I saved people during a natural disaster.
- 3 I stood alone against a terrible monster.
- 4 I stole from a corrupt merchant to help the poor.
- 5 I led a militia to fight off an invading army.
- 6 I broke into a tyrant's castle and stole weapons to arm the people.
- 7 I trained the peasantry to use farm implements as weapons against a tyrant's soldiers.
- 8 A lord rescinded an unpopular decree after I led a symbolic act of protest against it.
- 9 A celestial, fey, or similar creature gave me a blessing or revealed my secret origin.
- 10 Recruited into a lord's army, I rose to leadership and was commended for my heroism.

FEATURE: RUSTIC HOSPITALITY

Since you come from the ranks of the common folk, you fit in among them with ease. You can find a place to hide, rest, or recuperate among other commoners, unless you have shown yourself to be a danger to them. They will shield you from the law or anyone else searching for you, though they will not risk their lives for you.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

A folk hero is one of the common people, for better or for worse. Most folk heroes look on their humble origins as a virtue, not a shortcoming, and their home communities remain very important to them.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I judge people by their actions, not their words.
- 2 If someone is in trouble, I'm always ready to lend help.
- 3 When I set my mind to something, I follow through no matter what gets in my way.
- 4 I have a strong sense of fair play and always try to find the most equitable solution to arguments.
- 5 I'm confident in my own abilities and do what I can to instill confidence in others.
- 6 Thinking is for other people. I prefer action.
- 7 I misuse long words in an attempt to sound smarter.
- 8 I get bored easily. When am I going to get on with my destiny?

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Respect.** People deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. (Good)
- 2 **Fairness.** No one should get preferential treatment before the law, and no one is above the law. (Lawful)
- 3 **Freedom.** Tyrants must not be allowed to oppress the people. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Might.** If I become strong, I can take what I want—what I deserve. (Evil)
- 5 **Sincerity.** There's no good in pretending to be something I'm not. (Neutral)
- 6 **Destiny.** Nothing and no one can steer me away from my higher calling. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I have a family, but I have no idea where they are. One day, I hope to see them again.
- 2 I worked the land, I love the land, and I will protect the land.
- 3 A proud noble once gave me a horrible beating, and I will take my revenge on any bully I encounter.
- 4 My tools are symbols of my past life, and I carry them so that I will never forget my roots.
- 5 I protect those who cannot protect themselves.
- 6 I wish my childhood sweetheart had come with me to pursue my destiny.

**d6 Flaw**

- 1 The tyrant who rules my land will stop at nothing to see me killed.
- 2 I'm convinced of the significance of my destiny, and blind to my shortcomings and the risk of failure.
- 3 The people who knew me when I was young know my shameful secret, so I can never go home again.
- 4 I have a weakness for the vices of the city, especially hard drink.
- 5 Secretly, I believe that things would be better if I were a tyrant lording over the land.
- 6 I have trouble trusting in my allies.

GUILD ARTISAN

You are a member of an artisan's guild, skilled in a particular field and closely associated with other artisans. You are a well-established part of the mercantile world, freed by talent and wealth from the constraints of a feudal social order. You learned your skills as an apprentice to a master artisan, under the sponsorship of your guild, until you became a master in your own right.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: One type of artisan's tools

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), a letter of introduction from your guild, a set of traveler's clothes, and a belt pouch containing 15 gp

GUILD BUSINESS

Guilds are generally found in cities large enough to support several artisans practicing the same trade. However, your guild might instead be a loose network of artisans who each work in a different village within a larger realm. Work with your DM to determine the nature of your guild. You can select your guild business from the Guild Business table or roll randomly.

d20 Guild Business

- 1 Alchemists and apothecaries
- 2 Armorers, locksmiths, and finesmiths
- 3 Brewers, distillers, and vintners
- 4 Calligraphers, scribes, and scribes
- 5 Carpenters, roofers, and plasterers
- 6 Cartographers, surveyors, and chart-makers
- 7 Cobblers and shoemakers
- 8 Cooks and bakers
- 9 Glassblowers and glaziers
- 10 Jewelers and gemcutters
- 11 Leatherworkers, skinners, and tanners
- 12 Masons and stonecutters
- 13 Painters, limners, and sign-makers
- 14 Potters and tile-makers
- 15 Shipwrights and sailmakers
- 16 Smiths and metal-forgers
- 17 Tinkers, pewterers, and casters
- 18 Wagon-makers and wheelwrights
- 19 Weavers and dyers
- 20 Woodcarvers, coopers, and bowyers

As a member of your guild, you know the skills needed to create finished items from raw materials (reflected in your proficiency with a certain kind of artisan's tools), as well as the principles of trade and good business practices. The question now is whether you abandon your trade for adventure, or take on the extra effort to weave adventuring and trade together.

FEATURE: GUILD MEMBERSHIP

As an established and respected member of a guild, you can rely on certain benefits that membership provides. Your fellow guild members will provide you with lodging and food if necessary, and pay for your funeral if needed. In some cities and towns, a guildhall offers a central place to meet other members of your profession, which can be a good place to meet potential patrons, allies, or hirelings.

Guilds often wield tremendous political power. If you are accused of a crime, your guild will support you if a good case can be made for your innocence or the crime is justifiable. You can also gain access to powerful political figures through the guild, if you are a member in good standing. Such connections might require the donation of money or magic items to the guild's coffers.

You must pay dues of 5 gp per month to the guild. If you miss payments, you must make up back dues to remain in the guild's good graces.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Guild artisans are among the most ordinary people in the world—until they set down their tools and take up an adventuring career. They understand the value of hard work and the importance of community, but they're vulnerable to sins of greed and covetousness.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I believe that anything worth doing is worth doing right. I can't help it—I'm a perfectionist.
- 2 I'm a snob who looks down on those who can't appreciate fine art.
- 3 I always want to know how things work and what makes people tick.
- 4 I'm full of witty aphorisms and have a proverb for every occasion.
- 5 I'm rude to people who lack my commitment to hard work and fair play.
- 6 I like to talk at length about my profession.
- 7 I don't part with my money easily and will haggle tirelessly to get the best deal possible.
- 8 I'm well known for my work, and I want to make sure everyone appreciates it. I'm always taken aback when people haven't heard of me.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Community.** It is the duty of all civilized people to strengthen the bonds of community and the security of civilization. (Lawful)
- 2 **Generosity.** My talents were given to me so that I could use them to benefit the world. (Good)
- 3 **Freedom.** Everyone should be free to pursue his or her own livelihood. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Greed.** I'm only in it for the money. (Evil)
- 5 **People.** I'm committed to the people I care about, not to ideals. (Neutral)
- 6 **Aspiration.** I work hard to be the best there is at my craft.

d6 Bond

- 1 The workshop where I learned my trade is the most important place in the world to me.
- 2 I created a great work for someone, and then found them unworthy to receive it. I'm still looking for someone worthy.
- 3 I owe my guild a great debt for forging me into the person I am today.
- 4 I pursue wealth to secure someone's love.
- 5 One day I will return to my guild and prove that I am the greatest artisan of them all.
- 6 I will get revenge on the evil forces that destroyed my place of business and ruined my livelihood.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I'll do anything to get my hands on something rare or priceless.
- 2 I'm quick to assume that someone is trying to cheat me.
- 3 No one must ever learn that I once stole money from guild coffers.
- 4 I'm never satisfied with what I have—I always want more.
- 5 I would kill to acquire a noble title.
- 6 I'm horribly jealous of anyone who can outshine my handiwork. Everywhere I go, I'm surrounded by rivals.

VARIANT GUILD ARTISAN: GUILD MERCHANT

Instead of an artisans' guild, you might belong to a guild of traders, caravan masters, or shopkeepers. You don't craft items yourself but earn a living by buying and selling the works of others (or the raw materials artisans need to practice their craft). Your guild might be a large merchant consortium (or family) with interests across the region. Perhaps you transported goods from one place to another, by ship, wagon, or caravan, or bought them from traveling traders and sold them in your own little shop. In some ways, the traveling merchant's life lends itself to adventure far more than the life of an artisan.

Rather than proficiency with artisan's tools, you might be proficient with navigator's tools or an additional language. And instead of artisan's tools, you can start with a mule and a cart.

HERMIT

You lived in seclusion—either in a sheltered community such as a monastery, or entirely alone—for a formative part of your life. In your time apart from the clamor of society, you found quiet, solitude, and perhaps some of the answers you were looking for.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine, Religion

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A scroll case stuffed full of notes from your studies or prayers, a winter blanket, a set of common clothes, an herbalism kit, and 5 gp

LIFE OF SECLUSION

What was the reason for your isolation, and what changed to allow you to end your solitude? You can work with your DM to determine the exact nature of your seclusion, or you can choose or roll on the table below to determine the reason behind your seclusion.

d8 Life of Seclusion

- 1 I was searching for spiritual enlightenment.
- 2 I was partaking of communal living in accordance with the dictates of a religious order.
- 3 I was exiled for a crime I didn't commit.
- 4 I retreated from society after a life-altering event.



d8 Life of Seclusion

- 5 I needed a quiet place to work on my art, literature, music, or manifesto.
- 6 I needed to commune with nature, far from civilization.
- 7 I was the caretaker of an ancient ruin or relic.
- 8 I was a pilgrim in search of a person, place, or relic of spiritual significance.

FEATURE: DISCOVERY

The quiet seclusion of your extended hermitage gave you access to a unique and powerful discovery. The exact nature of this revelation depends on the nature of your seclusion. It might be a great truth about the cosmos, the deities, the powerful beings of the outer planes, or the forces of nature. It could be a site that no one else has ever seen. You might have uncovered a fact that has long been forgotten, or unearthed some relic of the past that could rewrite history. It might be information that would be damaging to the people who or consigned you to exile, and hence the reason for your return to society.

Work with your DM to determine the details of your discovery and its impact on the campaign.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Some hermits are well suited to a life of seclusion, whereas others chafe against it and long for company. Whether they embrace solitude or long to escape it, the solitary life shapes their attitudes and ideals. A few are driven slightly mad by their years apart from society.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I've been isolated for so long that I rarely speak, preferring gestures and the occasional grunt.
- 2 I am utterly serene, even in the face of disaster.
- 3 The leader of my community had something wise to say on every topic, and I am eager to share that wisdom.
- 4 I feel tremendous empathy for all who suffer.
- 5 I'm oblivious to etiquette and social expectations.
- 6 I connect everything that happens to me to a grand, cosmic plan.
- 7 I often get lost in my own thoughts and contemplation, becoming oblivious to my surroundings.
- 8 I am working on a grand philosophical theory and love sharing my ideas.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Greater Good.** My gifts are meant to be shared with all, not used for my own benefit. (Good)
- 2 **Logic.** Emotions must not cloud our sense of what is right and true, or our logical thinking. (Lawful)
- 3 **Free Thinking.** Inquiry and curiosity are the pillars of progress. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Power.** Solitude and contemplation are paths toward mystical or magical power. (Evil)
- 5 **Live and Let Live.** Meddling in the affairs of others only causes trouble. (Neutral)
- 6 **Self-Knowledge.** If you know yourself, there's nothing left to know. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 Nothing is more important than the other members of my hermitage, order, or association.
- 2 I entered seclusion to hide from the ones who might still be hunting me. I must someday confront them.
- 3 I'm still seeking the enlightenment I pursued in my seclusion, and it still eludes me.
- 4 I entered seclusion because I loved someone I could not have.
- 5 Should my discovery come to light, it could bring ruin to the world.
- 6 My isolation gave me great insight into a great evil that only I can destroy.

d6 Flaw

- 1 Now that I've returned to the world, I enjoy its delights a little too much.
- 2 I harbor dark, bloodthirsty thoughts that my isolation and meditation failed to quell.
- 3 I am dogmatic in my thoughts and philosophy.
- 4 I let my need to win arguments overshadow friendships and harmony.
- 5 I'd risk too much to uncover a lost bit of knowledge.
- 6 I like keeping secrets and won't share them with anyone.

OTHER HERMITS

This hermit background assumes a contemplative sort of seclusion that allows room for study and prayer. If you want to play a rugged wilderness recluse who lives off the land while shunning the company of other people, look at the outlander background. On the other hand, if you want to go in a more religious direction, the acolyte might be what you're looking for. Or you could even be a charlatan, posing as a wise and holy person and letting pious fools support you.

NOBLE

You understand wealth, power, and privilege. You carry a noble title, and your family owns land, collects taxes, and wields significant political influence. You might be a pampered aristocrat unfamiliar with work or discomfort, a former merchant just elevated to the nobility, or a disinherited scoundrel with a disproportionate sense of entitlement. Or you could be an honest, hard-working landowner who cares deeply about the people who live and work on your land, keenly aware of your responsibility to them.

Work with your DM to come up with an appropriate title and determine how much authority that title carries. A noble title doesn't stand on its own—it's connected to an entire family, and whatever title you hold, you will pass it down to your own children. Not only do you need to determine your noble title, but you should also work with the DM to describe your family and their influence on you.

Is your family old and established, or was your title only recently bestowed? How much influence do they wield, and over what area? What kind of reputation

does your family have among the other aristocrats of the region? How do the common people regard them?

What's your position in the family? Are you the heir to the head of the family? Have you already inherited the title? How do you feel about that responsibility? Or are you so far down the line of inheritance that no one cares what you do, as long as you don't embarrass the family? How does the head of your family feel about your adventuring career? Are you in your family's good graces, or shunned by the rest of your family?

Does your family have a coat of arms? An insignia you might wear on a signet ring? Particular colors you wear all the time? An animal you regard as a symbol of your line or even a spiritual member of the family?

These details help establish your family and your title as features of the world of the campaign.

Skill Proficiencies: History, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A set of fine clothes, a signet ring, a scroll of pedigree, and a purse containing 25 gp

FEATURE: POSITION OF PRIVILEGE

Thanks to your noble birth, people are inclined to think the best of you. You are welcome in high society, and people assume you have the right to be wherever you are. The common folk make every effort to accommodate you and avoid your displeasure, and other people of high birth treat you as a member of the same social sphere. You can secure an audience with a local noble if you need to.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Nobles are born and raised to a very different lifestyle than most people ever experience, and their personalities reflect that upbringing. A noble title comes with a plethora of bonds—responsibilities to family, to other nobles (including the sovereign), to the people entrusted to the family's care, or even to the title itself. But this responsibility is often a good way to undermine a noble.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 My eloquent flattery makes everyone I talk to feel like the most wonderful and important person in the world.
- 2 The common folk love me for my kindness and generosity.
- 3 No one could doubt by looking at my regal bearing that I am a cut above the unwashed masses.
- 4 I take great pains to always look my best and follow the latest fashions.
- 5 I don't like to get my hands dirty, and I won't be caught dead in unsuitable accommodations.
- 6 Despite my noble birth, I do not place myself above other folk. We all have the same blood.
- 7 My favor, once lost, is lost forever.
- 8 If you do me an injury, I will crush you, ruin your name, and salt your fields.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Respect.** Respect is due to me because of my position, but all people regardless of station deserve to be treated with dignity. (Good)
- 2 **Responsibility.** It is my duty to respect the authority of those above me, just as those below me must respect mine. (Lawful)
- 3 **Independence.** I must prove that I can handle myself without the coddling of my family. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Power.** If I can attain more power, no one will tell me what to do. (Evil)
- 5 **Family.** Blood runs thicker than water. (Any)
- 6 **Noble Obligation.** It is my duty to protect and care for the people beneath me. (Good)

d6 Bond

- 1 I will face any challenge to win the approval of my family.
- 2 My house's alliance with another noble family must be sustained at all costs.
- 3 Nothing is more important than the other members of my family.
- 4 I am in love with the heir of a family that my family despises.
- 5 My loyalty to my sovereign is unwavering.
- 6 The common folk must see me as a hero of the people.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I secretly believe that everyone is beneath me.
- 2 I hide a truly scandalous secret that could ruin my family forever.
- 3 I too often hear veiled insults and threats in every word addressed to me, and I'm quick to anger.
- 4 I have an insatiable desire for carnal pleasures.
- 5 In fact, the world does revolve around me.
- 6 By my words and actions, I often bring shame to my family.

VARIANT NOBLE: KNIGHT

A knighthood is among the lowest noble titles in most societies, but it can be a path to higher status. If you wish to be a knight, choose the Retainers feature (see the sidebar) instead of the Position of Privilege feature. One of your commoner retainers is replaced by a noble who serves as your squire, aiding you in exchange for

VARIANT FEATURE: RETAINERS

If your character has a noble background, you may select this background feature instead of Position of Privilege.

You have the service of three retainers loyal to your family. These retainers can be attendants or messengers, and one might be a majordomo. Your retainers are commoners who can perform mundane tasks for you, but they do not fight for you, will not follow you into obviously dangerous areas (such as dungeons), and will leave if they are frequently endangered or abused.

training on his or her own path to knighthood. Your two remaining retainers might include a groom to care for your horse and a servant who polishes your armor (and even helps you put it on).

As an emblem of chivalry and the ideals of courtly love, you might include among your equipment a banner or other token from a noble lord or lady to whom you have given your heart—in a chaste sort of devotion. (This person could be your bond.)

OUTLANDER

You grew up in the wilds, far from civilization and the comforts of town and technology. You've witnessed the migration of herds larger than forests, survived weather more extreme than any city-dweller could comprehend, and enjoyed the solitude of being the only thinking creature for miles in any direction. The wilds are in your blood, whether you were a nomad, an explorer, a recluse, a hunter-gatherer, or even a marauder. Even in places where you don't know the specific features of the terrain, you know the ways of the wild.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: One type of musical instrument

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A staff, a hunting trap, a trophy from an animal you killed, a set of traveler's clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

ORIGIN

You've been to strange places and seen things that others cannot begin to fathom. Consider some of the distant lands you have visited, and how they impacted you. You can roll on the following table to determine your occupation during your time in the wild, or choose one that best fits your character.

d10	Origin	d10	Origin
1	Forester	6	Bounty hunter
2	Trapper	7	Pilgrim
3	Homesteader	8	Tribal nomad
4	Guide	9	Hunter-gatherer
5	Exile or outcast	10	Tribal marauder

FEATURE: WANDERER

You have an excellent memory for maps and geography, and you can always recall the general layout of terrain, settlements, and other features around you. In addition, you can find food and fresh water for yourself and up to five other people each day, provided that the land offers berries, small game, water, and so forth.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Often considered rude and uncouth among civilized folk, outlanders have little respect for the niceties of life in the cities. The ties of tribe, clan, family, and the natural world of which they are a part are the most important bonds to most outlanders.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I'm driven by a wanderlust that led me away from home.
- 2 I watch over my friends as if they were a litter of newborn pups.
- 3 I once ran twenty-five miles without stopping to warn to my clan of an approaching orc horde. I'd do it again if I had to.
- 4 I have a lesson for every situation, drawn from observing nature.
- 5 I place no stock in wealthy or well-mannered folk. Money and manners won't save you from a hungry owlbear.
- 6 I'm always picking things up, absently fiddling with them, and sometimes accidentally breaking them.
- 7 I feel far more comfortable around animals than people.
- 8 I was, in fact, raised by wolves.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Change.** Life is like the seasons, in constant change, and we must change with it. (Chaotic)
- 2 **Greater Good.** It is each person's responsibility to make the most happiness for the whole tribe. (Good)
- 3 **Honor.** If I dishonor myself, I dishonor my whole clan. (Lawful)
- 4 **Might.** The strongest are meant to rule. (Evil)
- 5 **Nature.** The natural world is more important than all the constructs of civilization. (Neutral)
- 6 **Glory.** I must earn glory in battle, for myself and my clan. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 My family, clan, or tribe is the most important thing in my life, even when they are far from me.
- 2 An injury to the unspoiled wilderness of my home is an injury to me.
- 3 I will bring terrible wrath down on the evildoers who destroyed my homeland.
- 4 I am the last of my tribe, and it is up to me to ensure their names enter legend.
- 5 I suffer awful visions of a coming disaster and will do anything to prevent it.
- 6 It is my duty to provide children to sustain my tribe.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am too enamored of ale, wine, and other intoxicants.
- 2 There's no room for caution in a life lived to the fullest.
- 3 I remember every insult I've received and nurse a silent resentment toward anyone who's ever wronged me.
- 4 I am slow to trust members of other races, tribes, and societies.
- 5 Violence is my answer to almost any challenge.
- 6 Don't expect me to save those who can't save themselves. It is nature's way that the strong thrive and the weak perish.

SAGE

You spent years learning the lore of the multiverse. You scoured manuscripts, studied scrolls, and listened to the greatest experts on the subjects that interest you. Your efforts have made you a master in your fields of study.

Skill Proficiencies: Arcana, History

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A bottle of black ink, a quill, a small knife, a letter from a dead colleague posing a question you have not yet been able to answer, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

SPECIALTY

To determine the nature of your scholarly training, roll a d8 or choose from the options in the table below.

d8	Specialty	d8	Specialty
1	Alchemist	5	Professor
2	Astronomer	6	Researcher
3	Discredited academic	7	Wizard's apprentice
4	Librarian	8	Scribe



FEATURE: RESEARCHER

When you attempt to learn or recall a piece of lore, if you do not know that information, you often know where and from whom you can obtain it. Usually, this information comes from a library, scriptorium, university, or a sage or other learned person or creature. Your DM might rule that the knowledge you seek is secreted away in an almost inaccessible place, or that it simply cannot be found. Unearthing the deepest secrets of the multiverse can require an adventure or even a whole campaign.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Sages are defined by their extensive studies, and their characteristics reflect this life of study. Devoted to scholarly pursuits, a sage values knowledge highly—sometimes in its own right, sometimes as a means toward other ideals.



d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I use polysyllabic words that convey the impression of great erudition.
- 2 I've read every book in the world's greatest libraries—or I like to boast that I have.
- 3 I'm used to helping out those who aren't as smart as I am, and I patiently explain anything and everything to others.
- 4 There's nothing I like more than a good mystery.
- 5 I'm willing to listen to every side of an argument before I make my own judgment.
- 6 I . . . speak . . . slowly . . . when talking . . . to idiots, . . . which . . . almost . . . everyone . . . is . . . compared . . . to me.
- 7 I am horribly, horribly awkward in social situations.
- 8 I'm convinced that people are always trying to steal my secrets.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Knowledge.** The path to power and self-improvement is through knowledge. (Neutral)
- 2 **Beauty.** What is beautiful points us beyond itself toward what is true. (Good)
- 3 **Logic.** Emotions must not cloud our logical thinking. (Lawful)
- 4 **No Limits.** Nothing should fetter the infinite possibility inherent in all existence. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Power.** Knowledge is the path to power and domination. (Evil)
- 6 **Self-Improvement.** The goal of a life of study is the betterment of oneself. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 It is my duty to protect my students.
- 2 I have an ancient text that holds terrible secrets that must not fall into the wrong hands.
- 3 I work to preserve a library, university, scriptorium, or monastery.
- 4 My life's work is a series of tomes related to a specific field of lore.
- 5 I've been searching my whole life for the answer to a certain question.
- 6 I sold my soul for knowledge. I hope to do great deeds and win it back.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am easily distracted by the promise of information.
- 2 Most people scream and run when they see a demon. I stop and take notes on its anatomy.
- 3 Unlocking an ancient mystery is worth the price of a civilization.
- 4 I overlook obvious solutions in favor of complicated ones.
- 5 I speak without really thinking through my words, invariably insulting others.
- 6 I can't keep a secret to save my life, or anyone else's.

SAILOR

You sailed on a seagoing vessel for years. In that time, you faced down mighty storms, monsters of the deep, and those who wanted to sink your craft to the bottomless depths. Your first love is the distant line of the horizon, but the time has come to try your hand at something new.

Discuss the nature of the ship you previously sailed with your Dungeon Master. Was it a merchant ship, a naval vessel, a ship of discovery, or a pirate ship? How famous (or infamous) is it? Is it widely traveled? Is it still sailing, or is it missing and presumed lost with all hands?

What were your duties on board—boatswain, captain, navigator, cook, or some other position? Who were the captain and first mate? Did you leave your ship on good terms with your fellows, or on the run?

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Perception

Tool Proficiencies: Navigator's tools, vehicles (water)

Equipment: A belaying pin (club), 50 feet of silk rope, a lucky charm such as a rabbit foot or a small stone with a hole in the center (or you may roll for a random trinket on the Trinkets table in chapter 5), a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

FEATURE: SHIP'S PASSAGE

When you need to, you can secure free passage on a sailing ship for yourself and your adventuring companions. You might sail on the ship you served on, or another ship you have good relations with (perhaps one captained by a former crewmate). Because you're calling in a favor, you can't be certain of a schedule or route that will meet your every need. Your Dungeon Master will determine how long it takes to get where you need to go. In return for your free passage, you and your companions are expected to assist the crew during the voyage.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Sailors can be a rough lot, but the responsibilities of life on a ship make them generally reliable as well. Life aboard a ship shapes their outlook and forms their most important attachments.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 My friends know they can rely on me, no matter what.
- 2 I work hard so that I can play hard when the work is done.
- 3 I enjoy sailing into new ports and making new friends over a flagon of ale.
- 4 I stretch the truth for the sake of a good story.
- 5 To me, a tavern brawl is a nice way to get to know a new city.
- 6 I never pass up a friendly wager.
- 7 My language is as foul as an otyugh nest.
- 8 I like a job well done, especially if I can convince someone else to do it.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Respect.** The thing that keeps a ship together is mutual respect between captain and crew. (Good)
- 2 **Fairness.** We all do the work, so we all share in the rewards. (Lawful)
- 3 **Freedom.** The sea is freedom—the freedom to go anywhere and do anything. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Mastery.** I'm a predator, and the other ships on the sea are my prey. (Evil)
- 5 **People.** I'm committed to my crewmates, not to ideals. (Neutral)
- 6 **Aspiration.** Someday I'll own my own ship and chart my own destiny. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I'm loyal to my captain first, everything else second.
- 2 The ship is most important—crewmates and captains come and go.
- 3 I'll always remember my first ship.
- 4 In a harbor town, I have a paramour whose eyes nearly stole me from the sea.
- 5 I was cheated out of my fair share of the profits, and I want to get my due.
- 6 Ruthless pirates murdered my captain and crewmates, plundered our ship, and left me to die. Vengeance will be mine.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I follow orders, even if I think they're wrong.
- 2 I'll say anything to avoid having to do extra work.
- 3 Once someone questions my courage, I never back down no matter how dangerous the situation.
- 4 Once I start drinking, it's hard for me to stop.
- 5 I can't help but pocket loose coins and other trinkets I come across.
- 6 My pride will probably lead to my destruction.

VARIANT SAILOR: PIRATE

You spent your youth under the sway of a dread pirate, a ruthless cutthroat who taught you how to survive in a world of sharks and savages. You've indulged in larceny on the high seas and sent more than one deserving soul to a briny grave. Fear and bloodshed are no strangers to you, and you've garnered a somewhat unsavory reputation in many a port town.

If you decide that your sailing career involved piracy, you can choose the Bad Reputation feature (see sidebar) instead of the Ship's Passage feature.

VARIANT FEATURE: BAD REPUTATION

If your character has a sailor background, you may select this background feature instead of Ship's Passage.

No matter where you go, people are afraid of you due to your reputation. When you are in a civilized settlement, you can get away with minor criminal offenses, such as refusing to pay for food at a tavern or breaking down doors at a local shop, since most people will not report your activity to the authorities.

SOLDIER

War has been your life for as long as you care to remember. You trained as a youth, studied the use of weapons and armor, learned basic survival techniques, including how to stay alive on the battlefield. You might have been part of a standing national army or a mercenary company, or perhaps a member of a local militia who rose to prominence during a recent war.

When you choose this background, work with your DM to determine which military organization you were a part of, how far through its ranks you progressed, and what kind of experiences you had during your military career. Was it a standing army, a town guard, or a village militia? Or it might have been a noble's or merchant's private army, or a mercenary company.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Intimidation

Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set, vehicles (land)

Equipment: An insignia of rank, a trophy taken from a fallen enemy (a dagger, broken blade, or piece of a banner), a set of bone dice or deck of cards, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp



SPECIALTY

During your time as a soldier, you had a specific role to play in your unit or army. Roll a d8 or choose from the options in the table below to determine your role:

d8	Specialty	d8	Specialty
1	Officer	6	Quartermaster
2	Scout	7	Standard bearer
3	Infantry	8	Support staff (cook, blacksmith, or the like)
4	Cavalry		
5	Healer		

FEATURE: MILITARY RANK

You have a military rank from your career as a soldier. Soldiers loyal to your former military organization still recognize your authority and influence, and they defer to you if they are of a lower rank. You can invoke your rank to exert influence over other soldiers and requisition simple equipment or horses for temporary use. You can also usually gain access to friendly military encampments and fortresses where your rank is recognized.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

The horrors of war combined with the rigid discipline of military service leave their mark on all soldiers, shaping their ideals, creating strong bonds, and often leaving them scarred and vulnerable to fear, shame, and hatred.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I'm always polite and respectful.
- 2 I'm haunted by memories of war. I can't get the images of violence out of my mind.
- 3 I've lost too many friends, and I'm slow to make new ones.
- 4 I'm full of inspiring and cautionary tales from my military experience relevant to almost every combat situation.
- 5 I can stare down a hell hound without flinching.
- 6 I enjoy being strong and like breaking things.
- 7 I have a crude sense of humor.
- 8 I face problems head-on. A simple, direct solution is the best path to success.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Greater Good.** Our lot is to lay down our lives in defense of others. (Good)
- 2 **Responsibility.** I do what I must and obey just authority. (Lawful)
- 3 **Independence.** When people follow orders blindly, they embrace a kind of tyranny. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Might.** In life as in war, the stronger force wins. (Evil)
- 5 **Live and Let Live.** Ideals aren't worth killing over or going to war for. (Neutral)
- 6 **Nation.** My city, nation, or people are all that matter. (Any)

d6 Bond

- 1 I would still lay down my life for the people I served with.
- 2 Someone saved my life on the battlefield. To this day, I will never leave a friend behind.
- 3 My honor is my life.
- 4 I'll never forget the crushing defeat my company suffered or the enemies who dealt it.
- 5 Those who fight beside me are those worth dying for.
- 6 I fight for those who cannot fight for themselves.

d6 Flaw

- 1 The monstrous enemy we faced in battle still leaves me quivering with fear.
- 2 I have little respect for anyone who is not a proven warrior.
- 3 I made a terrible mistake in battle cost many lives—and I would do anything to keep that mistake secret.
- 4 My hatred of my enemies is blind and unreasoning.
- 5 I obey the law, even if the law causes misery.
- 6 I'd rather eat my armor than admit when I'm wrong.

URCHIN

You grew up on the streets alone, orphaned, and poor. You had no one to watch over you or to provide for you, so you learned to provide for yourself. You fought fiercely over food and kept a constant watch out for other desperate souls who might steal from you. You slept on rooftops and in alleyways, exposed to the elements, and endured sickness without the advantage of medicine or a place to recuperate. You've survived despite all odds, and did so through cunning, strength, speed, or some combination of each.

You begin your adventuring career with enough money to live modestly but securely for at least ten days. How did you come by that money? What allowed you to break free of your desperate circumstances and embark on a better life?

Skill Proficiencies: Sleight of Hand, Stealth

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit, thieves' tools

Equipment: A small knife, a map of the city you grew up in, a pet mouse, a token to remember your parents by, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

FEATURE: CITY SECRETS

You know the secret patterns and flow to cities and can find passages through the urban sprawl that others would miss. When you are not in combat, you (and companions you lead) can travel between any two locations in the city twice as fast as your speed would normally allow.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Urchins are shaped by lives of desperate poverty, for good and for ill. They tend to be driven either by a commitment to the people with whom they shared life on the street or by a burning desire to find a better life—and maybe get some payback on all the rich people who treated them badly.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I hide scraps of food and trinkets away in my pockets.
- 2 I ask a lot of questions.
- 3 I like to squeeze into small places where no one else can get to me.
- 4 I sleep with my back to a wall or tree, with everything I own wrapped in a bundle in my arms.
- 5 I eat like a pig and have bad manners.
- 6 I think anyone who's nice to me is hiding evil intent.
- 7 I don't like to bathe.
- 8 I bluntly say what other people are hinting at or hiding.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Respect.** All people, rich or poor, deserve respect. (Good)
- 2 **Community.** We have to take care of each other, because no one else is going to do it. (Lawful)
- 3 **Change.** The low are lifted up, and the high and mighty are brought down. Change is the nature of things. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Retribution.** The rich need to be shown what life and death are like in the gutters. (Evil)
- 5 **People.** I help the people who help me—that's what keeps us alive. (Neutral)
- 6 **Aspiration.** I'm going to prove that I'm worthy of a better life.

d6 Bond

- 1 My town or city is my home, and I'll fight to defend it.
- 2 I sponsor an orphanage to keep others from enduring what I was forced to endure.
- 3 I owe my survival to another urchin who taught me to live on the streets.
- 4 I owe a debt I can never repay to the person who took pity on me.
- 5 I escaped my life of poverty by robbing an important person, and I'm wanted for it.
- 6 No one else should have to endure the hardships I've been through.

d6 Flaw

- 1 If I'm outnumbered, I will run away from a fight.
- 2 Gold seems like a lot of money to me, and I'll do just about anything for more of it.
- 3 I will never fully trust anyone other than myself.
- 4 I'd rather kill someone in their sleep than fight fair.
- 5 It's not stealing if I need it more than someone else.
- 6 People who can't take care of themselves get what they deserve.