

SOUTHERN HILANDS HEROES



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SOUTHLANDS HEROES

RACES AND BACKGROUNDS FOR 5TH EDITION

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HEROES OF THE SOUTHLANDS

New lands bring new adventures. Fearsome creatures, deadly dungeons, and marvelous treasures wait beneath the pitiless sun, and new heroes rise to the challenge. One of the most compelling aspects of a new setting is expanding the pool of hero options for players to portray. Adventure is meaningless without adventurers, and the most important part of any roleplaying game is how your character engages with and changes the world. Becoming part of that world is the first step.

The 5th edition of the world's first roleplaying game creates an interesting opportunity to bridge the gap between monster and player characters in the way it treats NPCs and monsters. PCs and antagonists work on a fundamentally different level, mechanically. Because of this difference in ability mechanics, we can remove the combat actions and effects, leaving behind a core set of racial traits that defines a race or creature. All you need is a class and a background, and you have a compelling new character option.

To capture the flavor of the Southlands for rich, exotic, and vibrant player characters, we have done just that. We took several iconic Southlands races, previously the realm of antagonists alone, and rebuilt them into playable PC races. From ancient lizardfolk in primordial jungles, to renegade tosculi wasp folk cast out of their hive cities, the Southland's denizens join the ranks of more familiar heroic races. Some staple races, such as the gnolls, come with a sharp twist on the standard assumptions. This twist not only gives the gnolls an important place in the setting, but also brings them back into the realm of a playable race rather than demon-touched berserkers.

Each race comes with a compelling set of core racial abilities and a description of its place in the ranks of adventurers. Several go further, offering variant racial traits or new class path options. Skulking lizardfolk ambushers wait motionless just beneath the river's surface, biding time for the perfect moment to strike. Aasimar bear unique gifts based on the divine blood running through their veins. Noble werelions stalk

the savannah, wielding magic born of their inherent shapeshifting gifts.

Race is an important aspect of a heroic character, but it isn't the whole story. Backgrounds provide greater context as to why a given adventurer leads a life of danger and glory, as well as adding mechanical flair in the form of proficiencies and flavorful abilities. The Southlands brings exotic new backgrounds, as well as expanded options

for existing backgrounds. Your hero may be a life-long wanderer on the caravans setting out from Siwal, or she may have grown up in a grand temple as the daughter of a god. Backgrounds provide the "why" to complement the "who" of a player character, combining to bring depth and a stable foundation for a tale of greatness.

Your greatness awaits beneath pitiless sun and scouring sands. Who will you be? How will you claim it?



AASIMAR

Aasimar – the frailty of human flesh imbued with the celestial blood of gods and their angelic hosts. Shining exemplars of the possibilities, strength and wisdom of the power of good, they can also be cautionary tales about the dangers of hubris and temptation. With the divine power of the Seven Heavens flowing through your veins, will you make your world a better, safer, more enlightened realm? Or will you bring hell on earth through your missteps?

Divine Scions

Aasimar of the Southlands hail primarily from Ishadia on the Corsair Coast, and less commonly in the nations of Sar-Shaba, and Shibai. Though the blood of the aasimar flows from the Seven Heavens, only a fool would mistake the entire race to be pure-hearted. Many aasimar move through the world at the behest of their divine ancestor. These champions secure favor by enforcing the god's will on the mortal world, and in so doing expand their personal power.

Others descend from dead gods who spawned their lineage before falling in the ancient War in the Heavens. These celestial orphans often turn to a life of adventure to make their way in the world, in hopes of one day attracting the attention of a patron. Without the protection of a living deity, or perhaps an angelic figure, an aasimar drifts through life without purpose. The ultimate dream of these embattled souls is to wrest the power stolen from their line by jealous Aten, when he devoured their progenitor in the War.

Sometimes a celestial scion employs darker means to secure his future. He enters into a pact with Aten rather than trying to regain stolen glory, and risk the god's wrath. The desperate aasimar hunts down followers of other gods, offering them one chance to convert to the "true" faith, or die for their heresy.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Southern and Celestial.

AASIMAR RACIAL VARIANTS

Although not, strictly speaking, different races, aasimar come from a variety of lineages that may alter their natural abilities.

Airy Spirit. Your divine ancestor came from the Heaven of Buoyant Skies. At 5th level, you can cast *gaseous form* once as a 3rd level spell, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. This ability replaces the ability to cast the *daylight* spell.

Alternate Resistance. You were raised on a fiery plane or are the descendant of a fire godling. You have resistance to fire damage. This ability replaces your resistance to necrotic and radiant damage.

Celestial Awareness. You were trained to use all your senses to avoid surprise attacks and assassinations. You gain blindsight to a range of 10 feet. This ability replaces darkvision, and your ability to cast the *daylight* spell.



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Heaven's Wrath. You have been trained to focus the light and righteousness of the Seven Heavens upon your enemies as a weapon. You gain the ability to cast *guiding bolt* once as a 1st level spell, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. This ability replaces your ability to cast the lesser restoration and daylight spells.

Divine Splendor. Your celestial ancestor was a leader of angelic hosts, and you can summon their divine aura and captivate those who behold you. At 3rd level, you gain the ability to cast *enhance ability (eagle's splendor)* once with a range of Personal as a 2nd level spell without the need to maintain concentration, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. At 5th level, you gain the benefits of both *eagle's splendor* and *owl's wisdom* when you use this ability. A shining halo or nimbus forms around your head while the spell is in effect, revealing your divine nature. The glow from the halo is dim light with a ten-foot radius. This ability replaces your ability to cast the *lesser restoration* and *daylight* spells.

GNOLL

The average gnoll views the virtues of work and self-sufficiency with distaste. Gnolls with leadership skills or who tire of sharing the fruits of their labors frequently break off from the pack alone or in small groups to fend for themselves. Sometimes a male gnoll foolishly announces that he believes males are more fit to lead, and necessarily sets out on his own until he can find a new pack or the controversy is forgotten.

Gnolls who possess the will to face danger make excellent adventurers.

GNOLL TRAITS

Your gnoll character has several special traits, the result of a wild nature and growing in a harsh environment.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2.

Age. Gnolls reach adulthood at age 12, and they live short and brutal lives. The rare examples that die of old age experience only around 70 summers.

Alignment. As a product of a culture that values laziness, selfishness, and dominance, most gnolls are evil. On top of that, an unpredictable existence, where every day could be the last, usually leads to a chaotic view of the world. With that said, there are always exceptions to every norm.

Size. Gnoll females are taller and more powerfully built than their male counterparts. The former range from 7 to 8 feet and usually weight more than 250 pounds, while the latter average 6 inches and 30 pounds less. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You cannot discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Scent. You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Bully. Although gnolls are cowardly at heart, they like to disguise their fears by abusing others. You have disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened. On the other hand, whenever you make a Charisma (Intimidation) check for dealing with obviously smaller or weaker targets, you are considered proficient in the Intimidation skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

Live to Fight Another Day. When you take the Disengage action, your base walking speed is increased by 10 feet.

Gnoll Weapon Training. You have proficiency with the spear, shortbow, longbow, light crossbow, and heavy crossbow.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Southern and Gnollish. Gnollish words sounds almost like growls for the uninitiated, and gnolls tend to use scents and small gestures to convey subtle meanings. Two gnolls speaking can almost seem like dogs barking at each other to a casual observer.



Subraces. Although not, strictly speaking, different races, gnolls from the civilized lands live in an environment so different than their savage brethren that they are considered separate subraces. Choose one of them.

CIVILIZED GNOLLS

As a civilized gnoll, you are well-fed and enjoy the comforts that your primitive cousins can only dream of. You were valued as a mercenary, a temple guard, or simply a thug due to both your inherent toughness and your desire to please those that are in charge.

Ability Score Increase. Your Constitution score increases by 1.

Obsequious. Whenever you make a Charisma (Persuasion) check for dealing with obviously bigger or more powerful targets, you are considered proficient in the Persuasion skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

SAVAGE GNOLLS

As a savage gnoll, you are in touch with your animal side and understand the ways of nature. Your tribe has been raiding the desert or the plains since generations ago, and you know the land in which you live like the back of your hand.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Scavenge. Whenever you make a Wisdom (Survival) check for gathering food or locating water, you are considered proficient in the Survival skill and add double your proficiency bonus to the check, instead of your normal proficiency bonus.

LIZARDFOLK

The lizardfolk are an ancient people, existing as tribal cultures undisturbed by the passage of time. Most are content to remain within the untouched lands of their forebears, and care little for the extravagant pleasures of civilization. The inconvenient presence of the natives sometimes causes outsiders to clash with these communities. The chieftains know they must meet invading mammals with savage ferocity, or become overwhelmed. *Advanced Races: Lizardfolk* presents mechanical rules to offer lizardfolk expanded play options as both antagonist and protagonist in your game.

The following sections offer racial traits and variants for the iconic lizardfolk race.

LIZARDFOLK TRAITS

As a lizardfolk, your heritage is ancient and your patience and endurance far greater than most. Your people are hunters and raiders, and entirely at home in marshes and water. You gain the following traits.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Wisdom score increases by 1.

Age. Lizardfolk mature faster than humans, reaching adulthood at 16. They also have shorter lifespans, with few lizardfolk living longer than 60 years.

Alignment. Typical lizardfolk are highly territorial, following the beliefs and traditions of their tribes. They have no notion of civilized morality, and they find the concepts of good and evil alien. As such, lizardfolk tend toward neutrality. Lizardfolk who choose to leave their villages, or who are banished, may do so for a variety of reasons, including an alignment conflicting with typical lizardfolk society.

Size. Lizardfolk are slightly larger than the average human. Your size is medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet. You have a swim speed of 30 feet.

Natural Armor. If you are not wearing armor, your base AC equals 12 + your Dexterity modifier. You can use a shield and still gain this benefit.

Natural Attacks. You have proficiency with your bite, which deals 1d6 piercing damage.

Natural Predator. You have proficiency with the Stealth skill.

Hold Breath. You can hold your breath for a number of minutes equal to your Constitution score.

Languages. You speak, read, and write Draconic, plus one additional language of your choice (typically Southern).

LIZARDFOLK RACIAL VARIANTS

Lizardfolk have developed a range of abilities beyond those that are adapted for life in the swamp, and the race shows more variation than some.

The lizardfolk choose up to two of the following variants, so long as the two do not conflict by replacing the same ability. For instance, both Gout of Blood and Poisonous Bite replace your bite ability, so you cannot choose those two together. Likewise, Climber and Chromatophore both replace swim speed, so those can also not be chosen together.

Climber. While climbing you suffer no movement penalties, you are considered proficient in the Athletics skill, and add double your proficiency bonus to checks made to climb, instead of your normal proficiency bonus. This ability replaces your swim speed and hold breath abilities.

Chromatophore. You can alter the color of your skin and can blend into your environment. You gain advantage on Stealth checks made to hide as long as you are not moving. If you are wearing no armor and carrying no items, you may attempt to hide even if you have no cover or obscurity. You can't use this ability to hide while you are being directly observed. This ability replaces your swim speed and hold breath abilities.

Digger. You can burrow through soft sand, dirt, and mud at a rate of 10 feet per round. This ability replaces your swim speed ability.

Glider. You take no damage from falls. You gain a fly speed of 40 feet but cannot hover. At the end of any round you fly, you must have descended at least one-quarter the distance you traveled or you fall. This ability replaces your swim speed and hold breath abilities.

Gout of Blood. Some lizardfolk can force a jet of hot blood from their eyes to disorient predators and prey. As an action, you can target any creature within 15 feet with this ability and force the target to make a Wisdom saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Dexterity modifier. On a failed save, the target is frightened. The frightened creature can repeat this save at the end of each of its turns, ending the condition on a success. Creatures wearing full-face helmets, eye protection, etc. gain advantage on the save. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Constitution modifier, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest. This ability replaces your bite attack.

Regeneration. Some lizardfolk heal at an impressive rate. Whenever you spend at least one Hit Die to regain hit points during a short rest, you regain an additional number of hit points equal to twice your Constitution modifier. Severed fingers and toes regrow after 24 hours. Severed hands and feet regrow after three days. Severed limbs regrow after one week. If the severed body part is present and whole, you can reattach it during a short rest as long as you spend at least one Hit Die to regain hit points and perform no other actions, even light duties. You gain one level of exhaustion

when you begin regenerating a limb. While a limb is regenerating, as well as for one day after the regrowth is complete, you cannot have less than one level of exhaustion. This ability replaces your natural armor and natural predator abilities.

Poisoned Bite. Lizardfolk are sometimes born with venomous fangs or poisonous saliva delivered through their bite attack. You can make a bite as an unarmed strike that deals piercing damage. On a successful bite attack, the target must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Constitution modifier. On a failed save, the target gains the poisoned condition for 1 minute. The target can repeat the save at the end of its turn, ending the effect on a success. On a successful save or when the poisoned condition ends, the target becomes immune to your poison for 24 hours. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Constitution modifier, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest. This ability replaces your bite, natural armor, swim speed, and hold breath abilities.

Purple-Blooded. Some lizardfolk carry waste products through their blood, excreting toxins that build up in their systems and granting resistance to infections. You gain advantage on saving throws against poisons and diseases. This ability replaces your natural armor.

Pygmy. Many remote tribes of lizardfolk are much smaller than their common kin. Your Dexterity increases by +2 and your Wisdom increases by +1. Your size becomes Small. This replaces your normal ability score bonus and your Medium size.

NEW LIZARDFOLK CLASS ARCHETYPES

Lizardfolk dwell far from the trappings of civilization, and learn to live in a hostile world. Techniques that serve urban races fall short in the harsh wilderness of the Southlands, and so lizardfolk rogues capitalize on their reptilian nature to become more efficient killers. Lizardfolk characters follow their class progression normally, but replace several class features for the variants described below.

AMBUSH PREDATOR (ASSASSIN)

Assassins among the lizardfolk gain little benefit from impersonating another creature, and so they developed an alternate method for dealing death to their enemies. A lizardfolk's low metabolism allows some to wait in perfect ambush points for hours or days at a time. She strikes without warning, ending a victim's life with a rapid violent assault.

Killer's Craft. At 3rd level, you gain proficiency with the poisoner's kit. Additionally, you can use the bonus action granted by your Cunning Action to apply poison to a weapon. This ability replaces Bonus Proficiencies.

Patience. At 9th level, you learn to wait in a single spot with infinite patience. As long as you don't move, you have advantage on any saving throw against falling asleep or succumbing to exhaustion. While you remain



stationary you can undertake light activity (to remain on watch only) for the entire duration of a long rest, and still gain its benefits. If you move, or engage in any other sort of activity, you must rest as normal for the remainder of the long rest to complete it. This ability replaces Infiltration Expertise.

Sniper. At 13th level, you do not automatically reveal your location when you attack while hidden. You must be at least 10 feet away from any creature that could potentially hear or see you to use this ability. Whenever you attack, you can make a new Dexterity (Stealth) check. Any creature that might detect you gains advantage on its passive Wisdom (Perception) score. If successful, you remain hidden. This ability replaces Imposter.

MINOTAUR

Minotaurs are known for their strength and ferocity, but their kingdoms have largely fallen from the power and glory they once had, and some minotaurs are plagued by bloodlust and fury. Playing a minotaur character is sometimes a lonely matter; few minotaur settlements and citadels are still standing. But the minotaurs who remain are strong and not easily discouraged.

MINOTAUR TRAITS

Your minotaur character has several special traits.

Ability Score Increase. Your Strength score increases by 2, and your Constitution score increases by 1.

Age. Minotaurs mature at roughly the same rate as humans but mature 3 years earlier. Childhood ends around the age of 10 and adulthood is celebrated at 15.

Alignment. Minotaurs possess a wide range of alignments, just as humans do. Mixing a love for personal freedom and respect for history and tradition, the majority of minotaurs fall into neutral alignments.

Size. Adult males can reach a height of 6 1/2 to 7 feet, with females averaging 3 inches shorter. Your size is Medium.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You cannot discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Natural Attacks. You have proficiency with your horns, which deal 1d6 piercing damage.

Charge. If you move at least 10 feet toward a target and hit it with a horn attack in the same turn, you deal an extra 1d6 piercing damage and you can shove the target as a bonus action. You can apply this extra damage once per turn.



At 11th level, when you successfully shove a creature with Charge, you can push it 10 feet instead of 5. You can use this ability a number of times equal to your Constitution modifier, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Labyrinth Sense. You can retrace any path you have previously taken without a check.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Minotaur, as well as one other language of your choice (typically the Trade Tongue or Southern languages).

Backgrounds. Minotaurs in the Southlands are natural survivors and commonly have the Guild Artisan, Outlander, Sailor, and Soldier backgrounds.

TOSCULI (HIVELESS)

The tosculi are known to most humanoids in the Southlands as a danger to be either avoided or destroyed. They are alien beings, operating under a shared consciousness and most often hostile to (or at best uncaring toward) all but their own hive-mates. Their hive cities are

run with a ruthless efficiency and ruled by fearsome queens; any that do not conform to the hive's society, mentally or physically, are destroyed or driven out. Those that follow the Archdevil Arbeyach are even more draconian.

However, some tosculi drones do not fit seamlessly into the well-tuned social mechanics of the hive. They resist the orders of the queen and thoughts of the hive mind. Others are physically unsuitable to the tasks for which they were bred. Whatever the reason, they do not conform, and nonconformity is not abided in tosculi society. Renegades who are not killed are driven out or flee.

Known as the Hiveless, these outcasts attempt to thrive in a world where they are feared and reviled, making their way as best they can.

TOSCULI (HIVELESS) TRAITS

Your tosculi character has several special traits.

Ability Score Increase. One of your physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution) increases by 2, and one of your mental ability scores (Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma) increases by 2. You also take a -2 penalty to any one ability score. You may apply this penalty to the same ability score to which you gave a +2 bonus, granting you an overall +2 bonus to any one ability score.

Age. Tosculi reach maturity at around 13 years, but have shorter lifespans than most races with few living longer than 40 years.

Alignment. The tension between tosculi and other humanoids often makes it difficult for the Hiveless to develop any true sense of altruism toward others, and many are neutral in alignment, with good tosculi being rare, and evil ones more common. Hiveless tosculi are equally likely to be chaotic, lawful, or neutral.

Size. Hiveless tosculi are no more than 4 feet tall and typically weigh less than a humanoid of the same size. Your size is Small.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Natural Armor. Your Armor Class cannot be less than 11 + your Dexterity modifier no matter what armor you are wearing.

Natural Attacks. You have proficiency with your claws, which deal 1d4 slashing damage.

Gliding Wings. You take no damage from falls. You gain a fly speed of 40 feet but cannot hover. At the end of any round you fly, you must have descended at least one-quarter the distance you traveled or you fall.

Stalker. You have proficiency in the Perception skill and Stealth skill.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Tosculi and one other language of your choice (typically Southern).

ALTERNATE RACIAL TRAITS

Binding Spittle. As an Attack action, you may spit a ball of viscous fluid at a target within 60 feet that is

Medium or smaller. Make a ranged attack against the target with proficiency. If successful, the fluid hardens upon impact and the target becomes restrained. As an action, the target can make a Strength check against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier to remove the condition. Anyone adjacent to a creature restrained by binding spittle may use their action to free the target in the same way. Dealing an amount of bludgeoning damage equal to half your level plus your Constitution modifier (AC 10) to the spittle also frees the target. After you use binding spittle, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest. This trait replaces the Stalker trait.

Bite. Some hiveless tosculi develop the fierce mandibles associated with the warriors that defend their hives. You can make a bite attack as an unarmed strike that deals 1d6 slashing damage. On a successful hit with a bite, you may attempt to grapple the target as a bonus action. At 11th level, your bite damage increases to 2d6. This trait replaces the Stalker trait.

Latent Hive Mind. You know the *message* cantrip. This cantrip is a psionic ability that does not require components. The cantrip also functions in a *silence* spell.



At 3rd level you can cast the *detect thoughts* spell once, without the need for components, and you regain the ability to do so when you finish a long rest. This trait replaces the Gliding Wings trait.

Hardened Carapace. Some hiveless tosculi develop additional defenses at the cost of offensive ability. Your Armor Class cannot be less than 11 + your Constitution modifier + your Dexterity modifier no matter what armor you are wearing. This trait replaces the Gliding Wings and Natural Armor traits.

NEW TOSCULI CLASS ARCHETYPES

Tosculi are born with an unshakable sense of purpose and belonging because of the golden song of the hive queen. Those few, sad wretches who cannot hear the song must struggle to overcome the ever present void within themselves. To that end, hiveless tosculi have access to the following variant class paths for Druid and Ranger. Tosculi characters follow their class progressions normally, but replace several class features for the variants described below.

Variant Druid: Circle of the Hive (Circle of the Land)

Hiveless druids turn to their connection to nature to fill the void within themselves. This variant Circle of the Land druid creates an echo of the golden song by reaching out to the memory of the hive, and shaping magic with that

memory. The so-called Circle of the Hive druids gain access to the Hive land for their Circle Spells class feature.

HIVE

Druid Level	Circle Spells
3rd	<i>spider climb, web</i>
5th	<i>conjure animals, fly</i>
7th	<i>freedom of movement, giant insect</i>
9th	<i>contagion, insect plague</i>

Vermin's Ward

At 10th level, you become immune to poison and disease. In addition, you ignore movement restrictions caused by webbing and gain advantage on saving throws against being restrained. This ability replaces Nature's Ward.

Variant Druid: Circle of the Swarm (Circle of the Moon)

Hiveless tosculi who join the Circle of the Moon have their own way of coping with their renegade status. Their shape-shifting powers create a false hive song within. This allows the Circle of the Swarm druid to access creature shapes unavailable to druids of other races.

Insectoid Forms

Your wild shape feature works as the Circle of the Moon's Circle Forms with the following changes.



NOT JUST A WEAPON

One of the things about the newest edition's ranger that has disappointed fans of the animal companion classes is the lack of support for interactions outside of combat. With only one sentence mentioning your beast doing the best it can to obey commands, the options for building a fully developed NPC, friend, and heroic counterpart are left vague, with an unfortunate focus placed on the animal as primarily a weapon.

Though some DMs are happy to let that vague direction run wild in their game, others may be concerned that allowing a chimpanzee companion to pick a pocket steps too far into the arcane trickster's territory, threatening game balance. For hiveless tosculi, the bond to an animal companion is an integral part of their psyche, filling a void created from the absence of hundreds, if not thousands of voices. This bond is more than a handy weapon, it is a connection that supports the tosculi in a way even decades-long friendships can't.

DMs and players should work together to create interesting and meaningful relationship dynamics between a PC, their animal companion (or familiar), and their party. When deciding what a companion can do, it's important to assume, 1) that the animal is smarter than an average member of their species

(despite its listed Intelligence score) and, 2) that the PC can communicate with their companion through hand signals, a unique training language, clicks, whistles, or other means that is personal to the pair.

Companions should be able to perform basic tasks such as scouting, retrieving items, ambushing, protecting NPCs, guarding locations, etc., without requiring rolls or spells. More complex tasks, such as retrieving a specific colored gem from a certain room deep in a castle may require a skill check or *Speak with Animals* spell, but such restrictions should be reserved for the most difficult requests.

Encourage relationship dynamics between other party members by creating connections in a way that makes the potential loss of a companion an emotional event for everyone, not only the PC. A Hivemaster's wolf spider may adore the party halfling, but despise its drow. A ranger's hawk may have staring contests with the party fighter, while putting dead animals in the bed of the wizard as a sign of affection.

Characters from fiction and comics with companion animals have relationships far deeper than of ranger and attack action. They are partners, friends, siblings, protectors, even a part of each other's spirit. They are each the heroes of their own story, but together they are legends.

Your choice of forms is limited. You may use Wild Shape to change into any insectoid, arachnid, or similar beast (such as a crab), though you must still have seen the creature to do so. In addition, you gain access to the following list of non-standard forms (you must follow the same CR and ability restrictions as outlined in Circle Forms): ankheg, carrion crawler, death wasp (use wyvern stats), giant rhinoceros beetle (use triceratops stats), and swarm of insects (all variants). Other insectoid forms may be available at your DM's discretion.

Monstrous Wild Shape

At 10th level, you can expend two uses of Wild Shape at the same time to transform into a bullette, chuul, phase spider, or umber hulk. This ability replaces Elemental Wild Shape.

VARIANT RANGER: HIVEMASTER (BEAST MASTER)

Unable to form a connection with others of its kind, the hivemaster finds kinship with insects of the natural world, forming bonds with them and gaining the ability to rouse them against their enemies.

Hivemaster rangers parallel the Beast Master archetype, though they have a more specialized list of companions to choose from.

Insect Companion

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain a trained beast companion that accompanies you on your adventures and fights alongside you. You must select your companion from the following list: blood hornet or wasp (use flying snake stats), giant crab, giant centipede, giant wolf spider, or swarm of insects. At the DM's discretion other insectoid beasts may be suitable companions, but none should have a challenge rating higher than 1/4 (the swarm of insects is an exception to this restriction).

You form a limited hive-mind that allows you to communicate telepathically with your insect companion, as long as it is within 100 feet. You can issue commands to your companion verbally, or telepathically.

In all other ways this ability is identical to the Beast Master's standard Beast Companion ability.

WERELION

Werelions are humanoids with the ability to turn into lions and lion-humanoid hybrids. Powerful warriors and canny hunters, these lycanthropes prowl warm grasslands or snow-capped mountains seemingly content in the superiority of their way of life.

PLAYING A WERELION

Werelions are supremely proud individuals who view themselves as superior to everyone they meet, including other weres. Their combination of cunning, stealth, and power gives them a sometimes foolhardy confidence which infuses everything they do.

Male werelions tend to court conflict as a way to establish dominance. Hierarchy is extremely important as

it indicates where the individual stands in relation to the pride; a social dynamic that extends to werelions traveling with non-werelions as well. Ever ambitious, male werelions will instigate differences of opinion, arguments and physical contests as a way to test themselves and attempt to raise their standing in the group. This rarely results in actual combat or injury. In the pride, male werelions are primarily responsible for protecting the group against threats, though they do hunt as well. The strongest of the alpha males is called the Tau, but he does not "rule" the pride as such. Most important decisions are made by the females.

Unlike their male counterparts, female werelions take a more egalitarian approach, gravitating toward cooperation to overcome obstacles or foes. Where the male werelions tend to view themselves as individuals, female werelions see the advantages in equality. In a pride, every female is more or less equal. They are the primary hunters as well as caretakers of the young. When situations call for the female werelions to command, discipline or confront one of the males (even the Tau), they do so as a group, presenting a unified front against which no male ever succeeds.

Loyalty to the pride or group is hard-wired into all werelions regardless of gender. It is fine for a werelion to bully his or her pridemate, but heaven help an outsider who attempts to do the same.

Werelions favor gods of animals, freedom, magic, the hunt, nobility, and glory. They count among their members a special kind of inquisitor known as a ndau, a divine hunter who consumes the essence of her prey.

WERELION TRAITS

Natural werelions are human in appearance but are natural shapechangers, able to assume a hybrid leonine form and the form of a lion. Your character possesses the following traits.

Ability Score Increase. Your Wisdom score increases by 2, and your Strength score increases by 1.

Age. Although human in both appearance and origin, werelions' lycanthropic physiology allows them to live several decades longer than humans.

Alignment. Naturally rebellious, werelions often leave familial prides when they come of age. Although passionate about family, werelions are fiercely independent. The average werelion is neutral in alignment, balancing personal freedom with dedication to their pride.

Size. In humanoid form, natural werelions appear to be strong, muscular humans with long, thick hair, and fluid, graceful movements. Your size is Medium in your humanoid and hybrid forms, but may be Medium or Large in your lion forms.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You cannot discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.



OPTIONAL LYCANTHROPIC RESISTANCES

The werelions of the Pathfinder Southlands gain significant natural armor bonuses (+5) as well as damage reduction (DR 10/silver) at higher levels by taking a racial level. There are no rules for racial levels in 5th edition, so granting a PC race the same resistances to damage possessed by afflicted lycanthropes makes them quite powerful. If you would like the werelions in your campaign to have these resistances, you can use the following optional racial traits.

Resistances. While in hybrid or lion form, you gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that are not silver.

Vulnerabilities. While in hybrid or lion form, you gain vulnerability to damage from weapons made of silver.

It's important to note that this option makes werelion PCs quite powerful during low-level games when both magic and silver weapons are extremely rare, while at higher levels, any villain who can afford silvered weapons for their henchmen becomes a serious, possibly deadly, threat.

Keep in mind that both gold and magic are significantly rarer in 5th edition than in previous editions. Silvering weapons costs an additional 100gp over the weapon's normal cost, which is not an insignificant expense even at higher levels. Major villains may supply silvered weapons to their lieutenants, and perhaps a limited amount of silvered ammunition to lesser minions, but not every opponent in your games should have access to the amount of silver and the skill required to create these weapons en masse.

Providing too much silver to your PC's opponents may discourage your werelion from shapeshifting at all at higher levels, effectively removing one of their key racial abilities, so do so with caution.



Natural Shapechanger. Natural werelions possess the magical ability to assume two alternate forms—the hybrid leonine and the lion. As an action, you can change into either your hybrid leonine form or your lion form. You can remain in this form for 1 hour, reverting to your humanoid form when the time expires, you fall unconscious, you drop to 0 hit points, or you die.

You can revert to your humanoid form early as a bonus action. Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you finish a short rest.

Hybrid Form. In your hybrid leonine form you grow sharp teeth and claws, and take on a more intimidating feline appearance. In this hybrid form you may use weapons, wear armor, and carry equipment normally. Your base walking speed increases to 40 feet. You have proficiency with your claws and bite. Your claws deal 1d4 slashing damage, and are considered light weapons. Your bite deals 1d4 piercing damage.

In addition, you gain advantage on Charisma (Intimidate) checks, and Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell. You gain disadvantage on Intelligence checks and all other Charisma checks.

Lion Form. You may assume the form of a young lion (use the stat block for the panther) as if using the druid's Wild Shape class feature. Unlike that feature, you retain your own hit points between forms. At 8th level you instead assume the form of a full-grown lion when you use this ability.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Southern and Sylvan.



LYCANTHROPIC SORCEROUS ORIGIN HYBRID FORM

At 1st level, choose one of the following beasts: bear, big cat, rat, or wolf. As an action you assume the form of an animalistic humanoid with features similar to your chosen beast, growing fur, a long snout, bestial eyes, and either razor-sharp claws or teeth. You may maintain this form for 1 hour, or until you use a bonus action to revert to your normal form, fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or die. Once you use this ability, you may not use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

While in hybrid form, you gain the following benefits:

Bear. You gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell and on Strength checks. You can make attacks with your claws and bite. Your claws deal 1d4 slashing damage, and your bite deals 1d4 piercing damage.

Great Cat. You gain darkvision to a range of 60 feet. You gain advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. You can make attacks with your claws, which deal 1d4 slashing damage and are considered light weapons.

Rat. You gain darkvision to a range of 60 feet. You gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell. You may squeeze through spaces as if you were one size category smaller. You can make attacks with your bite, which deals 1d4 piercing damage.

Wolf. You gain advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on either hearing or smell. You also gain advantage on any checks made to track. You can make attacks with your bite, which deals 1d4 piercing damage.

No Hide Too Tough

At 6th level, you may spend 1 sorcery point to increase the damage die of your natural weapons by 1 step while you

are in your hybrid form (or beast form once you reach 14th level). You may also choose one of the following qualities to apply to your natural weapons: magic or silver. This enhancement lasts until the next time you change forms.

If you have the ability to take on a beast or hybrid form from another source such as your race, you may use this ability to affect the natural weapons of that form. Using this ability a second time allows you to change the special quality applied to your natural weapons, but does not further increase their damage.

In addition, while in your hybrid form (or beast form once you reach 14th level), you may communicate with members of your chosen beast's species as if under the effects of the *speak with animals* spell.

Beast Form

At 14th level, as an action you may spend 3 sorcery points to take on the form of your chosen beast: brown bear, lion (or tiger), giant rat (or rat), or dire wolf. You may stay in this form for a number of hours equal to half your sorcerer level, or until you fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or die. This feature otherwise functions as the druid wild shape class feature.

Leader of the Pride

At 18th level, you exude an arcane presence that beasts recognize and respect. When a beast attacks you, it must make a Wisdom saving throw against your sorcerer spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature must choose a different target, or the attack automatically misses. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours. The creature is aware of this affect before it attacks you.

In addition, you may spend 4 sorcery points to cast *dominate beast* as a 4th level spell. For each additional sorcery point you spend you increase the spell's level by 1.





BACKGROUNDS

One of the new rules introduced in 5th edition is the Background. Where once your main choices during character generation were race and class, the background becomes the third integral part of your character's build.

Backgrounds grant two skill proficiencies, two tool kit proficiencies or bonus languages, and a list of starting equipment. This ranks with classes that typically offer two skill proficiencies as well (more for certain classes like bards and rogues). In addition, your background grants a special feature that is largely roleplaying related. For example, if you have the Noble background, you are rarely bothered no matter what part of town you're in; people assume you are supposed to be wherever you are. You can also gain an audience with a minor noble with little trouble.

Backgrounds allow players to easily build characters that may have been a challenge in previous editions. For example, if you are a pious fighter who spent much of her pre-adventuring life as a temple guard, you can take the Acolyte background and get training in skills like Religion and Insight that aren't commonly associated with fighters. Or with the Criminal background, your fighter gains proficiency with Stealth and thieves' tools as well as access to criminal contacts, echoing the skills of a rogue without losing the fighter's front-line effectiveness.

Backgrounds are also an excellent mechanic to present the flavor of your campaign world—similar to regional traits in Pathfinder. Backgrounds are meant to be fairly general and applicable to a range of settings, while being flexible enough to mix and match the proficiencies and special features to create the character you want. If the previously mentioned temple guard worships a god of war or death, you can substitute the Intimidation proficiency for Insight without unbalancing the build.

Below we present a number of backgrounds that are particularly useful when creating characters for the Southlands. Temple Slaves, Siwali Travelers, and Burntenders echo the unique aspects of the Southlands, yet with a name change or skill swap, these versions will be useful in a range of campaign settings.

CHILD OF THE DIVINE

More than a mere acolyte, you were raised in a temple, acknowledged as the child of a god or mighty archangel. You act as a conduit between the Heavens and the Earth, and devout followers see your words as the edicts of the divine, whether true or not.

Choose a god, angel, devil, or other quasi-divine being active in your campaign world. Followers of your church or pantheon see you as a direct descendent of that being.

Although aasimar and tieflings are the most common recipients of this background, a member of any race can be a child of the divine.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion, Religion

Tool Proficiencies: Any one musical instrument

Languages: Enochian

Equipment: A holy symbol, a prayer book or prayer wheel, 5 sticks of incense, vestments, a set of fine clothes, and a belt pouch containing 5 gp

Feature: Word of God

In addition to the ability to perform the ceremonies of your deity, your words are taken as divine truth by the followers of your religion. You and your adventuring party 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. Other followers of your religion will provide shelter and food for you and your companions at your request.

When in a social interaction with a follower of your believed parent, your words are taken as truth unless directly opposed to the accepted edicts of the church or organization. While within a city or region that worships your parent, it is

assumed that wherever you are, you are meant to be there. While within a city or region that worships a god or pantheon other than your parent, your presence will often be questioned even if you have permission to be there.

Suggested Characteristics

Children of the Living God are shaped by their childhood experiences. Whether or not they are actually the child of a divine or other-planar being is irrelevant to the perceived truth. They may believe in their divine heritage, expressing condescending attitudes or benevolent humility. Their flaws may include not believing the stories about their history and secretly fearing the eventual revelation of their mortality.

D8 PERSONALITY TRAITS

- 1 I idolize my ancestor and constantly refer to their deeds and example.
- 2 I can find common ground between the fiercest enemies, empathizing with them and working toward peace.
- 3 I see omens in every event and action. My ancestor is always speaking to us, I simply need to listen.
- 4 I quote (and misquote) sacred texts and proverbs in almost every situation.
- 5 I am tolerant (or intolerant) of other faiths and respect (or condemn) the worship of other gods or pantheons.
- 6 I've enjoyed all the spoils life has to offer, from fine food and drink to high society. Rough living is for the common.
- 7 I've spent so long in the temple that I have little practical experience dealing with ordinary people.
- 8 I question all acts of altruism or charity as steps others use to manipulate.

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 strive bring about the changes that the gods wish to impose on the world. (Chaotic)
- 4 **Power.** I expect others of my faith to follow my word, and those not of my faith to see the wisdom in my leadership. (Lawful)
- 5 **Faith.** I trust that my actions are guided by my divine heritage and that if I don't understand something, all will eventually be revealed. (Lawful)
- 6 **Aspiration.** I work to prove myself worthy of my god's trust and actions, whether or not I am truly their child. (Any)



BRYAN SYME

D6 BOND

- 1 Recovering a lost relic or artifact of my faith will prove I am the hand of my ancestors.
- 2 I owe my life to the priest who found me and raised me to be a symbol of our faith.
- 3 Everything I do is for the people my ancestor created.
- 4 I will do anything to protect the temple in which I was raised.
- 5 I am driven to protect ancient and sacred texts my enemies see as heretical and seek to destroy.
- 6 I have found a mortal love that my position denies me.

d6 FLAW

- 1 I don't believe the stories told about me, but see the good my presence does to my community. I cannot let anyone know my doubts.
- 2 I put too much trust in those who wield power in my religion'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 those not of my faith and expect the worst of them.
- 6 Once I believe my god has laid a goal before me, I will stop at nothing to achieve it.

TEMPLE SLAVE

In your youth, you served as a temple slave. While you paid your debt and regained your freedom, the experience gave you knowledge that serves you still.

You are well versed in the religious views of the temple and have spent your life reading the needs and intentions of your keepers.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Religion

Tool Proficiencies: Any one artisan tool (except Alchemist's supplies) or musical instrument

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: A small knife, a religious text or holy symbol (either given or stolen), a set of artisan's tools or musical instrument (practical, but of poor quality), a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: *Servant's Grace*

You are skilled in being unseen in a crowded room. Your mannerisms and skills allow you to enter areas typically limited to servants, craftsmen, and those of lower societal standing. Servants and paid help see you as one of them and will be more likely to gossip with you than other members of your party.

Suggested Characteristics

Former slaves may either resent their previous position, constantly trying to prove they have earned their freedom, or believe they will always be lesser than others with greater accomplishments or heritage. Those who have earned their freedom may strike out at bullies and slavers, or use their well-earned skills at reading body language to diffuse violence before it starts.

D8 PERSONALITY TRAITS

- 1 I judge people by their actions, not their words.
- 2 I have no tolerance for bullies.
- 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 Action is for other people; thoughtful words have kept me alive more often than a sword.
- 7 I listen before I speak.
- 8 I have spent enough of my life serving others; it is time for others to serve me.

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 deserve.
- 5 **Sincerity.** There's no good pretending to be more than I am. (Neutral)
- 6 **Aspiration.** I've always worked hard to be the best I am at what I do; I don't intend to stop now that I'm free. (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 only survived my ordeal because of a mentor who taught and protected me. I will see them freed.
- 3 My master and his higher servants beat me for the slightest error, as well as for fun. 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 what I rose above.
- 5 I protect those who cannot protect themselves.
- 6 The memories of my home and family kept me alive and I will do anything to either return to them or avenge their passing.

D6 FLAW

- 1 My freedom wasn't legally earned and my master will stop at nothing to put me back in chains.
- 2 I have taken too well to freedom, indulging in all the vices available to me.
- 3 I sometimes believe my life as a slave was easier than a life of choice and free will.
- 4 I have trouble trusting my allies.
- 5 My life as a slave is something I will never willingly tell another, especially those I respect.
- 6 I secretly want whatever power or title it takes to have slaves myself.

SIWALI TRAVELER

You traveled the sands of the deserts as a youth, with the camel trains, as part of a sandship crew, or in a caravan.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Navigator's tools, Vehicles (land)

Equipment: A staff, a set of traveler's clothes, waterskin, several small pouches of herbs and spices, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Worldly

You know the local deserts, their cultures, and the customs of those people. You know where and when nomadic tribes typically pass through certain areas, which tribes claim which oasis at what time of year, and where food and water can likely be found (though no guarantee).

You also have one trade contact with a group or individual outside of your tribe. This contact may be friendly, or barely tolerated, but trade between rival camps is a necessity for survival in the harsh

environments. You know when and where this contact will be at any time of year, and can send messages to this contact even over great distances; you know the local messengers, caravan masters, and runners who can carry messages for you.

Suggested Characteristics

Siwali tradesmen and caravanners travel among the great cities of the Southlands, carrying dates, rare flowers, spices, salt, herbs, and other trade goods. Adventurers with this background are used to a range of cultures, languages, and laws and are typically a curious lot. Wanderlust swings from one extreme to the other—you either become anxious and antsy staying in one town or city for more than a few weeks, or you have tired of life on the open road and long for a permanent home, friends, and family.



D8	PERSONALITY TRAITS
1	I'm driven by a wanderlust that led me away from home.
2	I'm rude to people who lack my commitment to hard work and fair play.
3	I don't part with my money easily and will haggle tirelessly to get the best deal possible.
4	I am utterly serene; panic won't protect you from a sandstorm.
5	My friends know they can rely on me; teamwork is survival in a caravan.
6	I never pass up a friendly wager.
7	Don't let the truth get in the way of a good story.
8	I judge people by their actions, not their words.

D6	IDEAL
1	Freedom. Everyone should be free to travel and to pursue their own destiny. (Chaotic)
2	People. I'm committed to the people I care about, not to ideals. (Neutral)
3	Greed. I'm only in it for the money. (Evil)
4	Fairness. Order, teamwork, and fair treatment are the foundations of caravan survival. (Lawful)
5	Live and Let Live. Trade is trade; imposing your beliefs and traditions on others only leads to trouble. (Neutral)
6	Aspiration. Someday I will own my own caravan and be an example to traders everyone. (Any)

D6	BOND
1	Nothing is more important than the other members of my caravan.
2	I owe my life to the trader who raised me after my family died.
3	I long for the days when I can travel to my love's home settlement. If only they had my love of the open road.
4	I was once cheated out of my fair share of profits and I'll get what's due me.
5	The caravan itself is the most important thing — masters, guards, and servants come and go.
6	I joined the caravans to avoid those who may still be hunting me. One day, I will be ready to confront them.

D6	FLAW
1	Gossip shatters bonds built by action. I don't talk, I do.
2	Life is lonely on the road. I have an insatiable desire for the pleasures of civilization.
3	I'll do anything to get my hands on something rare or priceless.
4	No one can know I once stole from the caravan; betrayal on the road means death by eviction.
5	I have trouble keeping my thoughts to myself; my tongue often lands me in trouble.
6	I am suspicious of strangers and always think the worst of them.

SOLDIER: QUARTERMASTER

Not every soldier is meant for the frontlines. Armies require a range of skills and proficiencies to operate effectively. Although you spent time in the military, you worked as a quartermaster more than a warrior, purchasing, supplying, and acquiring whatever was needed to keep the warriors fed, clothed, healthy, armed, and even entertained.

Skill Proficiencies: Persuasion, Investigation

Tool Proficiencies: Forgery kit, or any one artisan tool or gaming set

Languages: Any one of your choice

Equipment: An insignia of rank, three trinkets from the trinket table, a gaming set, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Beg, Barter, or Trade

The military can't expect the best supplies to arrive in time, it must often make do with what's available. Luckily they had you on their side. You make it a habit of being prepared for as many situations as possible.

Once per day, you may search your gear for any piece of adventuring gear, any weapon, or any tool worth 2 gp or less. When you are in a settlement, or when dealing with a caravan, tribe, or other group willing to trade, sell, or barter, the value of the item increases to 5 gp. You do not need to pay the gold piece value of the item; it is assumed you can barter or trade for it from other minor items in your inventory.

Your DM may allow you to use this ability to make either a Persuasion check or Investigation check to barter for gear or tools worth up to 50 gp, though you must pay at least half the value of the item, and possibly much more depending on the rarity of the item and who owns it. The recommended DC for these checks is 10 for cities, 15 for large settlements or trade caravans, 20 for small settlements or small groups of travelers, and 25 or higher for isolated nomadic groups or communities.

Suggested Characteristics

Although quartermasters rarely see the extent of war's horrors reserved for front-line warriors, they see the consequences all too well. Even after leaving service a quartermaster may find themselves preparing for the worst situations, some becoming packrats, others making sure everything they own can be carried on nothing more than a packmule.

D8 PERSONALITY TRAITS

- 1 I'm always polite and respectful.
- 2 I believe anything worth doing is worth doing right.
- 3 I'm condescending to those I see as not willing to work for their livelihood.
- 4 I'm always looking for the unusual, or for uniquely helpful items.
- 5 I don't part with money easily and will haggle for the best possible deal.
- 6 Soldiers can be both the best and the worst people in the world, but those who haven't been on the battlefield have a hard time earning my respect.
- 7 I love sharing stories about the places I've traveled and the cultures I've encountered.
- 8 I can only relax after I've prepared for the worst.

D6 IDEAL

- 1 **Respect.** I've seen entire countries at their best and their worst. All deserve respect. (Good)
- 2 **Organizational.** My job is to predict needs before they even know they're needed. (Lawful)
- 3 **Cultural.** Understanding where you are and with whom you're dealing with is the key to both success and survival. (Neutral)
- 4 **Acquisition.** Possessions belong in the hands of those that need it, whatever the cost to the previous owner. (Evil)
- 5 **Independence.** If I've learned anything from war, it's that unquestioned orders lead to innocent casualties. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Behind the Curtain.** I support those who can make the greatest change in the world. (Any)



D6	BOND
1	I would lay down my life for the people I serve with.
2	I once read about/saw an item I cannot stop thinking about, and will do anything to find.
3	I returned home to my family, and I will do anything to protect them.
4	I left a loved one behind in a country far away. Although we cannot be together, I will never forget them.
5	I should have died but my life was saved by a selfless act. I will make that act count.
6	War makes orphans and I returned from my travels with a youth I have sworn to raise as my own.

D6	FLAW
1	I'll never forget the comrades who died because of my mistake.
2	I scavenged an item from the battlefield and something about it haunts me to this day.
3	Orders are not to be questioned if given by one in proper authority.
4	I will do anything to acquire a rare object. Anything.
5	Of all the horrors I've seen, one monstrosity still haunts my every waking moment.
6	Authority must be questioned at every turn.

SOLDIER: GROOM/SQUIRE

No military officer, lord, or knight can attend war without the help of those often seen as lesser. Grooms are responsible for the general care of one or more animals of war, including feeding, armoring, cleaning, and even training. Squires are often the children of lords assigned to a knight or officer to learn the practicalities of war and the often-brutal consequences of failed negotiation. Squires tend to the animals, armor, weapons, equipment, and rations of their sire.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Insight

Tool Proficiencies: Calligrapher's, Cook's, Leatherworker's, Smith's, Tinker's, or Weaver's tools (choose one), Vehicles (land)

Equipment: A small knife, a set of artisan's tools, a set of common clothes (groom) or fine clothes (squire), groom's brush, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: *An Eye for the Best*

You are skilled at picking the strongest, most intelligent, and most trainable mounts, birds of prey, hunting dogs, and other domestic animals commonly used in war. Whenever you purchase or otherwise acquire a draft horse, camel, hawk, mastiff, mule, or riding horse from a selection of at least four of the same animal, that animal possesses the maximum hit points for its hit dice (i.e.: 9



for a mastiff, 3 for a hawk) and its Intelligence increases by 1 (to a maximum of 4). Your DM may allow this feature to apply to other animals depending on your race and the setting of your campaign. Some alternate creatures include bats, boars, elk, flying snakes, octopuses, panthers, ravens, giant frogs, giant lizards, giant wolf spiders, and wolves, though none should have a CR greater than 1/4.

Suggested Characteristics

Grooms are often conscripted into service or, more rarely, volunteer, and come from the ranks of the common folk of the area. After service, their deeds are often thankless and they are expected to return to their friends and family (if they are still alive). Adventurers who are grooms are often highly practical, sometimes scarred by their experiences, and find stronger companionship with animals than people, possibly because of the tendency of the latter to die in battle.

Squires join military ranks most often because of aristocratic obligation, but sometimes from a sense of personal honor. Adventurers who choose this background instead of the Soldier or Noble backgrounds did not see the glory they were after, or fulfill the obligations that were required of them—yet. They are often either bitter about their unfortunate lot, or driven to prove themselves in the field.

D8	PERSONALITY TRAITS
1	I've seen many soldiers, both allies and enemies. Trust me, animals are more reliable, loyal, and cleaner.
2	There is/was a soldier in whom I saw everything I wished to be in life.
3	Beasts are not fooled by flattery and neither am I.
4	Success and survival requires awareness and strength.
5	I know when to speak and when to listen. The latter is far more helpful than the former.
6	I will never be as heroic as the soldiers I've seen on the battlefield, but I will never stop trying to be.
7	I came from humble beginnings and will do anything to gain official recognition.
8	I work hard so I can play hard.

D6 IDEAL

- 1 **Loyalty.** Earning an animal's trust is often more difficult than a person's, and betraying it more lethal. (Lawful)
- 2 **Independence.** I must prove I can handle myself without the protection of my Lord. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Alpha.** Animals are tools to be broken, forged, and honed like any other. (Evil)
- 4 **Kindness.** Fear is only countered by grace. (Good)
- 5 **Nature.** War is a construct of culture. Balance is a construct of nature. (Neutral)
- 6 **Aspiration.** I work hard to become the best at what I do. (Any)

D6 BOND

- 1 The animals I train are my greatest allies.
- 2 The people I fight beside deserve my loyalty, as I deserve theirs.
- 3 I left my love at home when I went to war, but I have never forgotten it.
- 4 I will have my revenge on the forces that destroyed my home and my family.
- 5 I protect those who cannot protect themselves.
- 6 A soldier I admired gave me an item of great personal value and I will never let it out of my sight.

D6 FLAW

- 1 I have no respect for those who speak ill of soldiers.
- 2 I deserted my unit when it needed me most.
- 3 I have trouble trusting humanoids, even of my own race.
- 4 I sometimes forget to think before I speak.
- 5 I wander off on my own at inopportune moments.
- 6 New creatures fascinate me. Luckily, the less friendly ones haven't killed me yet.

SOLDIER: HEALER

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine, Nature

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalist kit, and either alchemist supplies or poisoner's kit

Equipment: A set of artisan's tools (one of your choice), insignia of rank, healer's kit, a scroll case containing medical notes, a small knife, a set of common clothes, and a belt pouch containing 5 gp

Feature: Field Surgeon

You are well versed in the origins of natural remedies and are trained to find the right plants, roots, flowers, or seeds required to restock your kits in the field. Once per day, you

may spend an hour searching the local terrain for natural remedies, or bartering for medicines and supplies in local settlements. After completing your search (or trade), you may restock your healer's kit with a number of uses equal to your proficiency modifier at no cost. How you organize your healing kit becomes personal and only those trained in the Medicine skill may use your kit if you are not present to direct them.

In addition, you may craft antitoxin vials and potions of healing using your herbalist's kit in half the normal time, i.e.: one every 5 days instead of one every 10 days.

Suggested Characteristics

Field surgeons see the aftermath of war in a way few, even other soldiers, are exposed to. That experience can crush your will, force you to develop a gallows humor inappropriate in polite society, or drive you to be the best at what you do, either from guilt or obligation.

d8 PERSONALITY TRAITS

- 1 I am calm even under the most violent of circumstances.
- 2 I am responsible for every life I see.
- 3 The horrors witnessed by soldiers are nothing compared to those cleaning up the mess.
- 4 The humanoid body is a mystery beyond magic and I want to unravel it.
- 5 Yes, I'm a healer; pray I don't need to use my skills on you.
- 6 I became a healer out of need, not training. Everything I know, I learned at the bloodiest university.
- 7 My experiences have reduced my bedside manner to sharp practicality.
- 8 No soldier, mage, or priest knows the body like I do, and they need to know it.

D6 IDEAL

- 1 **Responsibility.** Healing is not my job, it's my destiny. (Lawful)
- 2 **Greater Good.** My skills aren't for my own glory, but for the benefit of all. (Good)
- 3 **Immoral Experiments.** I will learn what I need by any means necessary. (Evil)
- 4 **Free Thinking.** Intellectual curiosity and public discourse are the cornerstones of civilization. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Knowledge.** Understanding is the ultimate goal of all medicine. (Neutral)
- 6 **Self-Improvement.** I will become the best I can at what I do. (Any)

D6	BOND
1	I was the personal physician to a lord to whom I will always be in debt.
2	I saved the life of an enemy soldier who offered me a life-debt.
3	I did my duty and returned to the family I love.
4	I have dragged wounded soldiers out of active melee and will do so again.
5	I brought home an orphan of war.
6	My people deserve the benefits of the skills I've learned.

D6	FLAW
1	I drink to forget. Gods help you if I'm your only choice to live.
2	Of course I'm bitter. The battle would have been lost without my skills and what thanks did I get?
3	I made a choice once between a noble I hated and a commoner deserving better. I will regret it forever.
4	I deserted after performing acts unworthy of a healer.
5	Clerics are simply the conduits of gods. I heal with nothing more than my head and hands. That's true power.
6	I will go to any lengths to learn more about humanoid bodies. Any lengths.

DESERT RUNNER

You are more than simply experienced in desert living, you thrive there. Your tribe has lived in the desert for centuries and you know more about living there than in civilized areas.

Skill Proficiencies: Perception, Survival

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalist kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Traveler's clothes, herbalist kit, waterskin, pouch with 10 gp

Feature: Nomad

Your life in the open desert has adapted your body to a range of environmental conditions. You may survive on 1 gallon of water in hot conditions (or 1/2 gallon in normal conditions) without being forced to make Constitution saving throws and you are considered "naturally adapted" to hot climates (see DMG pg. 110). You are also able to read the natural environment to predict natural weather patterns and temperatures for the next 24 hours, allowing you to cross dangerous terrain at the best times. The accuracy of these predictions are up to the DM, but should be largely reliable unless affected by magic or unforeseeable events such as distant earthquakes or volcanic eruptions.

Suggested Characteristics

Those raised in desert tribes can be the friendliest of humanoids, knowing that allies are better than enemies in that harsh environment, or territorial and warlike, believing that protecting food and water sources by force is the only way to survive.



D8 PERSONALITY TRAITS

- 1 I'm driven by wanderlust that led me away from home.
- 2 I watch over my friends as if they were a litter of newborn puppies.
- 3 I once ran twenty-five miles without stopping to warn my clan of an approaching horde. I'd do it again if I had to.
- 4 I have a lesson for every situation, drawn from observing the subtleties of desert life.
- 5 I place no stock in wealth or well-mannered folk. You can't trade money for rain, or ask an ankheg to let you pass.
- 6 I'm always picking things up, absently fiddling with them, and sometimes breaking them, accidentally of course.
- 7 I feel far more comfortable in the open than the crowded streets.
- 8 I was, in fact, raised by animals.

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 every man, woman, and child that came before me. (Lawful)
- 4 **Might.** The strongest are meant to rule. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Nature.** The natural world is more important than all the constructs of man and civilization. (Neutral)
- 6 **Glory.** I must earn glory in battle, for my clan, my ancestors, and myself. (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 and protect children to sustain my tribe and to honor the ancestors who gave me life.

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 my family, my clan, or I have ever received and nurse a silent resentment toward anyone who's ever wronged them or me.
- 4 I am slow to trust members of other races, tribes, or 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.









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