

FIVE NEW PLAYABLE BACKGROUNDS

SECRET OPERATIVE

DOMESTIC SERVANT

PHYSICIAN

ATHLETE

GAMBLER



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SECRET OPERATIVE

You are a spy, highly trained after being identified at a young age for your physical and mental aptitude and your steadiness in high pressure situations. You have had some close calls before but have always managed to find your way out or be the last person standing. You may be a member of a Guild of Secrets or work for the intelligence agency of your particular monarch. Or you may freelance, playing one side off on another. Whatever your allegiance, you are sure of one thing and one thing only: you will complete your mission.

Skill Proficiencies: Stealth, Investigation

Tool Proficiencies: Disguise kit or Forgery kit, water and land vehicles

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A set of dark common clothes including a hood, a ring containing a secret poison pellet, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

OPERATIVE SPECIALTY

There are many kinds of operatives, and in your training you specialized in one of the following areas. Of course, you might just be great at all of them, like the best spies are.

d8	Specialty	d8	Specialty
1	Surveillance	5	Research
2	Assassination	6	Gadgetry
3	Combat	7	Research
4	Analysis	8	All of the Above

FEATURE: SPY TRAINING

Your training as an operative gives you uncanny awareness. You naturally mark all exits when you enter a building and you know how to find them from anywhere in the building. You also have a honed sense of how many people are in a given room, who might be armed, and whom to neutralize first if violence breaks out.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Secret Operatives are self-assured and cool under pressure. The higher the stakes, the better they perform. They may seem to have a perfectly normal life under a false identity, but the moment they are called into action, their true training and natural ability are on display, often to fantastic results. Other times, their bravado can be their undoing.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I prefer sneaking around to open confrontation.
2	I have a sense of humor so dry that people never can tell when I'm joking.
3	I always need to get the last word.
4	My clothing looks pristine no matter how many scrapes I've been in.
5	I've done things I'm not proud of, but I find ways to justify them to myself.
6	I can think quickly through a long list of options and usually choose the best one.

- 7 I have a knack for stalling when in danger, and I'm good at keeping my enemies talking.
- 8 I am not subtle. When I'm around, things tend to explode.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Mastery.** I have studied up on the work of all the best operatives and seek to emulate their greatness. (*Neutral*)
- 2 **Authority.** My superiors know what's best for me, and I follow their orders unflinchingly. (*Lawful*)
- 3 **Duty.** My training has given me tools to help people, even if they don't know I was involved. (*Good*)
- 4 **Instinct.** I rely on my intuition to make decisions; this means that sometimes I uphold the system, and sometimes I tear it down. (*Chaotic*)
- 5 **Vengeance.** I am done being a pawn; I will show them the monster they have made. (*Evil*)
- 6 **Self-Reliance.** I am my own best weapon, and I keep myself sharp. (*Any*)

d6 Bond

- 1 The love of my life died because of my actions. I work for atonement.
- 2 I have no idea who I truly am anymore, and I seek clarity for my memory.
- 3 My family do not know I'm still alive. I hope to reconnect with them someday.
- 4 I work in secret to protect people; the fact that they can go about their daily lives oblivious to danger means I'm doing my job.
- 5 An old ally and friend betrayed me and our organization; I seek to bring him/her to justice.
- 6 I am fiercely loyal to those who trust me to get the job done, using my own methods, of course.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I always think I'm right, even if my superiors disagree.
- 2 I only befriend others when I think they can be of use to me.
- 3 I too often succumb to my own destructive passions.
- 4 My bravado is a mask; deep down I'm terrified all the time.
- 5 I disregard consequences and body counts mean nothing to me.
- 6 Only spies who mess up get famous, and yet I have a desire for fame.

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DOMESTIC SERVANT

You spent your youth working your way up through the ranks of servants in the manor house of a lord. You lived on the estate, earned your wages, and did your best to please your masters. They gave you a bit of schooling, but generally kept their distance except when giving you direct orders. Depending on your age, you may have attained a higher rank among the domestic staff before leaving for a life of adventure.

Skill Proficiencies: Stealth, Insight

Tool Proficiencies: Cook's utensils or Woodcarver's tools; and a Playing Card Set

Equipment: An authentic or forged letter of reference from your most recent lord, a set of playing cards, rustic common clothes, and 10 gp

RANK OF SERVICE

Life "downstairs" is just as hierarchical as the life of the nobility "upstairs." Indeed, it is based on the ranks of the nobility served by domestics like yourself. Depending on your character's gender, roll either a d4 or d6 on the rank table below.

MALE		FEMALE	
d4	Rank	d6	Rank
1	Stablehand	1	Scullery Maid
2	Footman	2	Chamber Maid
3	Valet	3	Lady's Maid
4	Butler	4	Governess
		5	Cook
		6	Housekeeper

FEATURE: NOBLE STUDY

After having observed the nobility for years, you have become adept at mimicking their behavior. As long as your appearance is up to par, you can pass yourself off as a person of noble birth. You also get along well with common folk, making you skilled at moving through all levels of society. Because of your ability to anticipate the needs of nobles, they are inclined to trust and like you.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Domestic laborers live a life of service to others, who are often pampered and show little respect to "the help." Thus, servants can be disillusioned by the nobility. However, some nobles treat their servants with courtesy and thus engender fidelity in their staff. The kind of household you served will do much to determine your traits.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I'm always looking for ways to please others.
- 2 I dress impeccably, knowing that a good appearance is worth its weight in gold.
- 3 Though I was a servant, I had others beneath me, so I am used to giving orders.
- 4 I comport myself with dignity and never speak ill of other people.
- 5 I spent too many years cleaning things; now I prefer to be messy.

- 6 I still wake up at the crack of dawn thinking I have duties to perform.
- 7 I rarely speak my mind unless asked a direct question.
- 8 I find the most efficient way to complete any task.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Excellence.** I hold myself to a personal standard even higher than my former employers expected. (*Any*)
- 2 **Tradition.** The customs of this land have led to its greatness, and I seek to preserve them. (*Lawful*)
- 3 **Self-Determination.** I have lived too long in the strictures of a caste system. I must have freedom. (*Chaotic*)
- 4 **Service.** I have always helped others, just because it's the right thing to do. (*Good*)
- 5 **Personal Growth.** I rose through the ranks on my willingness to learn, and I continue to seek such opportunities. (*Neutral*)
- 6 **Exploitation.** My employers exploited me, so I stole from them every chance I got. Now it's my turn on top. (*Evil*)

d6 Bond

- 1 I have been led to believe I am actually the child of my employer, and I have left his service to prove myself in his eyes.
- 2 My beloved is in prison on a murder charge of dubious veracity. I seek evidence to exonerate him/her.
- 3 My lord and lady were kindly people. Now that they are deceased and their household disbanded, I seek my fortune in order to help other common folk as they did.
- 4 The cruelty of my last employer must be brought to light, but I cannot do so until I have power and respect.
- 5 I have younger siblings who rely on money I send home, and my life as a domestic did not earn enough to provide for them.
- 6 A member of my last employer's family and I are secretly in love. I have left to raise my rank in society so that we might one day be together.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I know I'm obsequious, but I can't help it. It was bred into my nature.
- 2 I always think people are using me for their own ends.
- 3 I have trouble dreaming big and seeing the whole picture.
- 4 I'm used to strict routine, so the unexpected makes me anxious.
- 5 World-weariness often sends me into a state of melancholy.
- 6 Once I know one way to accomplish a task, I am loath to try a different way.

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PHYSICIAN

You are skilled in the art of healing, but not with spells and prayers. Rather, you employ salves, tonics, and diagnostic cunning. Many people distrust your practice as witchcraft, but those whom you have helped regard you as a worker of wonders. Your knowledge of anatomy and disease, along with your skill in extracting vital serums from various plant life, make you an asset to any community that is open-minded enough to welcome what it does not understand.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Medicine

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism kit or Poisoner's kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A book of known diseases, a set of fine clothes, and a belt pouch containing 20 gp

MEDICAL TRAINING

Your training in medicine gives you a certain perspective on the world, especially as it relates to the healing arts. Choose a course of training or roll randomly on the table below.

d8	Training	d8	Training
1	Barber	5	Veterinarian
2	Coroner	6	Battlefield Medic
3	Country Doctor	7	Surgeon
4	Tribal Shaman	8	Midwife

FEATURE: TONIC MAKER

You have the ability to distill from plants the basic ingredients of certain powerful medicines. In consultation with your DM, such ingredients when gathered and combined have the same effect as the lesser restoration spell.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Physicians have studied the inner workings of life, seeking to understand how the body heals itself when afflicted by illness, injury, and disease. This study makes some doctors humble in the face of the vast unknown. It fills others with self-importance.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I routinely ignore quarantine orders so I can help the sick.
2	First I look for practical reasons to explain any sickness, even for afflictions that seem supernatural.
3	When I am stymied by an elusive diagnosis, I treat the patient for every illness until something works.
4	Once I purposefully gave myself a disease just so I could experience the symptoms.
5	I have no problem cutting off a limb, if such a procedure will save my patient.
6	The more dire the emergency, the more focused I become.
7	I am loathe to try a procedure I have only witnessed but never attempted.
8	I believe every poison is a medicine incorrectly administered.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Nonmaleficence.** First, do no harm. (*Lawful*)
- 2 **Beneficence.** I use my skills to help sick people whether they can pay me or not. (*Good*)
- 3 **Innovation.** To break new ground in medicine, you have to be willing to take risks others will not take. (*Chaotic*)
- 4 **Education.** I must pass on my medical knowledge to the next generation of doctors. (*Any*)
- 5 **Pain.** I have found that torture is just another name for surgery. (*Evil*)
- 6 **Longevity.** I am bent on discovering the secrets that will lead to immortality. (*Neutral*)

d6 Bond

- 1 I revere the natural world because it is full of medicine, if you just know where to look.
- 2 I seek atonement for rash experiments I did in my youth, which led to the deaths of several people.
- 3 A loved one is slowly dying from an unknown disease, and I must find a cure.
- 4 Ancient medical knowledge lies hidden in tomes scattered across the world. I must find them.
- 5 It is my duty to provide aid where I can, and I will go out of my way to do so.
- 6 I have revolutionary medical theories that others need to hear, but no one will listen to me until I prove myself.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I always appear to know what I'm doing, even if I haven't got a clue.
- 2 I tend to view everyone as a medical puzzle without seeing the person underneath.
- 3 After several botched surgeries, I am now filled with self doubt.
- 4 I get to play god, and I like it a little too much.
- 5 Sometimes I prey on the ignorance of locals to squeeze more payment out of them.
- 6 I quickly write off those with less education than I have.

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ATHLETE

From a young age, you were praised for your prowess as an athlete and began working your way up through the ranks in your particular sport. Perhaps you became the best in the world at your game before going out on top. Or perhaps you never quite lived up to your potential and thus turned away from the sport you love to pursue the adventuring life. In either case, one thing is certain: athletic competition still makes your heart sing.

Skill Proficiencies: Athletics, Acrobatics

Tool Proficiencies: Vehicles (land and water), one game set of your choice

Equipment: Items related to your favored athletic pursuit, common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

PREFERRED SPORT

To hone your skills for excellence as an athlete, you needed to train for a specific type of contest. Choose one sport or roll on the table below to define your preferred area of competition.

d10	Sport	d10	Sport
1	Gymnastics	6	Swimming
2	Track and Field	7	Wrestling
3	Rowing	8	Tennis
4	Archery	9	Horseback Riding
5	Jousting	10	Martial Arts

FEATURE: COMPETITIVE ENDURANCE

You are used to pushing your body to the limit in pursuit of your competitive goals. Therefore, when you gain a level of exhaustion do not apply its effects until you gain another level of exhaustion. For example, you do not suffer the effects of the first level of exhaustion until you have two levels, and so forth.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Athletes give up all else for the glory of competition. This single-mindedness trains them to be dedicated, but can also leave them unprepared for the most normal of daily circumstances.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 Since I became a professional athlete, I have never lost.
- 2 I prefer team competition to individual games.
- 3 I've always been the smallest competitor, but I make up for my size by having the biggest heart.
- 4 I've been at this long enough to know defeat is part of the game, and I don't let it rile me.
- 5 I have never in my life said the words, "It's only a game."
- 6 My physical prowess has always come naturally, so I rarely feel the need to exercise.
- 7 I always eat as healthily as possible.
- 8 I grew up fast because I began competing at such a young age.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Victory.** I do whatever it takes to win, even if it means "bending" the rules. (*Chaotic*)
- 2 **Sportsmanship.** There is honor and dignity in the purity of competitive pursuits. (*Lawful*)
- 3 **Exercise.** Physical and mental perfection lead me to triumph. (*Neutral*)
- 4 **Determination.** All I can do is train hard, try my best, and never give up. (*Neutral*)
- 5 **Paragon.** My fame makes me a role model to the young, and I will do everything to live up to that calling. (*Good*)
- 6 **Wealth.** The thrill of competition used to be everything to me, but now I'm just in it for the money. (*Neutral*)

d6 Bond

- 1 I left the sporting world having never beaten my rival, but the day will come for another contest, so I must stay sharp.
- 2 I was forced out of my sport by false accusations of cheating, and I continue to work to clear my name.
- 3 An injury kept me from competing for a long time, but perhaps it's time to give it another shot.
- 4 I never lived up to the standard others set for me, so now I strive to excel in other areas of life.
- 5 Every member of my family plays my sport, and I've always felt the need to keep the family's legacy alive.
- 6 I rose out of poverty playing my sport, so whenever I can I help poor children realize their dreams.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I can't read or write or cook because my youth was consumed by training, so I am utterly dependent.
- 2 I am overly competitive in everything I do.
- 3 I often remind my acquaintances of my brilliant achievements.
- 4 My "never give up" attitude can mutate into dangerous obsession.
- 5 I never back down from a fight, even when hopelessly outnumbered.
- 6 I feel entitled to special treatment because I reached the pinnacle of fame in my sport.

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GAMBLER

A game of cards, a boxing match, a horse race: you just can't say no to placing a bet, especially when the stakes are high. Sometimes you beat the house; sometimes the house beats you. But you always come back for more. Perhaps you left the gambling scene after a big score, never to look back. Or perhaps you busted big time and all that you have left is the shirt on your back. Either way, something always seems to pull you back in whenever there's some action to be had.

Skill Proficiencies: Deception, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: All gaming sets, one musical instrument of your choice

Equipment: A set of your favored game of chance, a ledger of all your bets for the past year, common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

PLACE YOUR BETS

All gamblers have a favorite opportunity for placing a bet, and you are no exception. While you will bet on anything and everything, you gravitate to one outlet more than the others. Choose one or roll on the table below to define your preferred gambling opportunity.

d8	Betting Outlet	d8	Betting Outlet
1	Card games	5	Boxing
2	Dice games	6	Cockfighting
3	Roulette	7	Drinking
4	Horse racing	8	Dog racing

FEATURE: PLAY THE ODDS

Your history of gambling has given you an uncanny awareness of knowing when to play the odds. Before knowing the outcome, you may reroll an ability check but must use the result of the second roll. You cannot use this feature again until you complete a long rest.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Gamblers have a penchant for taking risks, calculated or otherwise. Some see gambling as a science and use math and analysis to make their choices. Others just let their instincts decide. No matter what, gamblers tend to be their own worst enemies.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 My nickname is "All In."
- 2 I'll do whatever I can to make sure the odds are in my favor.
- 3 Everything in life can be turned into a bet of some sort.
- 4 I have small stashes of money hidden all over.
- 5 It's not cheating unless you get caught.
- 6 I always know exactly how much money I have, down to the last copper.
- 7 One time I started with a pair of coppers and ended the night with all the money at the table. You might call it luck; I call it skill.
- 8 I've had a few close calls after winning big pots, so I practice wariness and caution.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Exhilaration.** I live for the high of taking risks. (*Neutral*)
- 2 **Honor.** At the end of the night, I always settle up. (*Lawful*)
- 3 **Justice.** The deck is stacked against some people, and I aim to help them out. (*Good*)
- 4 **Fraud.** Weighted dice, a suddenly lame horse, a bribed boxer: these things simply assure my investments. (*Evil*)
- 5 **Diligence.** I only place bets when my research tells me they're as close to a sure thing as possible. (*Neutral*)
- 6 **Chance.** The top of the deck is unknown, as are the events of tomorrow, so I will just go with the flow. (*Chaotic*)

d6 Bond

- 1 My loved one is in debtor's prison because of me, and I am determined to pay off those debts.
- 2 My former business partners bilked me out of my half of our casino, and I plan to show them my displeasure.
- 3 I won my horse in a bet, and she/he is my most prized possession.
- 4 My father gave me his dice when he died, and I always think of him when I roll them.
- 5 I lost it all in a card game, and I still carry around the final card I was dealt as a reminder of my foolishness.
- 6 There's a big score out there with my name on it, and I will chase it until my dying day.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I let my emotions rule my decisions, especially when my luck is running bad.
- 2 I have a tendency to throw good money after bad.
- 3 I will not acknowledge that I have an addiction to gambling.
- 4 I blame my failures on everything but my own shortcomings.
- 5 Whenever I calculate odds, I tip them in my favor even when there is no reason to do so.
- 6 When I have money in my pocket, I spend it as soon as I can.

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