

Background Noise

Breath life into your character



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Second Rat Games

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Introduction

Welcome

Ultimately, it is our hope that this book will help you expand your role-playing and bring life to your characters that they previously lacked. Please let us know if you have any comments or thoughts at erik@secondrat.com.

How to Use This Book

The best use of this book is a springboard for your imagination. When all of the rolling is finished, you will find the character's past roughly detailed. From there, all you need to do is smooth everything out, play up any coincidences you find, and ignore anything that does not fit in your mind. The tables are there to help you, not dictate what you must play.

In addition to creating backgrounds from whole cloth, you can use the tables within to generate information needed on-the-fly. Looking for a title for a noble, or a strange event to occur in the past, simply choose the correct table and roll the dice.

One quick note, the tables are written with the assumption that the character is a generally good male individual in a fantasy world. Feel free to alter any of the results to better tailor them to your character.

Generating a Background

The process for generating a character is fairly straight forward. First, print out the Character Background form on the last page.

Then grab some percentile (d100) dice and turn to Table A. On top of each table are the instructions on how to use it and also what the results represent. After each table are the directions on where to go next. Follow those and your background will be built in no time.

Thanks.



51-53	Compound
54-60	Inn
61-63	Barracks
64	Jail
65-70	Hut
71-72	Homeless
73-79	Servant's quarters
80-84	Mansion
85-88	Castle
89-91	Tent city
92-94	Boat/Ship
95-98	Wagon
99	Treehouse
100	Sewers

94-98	Stable
99	Smithy
100	Hunting lodge

Finally, the character needs to determine his birth order and how many siblings he has.

Birth Order

Roll	Value
1-45	First born
46-70	Middle child
71-100	Youngest child

Proceed to table H.

Table H Birthplace

Everyone is born somewhere, and this is where the character was. Some people may apply certain superstitious beliefs upon a baby born in a strange location. It could be a premonition of great things to come or a warning of the terrible evil about to be unleashed.

Roll	Value
1-30	Home
31-40	Healers guild
41-45	Carriage
46-50	Barn
51-53	Cave
54-57	Field
58-60	Forest
61-66	Temple
67-68	Battlefield
69-72	Alley
73-74	Brothel
75	Palace
76	Creature's lair
77-79	Tavern/Inn
80-81	Sewers
82-83	Guildhall
84	Another plane
85-87	Ship
88	Prison
89	Wizards lab
90	On an altar
91	In a nest of a great bird
92-93	Kitchen

Once the birth order is determined, roll 1d6-1 to determine the number of siblings in the family. The die type could be modified if the race is notably prolific or barren (i.e., the Halflings of the world are known for multiplying like crazy so roll 1d10-1 while the elves are a dying race are reproduce rarely, so roll 1d4-1 for them). After the number of siblings is determined, roll for each of their sex.

Roll	Value
1-50	Male
51-100	Female

Proceed to section II, table I





- 64 Character has a climatic battle on the roof of a church or other major building in the city. This final battle was viewed by many and the character has become legendary in the town for this.
- 65 The character is surprisingly given custody of a small child. No one can adequately explain why the character is named guardian nor whose the child is.
- 66 The character meets one of his greatest heroes and is saddened to learn that this hero is nothing but a bully and a drunkard. The character leaves disillusioned.
- 67 One of the character's friend invites him to join a secret society. It is mostly a social club, but who knows what happens at the top level of the group.
- 68 The character discovers an amazing aptitude with maps. He is able to roughly sketch an accurate map of any area he has visited, almost as if he were looking down on it from on high.
- 69 Character does a short stint as a gate guard at the entrance to his home city. It was boring and uneventful, but he still has friends in the guard.
- 70 During a holiday celebration, the character helps some local orphans. News of his generosity spreads across the entire town, whether the character wants that reputation or not.
- 71 Character gains a reputation of being miserly, even if he is not.

- 72 Thanks to an early adventure, the character now owns a minor demon that was turned to stone.
- 73 Character has an unusual fascination with clocks and time keepers. He can build a wide variety of them, given materials and time.
- 74 While passing through a town, the character sees a young woman tied to a stake. The bundle of wood below her catches fire as she begins to burn to death. The character beats through the crowd and rescues the woman, thought to be a witch. They both escape into the night. She is very grateful for the rescue, but is she really a witch?
- 75 An imp or other similar small outsider decides that the character is a fun drinking buddy. Any time the character visits a tavern, the imp appears and hangs out with the character. Once he leaves the tavern, the imp disappears as well.
- 76 A failure at a previous adventure left the character turned into a mink for a period of three months. Eventually the character returned to his normal shape, but he occasionally has muscle ticks that reflect his time as a mink. The character also does not care for any kind of shape change.
- 77 Character became severely wounded out in the wilderness. His last memory before falling unconscious was an angelic figure bending over him. He came to and unknown number of days later in a church almost halfway across the country. His wounds were being tended and no one knows how he got there. He just appeared on the doorstep one day.
- 78 The character was sent out to attack a group of giants near a village. Rather than slaughter them, the character was able to start diplomatic talks between the giants and the village and soon a harmonious agreement was reached. The character is praised for his actions.
- 79 The character owed a debt to an underworld figure. The debt was called and the character helped someone break out of prison. The character knows nothing about the man he helped escape, but he is wracked with guilt about it.
- 80 For excitement, the character often participates in some kind of sporting combat like wrestling, boxing, etc. It is violent but rarely fatal.
- 81 The character discovers that the royal jewels of his country are actually fake. The fate of the originals is unknown as is when they were replaced. As far as he knows, the character is the only one with this knowledge.
- 82 One morning, the character wakes up to find a dead body in his room. He has no knowledge of how it got there and the only thing it has on its person is (see table GG).



Table U Bad Things

Into every life a little rain must fall. Unfortunately, now it is rainy in your character's life. Cheer up, it will get better (you hope).

Roll	Value
1-3	Imprisoned for a crime (see Table X)
4-6	Parents are imprisoned (see Table MM)
7-9	Place where the character lives is wiped out.
10-12	Character causes the death of someone (see Table DD and CC)
13-15	Family is wiped out
16-18	Sold into slavery (see Table W)
19-21	Character injured (see Table NN)
22-24	Character is cursed (see Table KK)
25-27	Character's relationship with family is severed
28-30	Forced into an unwanted marriage
31-34	Character loses all possessions in a catastrophe, fire, earthquake, volcano, dragon, etc.
35-37	There is a split in the character's guild or order and it eventually dissolves
38-40	Character is accused of a crime and flees the country (see Table MM)
41-43	A Family heirloom or important personal possession is stolen
44-47	Character is outlawed for political reasons and goes into hiding

48-50	The character's mother is killed by someone (see Table DD)
49-53	The character's father is killed by someone (see Table DD)
54-56	The character's parents are forced into slavery
57-60	Character's romantic interest leaves him
61-63	Character's romantic interest is unfaithful
64-66	Character's romantic interest dies
67-69	Character's romantic interest vanishes and has not been seen since
70-72	Character scarred from a disease
73-75	Character is disinherited by parents
76-78	Character is forced into a marriage with someone who hates him
79-81	Due to a misunderstanding, rumors fly about how unskilled the character is in his profession
82-84	The character has a very visible birthmark that makes others think he is cursed. (see Table II)
85-87	Someone is stalking the character and constantly leaves notes, hints, etc. to show that he can get to the character at any time.
88-90	Character develops a stutter and has a difficult time talking to people.
91-93	There is a killer on the loose who looks a lot like the character. Character is often mistaken for him.
94-96	Years after your saintly mother dies, your father marries a nasty hag with two sons/daughters of her own who she favors and makes your life a living hell.
97-100	Your father is a soldier for an expansionist country and your childhood memories are marked by one bloody battlefield after another.

Return to the table that sent you here.

Table V Military Events

Your character is in the army now. Enjoy the free room and board while you travel to exotic places and stand guard.

Roll	Value
1-3	Character involved in a brutal battle. Character fought poorly, drummed out of the military.
4-6	Character involved in a battle. Character was wounded and has some impressive scars to show for it.
7-9	Character involved in a battle. The horror causes the development of an exotic trait (see Table JJ)
10-12	Character involved in a battle. Character fought well.
13-15	Character involved in a battle. Character fought heroically. He saved the life of many comrades and was promoted.
16-18	Character involved in a battle. Captured and enslaved (see Table W)
19-21	Character involved in a battle. Decorated for heroics

Table JJ Exotic Traits

Your character is a little... let us just say he is special. It is not his fault, but he is harboring a particular quirk in his brain.

Roll	Value
1-5	Character has quite the Casanova complex and must flirt with anyone of the opposite sex he comes across.
6-10	Character has a traumatic experience and gains a phobia of something
11-15	Character has an allergy to a relatively common substance (mold, eggs, gold, silver, wool, etc)
16-20	Character becomes addicted to a substance such as wine, elderberries, tobacco, etc.
21-25	Character has an irrational need to be known for his exploits. He adopts some kind of behavior that marks his participation in events. This could be carving his initials into things, leaving a card or coin or other similar object, leaving one witness, etc.
26-30	Character is a great lover of food and drink. When options are available, he becomes picky as to what he will consume and will not stop eating or drinking until well past full.
31-35	Empathic. The character can always see things from the other side. This often throws him at odds with the rest of his group. He often plays devil's advocate.
36-40	Character enjoys pulling elaborate practical jokes, even if the timing is poor.
41-45	Cleanliness is next to godliness for this character. He is meticulous about his appearance and is very reluctant to get dirty.
46-50	Cleanliness is an accident. The character is slovenly in appearance and is not concerned about others opinions of his looks.
51-53	Animal lover. Character loves animals and will always stop to help one in need. Often he has a small creature somewhere with him.
54-55	Slow. While the character is by no means stupid, it does take a little longer for him to understand things.
56-60	Character has an idle skill that he does almost unconsciously. This could be something like whittling, humming, sketching, sign language, etc.
61-70	Attractive to members of the opposite sex. The character has an aura that makes him very desirable to members of the opposite sex, regardless of the characters appearance.
71-75	Character uses a particular figure-of-speech constantly in conversation.
76-80	Character is aggressive when he encounters a conflict.
81-85	Character is a born romantic and always sees the world through idealized eyes
86-90	Character covers up his adventuring by adopting a secret identity

91-100	The character has a second personality that occasionally manifests itself
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Return to the table that sent you here.

Table KK Curses

Someone wants something bad to happen to your character, so they call on the help of forces best left unseen. Your character is now saddled with a curse.

Roll	Value
1-5	Through no fault of their own, and no matter how often they wash, the character always smells
6-10	Character can move no faster than a walk
11-15	Character cannot tolerate the wearing of shoes
16-20	Character develops a stutter when talking to members of the opposite sex
21-25	Character is a weirdness magnet. If something unusual happens to the party, it almost always happens to the character.
26-30	Character cannot live for longer than one year in a single place before some tragedy forces them to leave.
31-35	Character seems untrustworthy to strangers. Often is blamed for incidents he had no part in
36-40	Character's skin changes to an unusual color.
41-45	Character's skin glows a pale white.
46-50	Gold touched to the skin of the character turns to lead.
51-55	When character sneezes, he teleports up to 5 feet away
56-60	Character is ordered by the king (or other leader) to provide an expensive birthday present for his daughter.
61-65	All of the character's possessions other than what he is carrying is lost to the crown or destroyed.
66-70	The character is forced into an unwanted marriage due to an unexpected pregnancy. The character might not even spent any time with his new betrothed, but that is how magic works sometimes.
71-75	The character is exiled from his home country on the pain of death if he ever returns.
76-80	Character gets a case of the hiccups that never goes away
81-85	Character's hair turns into non-venomous snakes
86-90	Character can speak only the truth
91-95	One body part of the character's becomes animal-like. Randomly choose an animal. The body part is chosen on the Birthmark/Tattoo table. (see Table II)
96-100	Character involuntarily insults and curses those he talks to.

Return to the table that sent you here.