



100 TRAITS FOR VILLAGES AND OTHER SETTLEMENTS

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COMPATABILITY

This product is designed to be system agnostic and usable with any pen and paper role playing game system.

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INTRODUCTION

To make settlements stand out more, instead of having them blurring together, they can be given traits, an unusual or noteworthy feature, whether physical or custom, that characters can encounter. Some of these traits will just provide background colour whilst others could be the source of problems or potential adventure hooks. Many of the traits are most suited to small settlements, such as villages, for larger ones, such as major towns and cities, are less likely to have a single overriding trait. However, some of these traits could be used to make districts in larger urban areas more distinctive.

USING THE LIST

Whilst d100 can be rolled for a random result, it can be a better idea to choose appropriate ones manually.

1. A crossroads is in the settlement's centre. It stands on two major routes and by the crossroads are gallows on which bandits caught on the routes are regularly executed.

2. A famous theatre is the main point of interest, with people coming from miles around to watch performances. Troupes based in the theatre tour the surrounding country, putting on smaller scale performances, and supplies needed by thespians are easy to obtain here.

3. A famous warrior fell, defending the land against an invader, several centuries ago. A monument was erected in their honour and the village built around it.

4. A high incidence of magical ability amongst the population, even though most have little skill, means that minor magics and cantrips are very common.

5. A high wall surrounds the village, far larger than it warrants, for it has been constructed within the ruins of an ancient castle.

6. A home base for a group of rangers and wilderness guides is the most important building in the village. From here, rangers patrol the borders and can be hired to accompany groups into the wilderness.

7. A large number of leatherworkers call the settlement home and it is known for its fine leather. It is also known for the horrendous smell of the tanneries that help support the leather trade.

8. A library devoted to a god of knowledge is the main focal point of the settlement, attracting scholars from far and wide. The library would seem like a tempting target to unscrupulous seekers of knowledge, but a guardian order of warrior monks and powerful divine enchantments protect it from those who would steal any books.

9. A monastery is close to the village and it has very close ties with it. The monks do not own the village, but many villagers grow up to become monks at the monastery or priests for the monks' religion.

10. A noted sculptor makes their home in the settlement and, as well as their commissioned pieces, they have donated several fine statues to their home.

11. A pilgrimage route passes through the settlement and the locals make much of their income selling supplies and religious items to pilgrims.

12. A strong magical aura permeates the settlement and spells cast within are more effective than normal. This has attracted a large number of spellusers who make use of it to empower their spells.

13. A strong smell of beer radiates from the settlement, as the residents are known to be brewers of no small talent. There are many breweries within the settlement, all constantly vying with each other to improve their drinks.

14. A wide river cuts the village in half, with small settlements on each side linked together by a ferry.

15. Almost everyone in the settlement is armed and frequent duels between resi-

dents happen when someone decides their honour has been impugned. These fights are only to first blood, though, and maiming or killing an opponent results in the perpetrator being exiled or executed. The locals view these duels as being nothing more than friendly, slightly bloody, arguments.

16. An ancient, but invisible, magical barrier surrounds the village. The barrier doesn't do much except keep out pests, but there are rumours it used to be stronger.

17. An unusually large number of lycanthropes of different kinds live in the village. They live peacefully with other types and with the ordinary villagers.

18. Buildings have been boarded up in the settlement and mass graves have been dug on the outskirts, as it recently suffered an outbreak of a disease that killed a substantial proportion of the population.

19. Buzzing can be heard from some distance away as this village has many beehives. It is well known for the fine, and unusually powerful, mead it brews.

20. Clockwork items, from small to large, are made in the village. These are of an incredible level of craftsmanship and are always in high demand.

21. Decorative planters full of flowers can be found all around the settlement, sitting on windowsills, hanging from brackets and standing in the streets.

22. During the summer months the village is quiet, but during the winter months the population doubles or trebles. It was founded as a place for travelling entertainers to overwinter and still serves that purpose. In winter, entertainers flock to the village to rest, recuperate and learn new material.

23. Elegance and beauty are highly prized, and the leaders are the most attractive and best-dressed. Every local is incredibly vain and spends most of their money on making themselves look good. Those with skills in such areas find a willing market here.

24. Every spring, the fields surrounding the settlement are filled with a profusion of beautifully scented flowers. The flowers are used to create fragranced items and perfumes.

25. Herbs of uncommon or rare types can be found in the woods and streams around the village in larger quantities than normal. Much of its income comes from harvesting and selling the herbs, and they carefully watch strangers to make sure they don't steal any.

26. High quality sand available close to the settlement is used in the manufacture of glass items. The glassworkers make practical items as well as decorative ones that are in high demand.

27. In the centre of the settlement is a sacred grove. Outsiders are not permitted to pass beyond the outermost ring of trees.



28. Leading this settlement is a horrible and thankless job and no-one wants to do it. Leaders are selected by vote and the winner is forced to do the job whether they want to do it or not.

29. Many alchemists live in the settlement which is notorious for its strange and occasionally fatal smells, explosions and dangerously mutated pests.

30. Many years ago, the village was the site of a major battle. Farmers regularly unearth bones in the fields and all the buildings are warded in some way against the undead, who are more common than normal, thanks to the battle. Those able to deal with the undead are welcomed by the village and put up free of charge.

31. Most of the buildings in the village are shabby and run down, as are the people who live in them, who are clearly extremely poor. The exceptions are a few merchants who have rigged the system to benefit only them and now have almost all of the settlement's wealth.

32. Nearly every day of the year is a celebration in this settlement. The celebrations cover a whole range of gods, pantheons, festivals, solstices; the locals will celebrate everything and, if they find a festival for a day currently lacking one, will add that to the calendar.

33. No religion is publicly worshipped in the village and any displays of such are illegal, whether this be showing a holy symbol or invoking the name of a god. Gods are worshipped, but only in private in the residents' homes.

34. Orchards surround the village and the amount of fruit they produce is unusually high, sometimes with multiple harvests a year.

35. Parts of the settlement are in ruins after a recent, unnatural fire raged through it. The inferno completely destroyed many buildings and rebuilding has barely started.

36. Rats are considered sacred in the village as they are believed to be protectors

sent by the gods, after they helped drive off a plague of snakes. Hurting a rat is a crime and killing one can be punishable by death.

37. Residents are taxed based on how wealthy they appear. As a result, even the wealthiest people in the settlement live in shabby, run-down houses with broken furniture, and dress in worn-out clothing.

38. Rising from the exact centre of the settlement is a narrow, pure white spire. There are no entrances and the locals have many rumours about it, from it being a home of gods to faeries to a gateway to other planes.

39. Sand is a constant in the settlement and the residents are forever having to shovel it from streets and buildings, as the sand is threatening to engulf everything.

40. Several famous families of knights make the settlement their home, and locals seek to become their squires in the hopes of being knighted themselves one day.

41. Significant fortifications surround the settlement, for it is in a dangerous area that is often raided. Patrols of scouts are regularly sent out to keep an eye on things.

42. Soldiers are a common sight in the settlement and there are many barracks and military stables. It functions as a hub for local patrols.

43. Songbirds are popular in the village and most households will have at least one. There is an extensive industry based around raising and caring for the birds.

44. Springs reputed to have medicinal properties make this settlement a popular place for those with aches and pains, and sometimes other illnesses, to visit. The springs are used to fill several baths that people can visit to receive the medicinal properties.

45. Statues of angels of all sizes and materials in many different poses can be found all over the village.

46. Tents and caravans surround the vil-

lage, which is an important stop on a caravan trail and has a large number of people always passing through. Brawls between different groups are common in some parts, though these are rarely fatal.

47. The air is redolent with the smells of different spices, as the settlement is a major spice hub. Spice is ground here and not only does the air smell of spices, anything eaten or drunk does, whether or not spices have been added deliberately.

48. The buildings are built on platforms attached to stout wooden pilings that have been driven deep into the marshy terrain below. Wooden or rope bridges connect the platforms together.

49. The buildings have been painted in bright primary colours that create a display of clashing colours that is eye-searing to visitors.

50. The buildings have flat roofs on which the residents grow food, for the fields around the settlement have problems and crops planted in them frequently fail.

51. The buildings in the settlement have stones salvaged from many sources used in their construction. Many of these stones are immense and a number have runes and markings carved into them. During the night, some of these markings glow.

52. The buildings of the settlement have been carefully constructed so that they blend into the natural surroundings; outsiders often discover that what they thought was a natural hillock is someone's home.

53. The dead are greatly revered here, with places set for them at family tables, shrines devoted to them in homes and regular festivals and celebrations held at their extravagant graves.

54. The government buildings are far grander than the settlement merits. They are the remnants of the place's former glory; over the years, it has significantly shrunk.

55. The Guild of Merchants exerts a huge

amount of control over the settlement and every other faction is subject to their rulings. Their power means that anyone who wants to do any sort of business or work in the settlement has to accommodate the wishes of the guild.

56. The leader of the settlement is extremely popular and has been leading it for years. It's an elected position and they always win by a substantial majority.

57. The population wanders around with a vacant look on their faces and frequent accidents occur due to no-one seeming to be entirely there. The majority is addicted to a mild narcotic that gives them a pleasant feeling but leaves them unreliable and unconcerned by most things.

58. The residents have an unusually high incidence of elven blood. There are no true elves living in the village, but almost everyone shows at least a touch of elven blood, from slightly pointed ears to more delicate frames to longer lifespans.

59. The residents look subdued and frightened, with the exception of the local guards, who strut around arrogantly as if they owned the place. The settlement was taken over by a bandit chief and his followers. The chief has placed himself in charge and his followers patrol the streets; anyone who objected was butchered. Anything the chief or guards want, they take.

60. The river by which the settlement is built recently flooded its banks, inundating the place. A lot of damage was done and the residents are rebuilding slowly.

61. The settlement clearly used to be larger, but many buildings have been abandoned. The river by which it is built has dried up and the place is slowly dying.

62. The settlement clusters closely around a gold mine that is its primary reason for existence and the source of its wealth. A larger than would be expected wall surrounds it.

63. The settlement has a brutal, hated leader, but one who has too much pow-

er and too many heavily-armed thugs to overthrow.

64. The settlement has grown around a wizard's tower, where a famous and powerful mage takes in students to teach.

65. The settlement has the only drinkable water for many miles, as something has contaminated the other water sources. The residents are wealthy due to the high price they charge for their water.

66. The settlement is a single, massive building. There are no individual buildings and corridors take the place of streets, suites of rooms the place of houses. Light wells are dotted here and there.

67. The settlement is built in a natural harbour and, although there are some fishermen, it is most well-known for the racing boats built in it, and the regular races held between such.

68. The settlement is built into an ancient necropolis and the buildings are converted former tombs. The locals leave offerings to any spirits who may still haunt the place.

69. The settlement is constructed on a number of islands in a river. Some of the islands are natural, some have been enlarged and some are artificial. Most are connected by wooden piers.

70. The settlement is clearly heading downhill, with abandoned and decaying buildings and all the ones still occupied falling into disrepair. It used to be on a major trade route, but the route moved and the place started to die.

71. The settlement is in a lake and is made mostly from boats that have been moored and joined together with catwalks.

72. The settlement is famous for some distance around for the residents' ability in taming and training exotic animals.

73. The settlement is home to two different religious sects. Though they are not involved in open warfare, the sects do not get on with each other, and a wall has been built dividing the settlement into two areas.

74. The settlement is known for the large number of sages that call the place home. Sages knowledgeable on many different subjects can be found and there are many ancillary industries such as paper and ink manufacture, scribe services and book-binding.

75. The settlement is surrounded by the ruins of a once-strong wall. Many years ago, there was a rebellion and, when the settlement was retaken, the wall was breached in many places and the residents are not allowed to repair it.

76. The settlement was built around the wintering grounds of a mercenary company. An unusually high percentage of the population has skill with arms, as many former members have retired here to set up families and businesses.

77. The settlement was founded by a famous barbarian warrior and the inhabitants tend to be a boisterous lot in honour of them.

78. The streets of the settlement have been built as a maze. Locals have no problems navigating them, but visitors frequently get lost. Guides can be hired to lead visitors to where they want to go.

79. The village burnt down several decades ago and the lord of the time was an ardent amateur architect and planner who had the new village constructed with a regular street plan. The homes are sturdy, but boring.

80. The village has an unusually high proportion of spellusers. Few have any great skill, but more than half of the residents can use at least minor magics.

81. The village is a notorious gambling den. Gambling is illegal in most of the surrounding area, but a curious error in the village's charter means that it is perfectly legal within the village's bounds. As a result, there are dozens of places where all sorts of gambling can be done.

82. The village is carved into a limestone outcropping that stands a couple of hun-

dred feet above the surrounding land. A single entrance at the ground leads inside to a warren of caves that form living quarters and businesses, and the top of the outcropping supplies a secure supply of food and water.

83. The village is extremely xenophobic and outsiders are not welcome. No-one will deal with them, trade with them or provide any accommodation.

84. The village is known for its carpenters and the fine wooden items it produces. The wood is harvested from the nearby forest and recently the loggers have run into problems with the sylvan beings who live there who are objecting to the number of trees being felled.

85. The village looks extremely impressive from a distance, with magnificent buildings. These are all illusions, as are many things around the settlement, which is home to a number of illusionists. In reality, the place is rather shabby and rundown.

86. The village's buildings are caves in the side of a sheer cliff. Balconies have been built out from the entrances and staircases and ladders have been carved and fixed into the cliff face.

87. There are a substantial number of laws for many petty infractions, all of which are punishable by fines. Visitors have noticed that those who are not local seem to fall afoul of the law far more often than residents.

88. There are an unusually large proportion of beggars amongst the population. Despite numerous attempts, from charity to force, to clear up the problem, the beggars remain.

89. There are no taverns, inns or anything similar. Instead, such services are provided on a limited basis by individual households, none of whom will deal with more than half a dozen people at a time and many less.

90. There is a strong religious presence in the village, as it is home to a martial order of religious knights. Religious law is the

highest law of the settlement, and worshippers of many other religions are at best frowned on and at worst expelled.

91. There is very little crime and the citizens are very law abiding. This is not by nature, but because of a stringent set of laws together with harsh penalties for breaking them. Outsiders can easily fall afoul of the laws.

92. Thieves are common in the village, as it was founded by several who had retired to the country and then taught their skills to new generations. Most of the thievery isn't malicious, simply the locals attempting to test themselves against each other, though outsiders should beware.

93. To those with the right knowledge, the settlement is known as a place where poisons of many different types can be obtained. The residents manufacture a lot of poisons and, through trying to poison each other, have built up a substantial immunity to such.

94. Two large criminal gangs have an extensive influence on the settlement. There used to be three, but gang warfare recently erupted. The third gang was destroyed and now the survivors are fighting, leading to open warfare in the streets.

95. Underneath the settlement are some ancient caverns which are avoided by all the residents. Visitors are told to avoid them too, though no-one seems to know why they are shunned.

96. Unusually aggressive plants, most carnivorous in nature, are trying to smother the village and the residents spend a lot of time keeping these plants under control.

97. Vineyards surround the settlement, owned by a few families that have bought up most of the smaller ones over the years. The place is known for the wines it produces.

98. Years ago a prophet was said to have ascended to divinity in the settlement's location, and monuments and religious iconography connected to the prophet are

common.

99. Water features, from fountains to decorative streams to waterfalls tumbling from the roofs of house, can be found all over the settlement. There is a nearly constant mist of water droplets in the air as a result, which produces rainbows and can make

surfaces slippery. The moisture means that combatting mould is a constant battle.

100. Wrestling is very popular in this village and there is a main public wrestling ring where all and sundry can test themselves in major tournaments as well as smaller rings in taverns.

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