

OPTIONAL BACKGROUNDS FOR RAVENLOFT CHARACTERS

Afraid Of The Dark

- Race/Gender: Humans and Halflings Only
- Description: You cannot stand to be in the dark. You stay constantly aware of your surroundings, peering into dim corners and dark shadows to see if something is there. While this has granted you a +4 bonus to listen and spot checks, you suffer a panic attack if you are in too dark an area. In near or total darkness, you are *shaken* (-2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws) unless you succeed at a Fear check (DC 15). Likewise, all other fear, horror, and madness checks are made at -2 while in near or total darkness. A halfling does not apply his racial bonus to fear on this check.

Agoraphobic

- Race/Gender: Humans, Dwarves, Gnomes, and Halflings Only
- Description: You are terrified of open spaces. As a child, you rarely went outdoors and spent your time reading and studying, gaining a +2 to Intelligence. You are fine if you are indoors or even in a thickly forested area, but if you go into an outdoor open area, you suffer a panic attack and are *shaken* (-2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws) unless you succeed at a Fear check (DC 15). Likewise, all other fear, horror, and madness checks are made at -2 while in such an open area. A halfling does not apply his racial bonus to fear on this check.

Apprentice To A Shopkeeper

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: Spending your whole childhood inside a shop, you gain a +2 bonus to Diplomacy and Appraise but all of your days counting inventory and haggling has hurt your fortitude (-2 to Fortitude saves).

Army Training

- Race/Gender: Humans Only
- Description: You received some Army training during your youth, but were discharged for having a trick knee. You gain a proficiency in a martial weapon of your choice, or the Weapon Focus feat in one martial weapon if you are already proficient. However, your knee sometimes acts up, causing you to suffer a -1 penalty to AC.

Arsonist

- Race/Gender: Human, Caliban
- Description: You like fire. No, you LOVE fire! Fire, fire, fire! You were always picked on as a kid for being scrawny (-2 Strength) but you showed them! You studied explosives and you burned their homes! Burned them to the ground! Ha, ha! (+5 to Alchemy checks to create alchemist's fire, gun powder, and tindertwigs. In your hands, oils and combustibles do 1 more point of damage per die.)

Beat with an Ugly Stick

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You are Ugly. There is just no other word for it, unless you consider hideous a better word. Children flee from you in terror and even the kindest of souls finds it difficult to stand your presence for long. As a result of your countenance, you take an extreme penalty to beauty (+8 to Outcast Rating) and have low self esteem (-2 to charisma) but, because you have to defend yourself from frequent attacks, you gain a bonus to Strength (+2), Dexterity (+2) and Constitution (+2).

Bookworm

- Race/Gender: All but Calibans
- Description: You have spent most of your life reading. You gain a bonus to Intelligence (+2). Unfortunately, your sedate lifestyle has left you out of shape (-2 Constitution).

Born Under a Sign

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You were born during an astronomical event. As a result, you get critical hits and misses less often (50% chance to nullify a critical roll), but they tend to be spectacular when you do (emphasize the fumbles and add 1 to all critical multipliers).

Charlatans Protege

- Race/Gender: All but Calibans
- Description: Having been convinced by a traveling salesman to become his apprentice, you've given up your life in the military academy you were enrolled in. You gain a major bonus to Bluff (+3), Appraise (+2), and Diplomacy (+2) but suffer a penalty to all of your attack rolls (-1).

Clanless Dwarf

- Race/Gender: Dwarves only
- Description: Your parents did not belong to a clan, and would not discuss the reasons why. You gain no dwarven bonus to stone metal related skills, but you do start with a masterwork dwarven hammer.

Dark Sight

- Race/Gender: Humans, & Halflings only
- Description: Your eyes are overly sensitive to light. You are nearly blind in daylight, but you can see almost perfectly in darkness. Thus, you gain Darkvision of 60 ft but suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to attack rolls, skills, and saves while in bright light.

Day Caster

- Race/Gender: All But Dwarves
- Description: You were born with a magical aptitude that has affinity for the sun. During the day (between the hours of 6 AM and 6 PM), your spells are cast as if you were 2 levels higher, but at night your spells are cast as if you were 2 levels lower.

Debutante

- Race/Gender: Females only
- Description: Your family is one of the most influential in all of <insert Domain here>. As a young debutante, you have a natural beauty and charm (+4 Charisma and +1 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Perform). Of course, the easy life has made you soft. You have penalties in Strength (-2) and all of your Combat Skills (-1 to hit).

Disenfranchised Gnome

- Race/Gender: Gnomes only
- Description: You are not a part of the Gnomish capitalist bourgeoisie and instead grew up as a day laborer. You suffer a significant penalty to Intelligence and Charisma (-2), but gain a bonus to Strength (+2).

Effeminate

- Race/Gender: Male only
- Description: As a little boy, you were always playing games with the girls. You have avoided the stereotypical male role in society. This background negates the gender effect by decreasing Strength (-2) while increasing Dexterity (+2) and Charisma (+2), but sadly, your Charisma bonus does not apply to interactions with males (they think you are gay).

Escaped Lunatic

- Race/Gender: Human Only
- Description: You have escaped from an insane asylum and are on the run. You are extremely resistant to damage (+2 to Con, +2 to saves versus damage causing effects) but you must pick or roll an Insanity from the Ravenloft sourcebook and play it to the hilt. Also, you must have escaped from a known mental asylum (like the one in Mordentshire) and will be a Wanted man or woman in that domain.

Extreme Personality

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You possess an extreme personality. People react more strongly to your presence, and tend to grow to either love or hate you. Whenever determining reactions with NPC's, flip a coin: heads, you apply your diplomacy modifier as usual, or tails, you apply your diplomacy modifier as a penalty. Reactions to your actions or deeds follow a similar vein.

Feral Child

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: As an infant, your parents abandoned you in the middle of the forest. Having been raised by a pack of wolves gives you a considerable bonus to Dexterity (+4) and Constitution (+2). But, oblivious to table manners, the rules of good society, and without an education, you receive a severe penalty to Intelligence (-4) as well as decreases in social skills (+6 Outcast rating).

Halfling Orphan

- Race/Gender: Halflings only
- Description: Abandoned in a large city as a child, you survived by stealing and never received any education. You gain the feats Stealthy (+2 to hide and move silently) and Harmless (+2 to Pickpocket and Bluff), but suffer a -2 to Intelligence.

Hydrophobic

- Race/Gender: Humans, Calibans, Dwarves, Gnomes, and Halflings Only
- Description: You are deathly afraid of water and of drowning. As a child, you constantly made up reasons to avoid entering even shallow water, gaining a +2 to Bluff. If you do find yourself in or very near water (on a small boat or near the railing of a large boat), you suffer a panic attack and are *shaken* (-2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws) unless you succeed at a Fear check (DC 15). Likewise, all other fear, horror, and madness checks are made at -2 while in or near water. A halfling does not apply his racial bonus to fear on this check.

Hyperactive

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You are constantly busy. You react faster than others, but most people find you annoying. You gain the Improved Initiative feat but suffer a +1 to your Outcast rating.

Lady's Man

- Race/Gender: Males Only
- Description: Women swoon whenever they are near you. Being unusually good-looking, you gain a large bonus to beauty (+6 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Perform vs. females). Unfortunately, all that primping has you lacking in the more manly virtues...you lose points in Constitution (-2), and Strength (-2) and suffer a -2 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information and Perform vs. males.

Mad Doctor

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You have performed numerous untested and dangerous medical experiments upon yourself but suffer from the adverse affects. You have gained +2 Intelligence, the Alertness feat (+2 to listen and spot), +4 to poison and electrical saves, and a +3 to the Heal skill but you suffer a -2 to Charisma, Dexterity and Constitution.

Magic Allergy

- Race/Gender: All but Elves and Half-Elves
- Description: You are severely allergic to magical items and effects, such that touching them causes you pain. Therefore, you have been devoted to technology since a young age and have developed a knack for it. You gain a +2 bonus to Alchemy, Craft, and Heal skills, and have Spell Resistance of 11+ your level, but you cannot willingly lower it, and you cannot wield ANY magical items. In addition, ongoing spell effects cause you intense pain (-2 Dexterity, -2 to attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks), but you do check for spell resistance each round. Instantaneous spells cause you pain for 1 round (see above).

Miracle Operation

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: Though born to a wealthy family as a young child, you mysteriously lost your sight. It was discovered that you had contracted a degenerative and always fatal disease. As blind child, your early development favored indoor activities and development befitting the wealthiest of society. You gained +2 to Intelligence and Charisma. Your senses of touch, hearing and smell increased to compensate for your blindness, resulting in a +2 to Listen, Knowledge (you were read to), and Alchemy skills (similar to the Gnome alchemy bonus for keen smell). However, you suffer physically, leading to -2 Strength, -2 Dexterity and -2 Constitution. As a young adult, your parents, out of desperation, paid for the services of a renown, if unorthodox physician, who miraculously restored your sight. The operation cost your family its fortune, so you set out to make your own.

Nature Caster

- Race/Gender: All But Dwarves
- Description: You were born with a magical aptitude that has affinity for nature. While standing on a natural surface your spells are cast as if you were 2 levels higher, but on a constructed or worked surface your spells are cast as if you were 2 levels lower.

Nietzsche Poster Child

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: Nietzsche once said "That which does not kill us makes us stronger", and he may have been referring to you. All your life you have been making mistakes, but you always seem to come out better afterwards. In other words, you critically fail more than normal (1 or 2) but you have a 10% experience point bonus.

Night Caster

- Race/Gender: All But Dwarves
- Description: You were born with a magical aptitude that has affinity for the night. At night (between the hours of 6 PM and 6 AM), your spells are cast as if you were 2 levels higher, but during the day your spells are cast as if you were 2 levels lower.

Only Child

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You grew up as the only child of very permissive parents, and you basically always got your own way. As an adult, you expect nothing less than total obedience from those around you, but your temperament makes people think you are a spoiled brat. You receive the Iron will feat (+2 to willpower saves) but suffer a -2 to Diplomacy and Gather Information checks.

Professional Knife Thrower

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You used to work as a knife thrower in a circus, until losing an eye in a freak accident. Sadly, you suffer a -3 to spot checks, but you gain Weapon Focus in dagger.

Raised By Monks

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: Piety has its advantages and disadvantages. You may cast up to 3 Clerical Orisons (0-level spells) per day, but your pacifistic upbringing makes you a less effective combatant (-1 to attack rolls).

Raised By Savage Calibans

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You were a runaway orphan, homeless and starving, when a Caliban family in the wilderness took you in and raised you. Their brutish ways have left you with increased Strength (+2), the Alertness feat (+2 to listen and spot), and a free Weapon focus or proficiency in a martial weapon. Unfortunately, your upbringing has also taken its toll on your personality and education. You have a penalty to Intelligence (-2) and a severe penalty to Charisma (-4).

Raised by Snake Handlers

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You receive a +4 bonus to poison saves, but suffer a penalty to your beauty (+1 Outcast rating) due to the large number of bite scars on your arms and legs.

Raised in the Pits

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: Being a veteran in the local pit fights, you gain a bonus to Strength (+2), Dexterity (+2) and Constitution (+2). The vicious combat has also taken a toll. You have suffered a severe head trauma and your social and worldly experiences have been lacking. You have penalties to Intelligence (-4), Wisdom (-4) and Charisma (-2).

Sent to Charm School

- Race/Gender: Elf, Half-Elf, and Human Females only
- Description: Instead of a general education, you were sent to charm school. You gain bonuses to both beauty and Charisma (+2 Charisma, +2 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Perform), but you lose points in both Intelligence (-2) and Strength (-2).

Sheltered Childhood

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You were cooed and coddled incessantly as a child. As a result of overprotective parenting, you are weak and very naïve, but you also have a healthy self esteem, a good personality, and have studied well (-2 Strength, -2 Wisdom, +2 Intelligence, +2 Charisma).

Sickly

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: Mother Nature can be a harsh mistress. Having been born with an extremely weak immune system, you have penalties to Strength (-2), and Constitution (-4), and Dexterity (-2) but all is not lost! Afternoons spent with a fever and good books have afforded you an unnaturally high Intelligence (+6), and you have the Education feat (all Knowledge skills are class skills, and +1 checks with two different Knowledge skills).

Sky Mage

- Race/Gender: All But Dwarves
- Description: You were born with a magical aptitude that has affinity for the open sky. While outside and in clear view of the sky, your spells are cast as if you were 2 levels higher, but while underground, indoors, or even under a heavy forest canopy your spells are cast as if you were 2 levels lower.

Sold Your Soul

- Race/Gender: Any
- Description: You have made a pact with the dark powers. In exchange for more magical power, you are living on borrowed time. You have the Spellcasting Prodigy feat (see FRCS page 38) but you have the drawbacks of a dark power (your benefit is the feat), and all dark power checks you make have their percentages doubled. That is, you are twice as likely to acquire dark powers.

Super Model

- Race/Gender: Female Only
- Description: You are a stunningly gorgeous woman, and you have been pampered and coddled all of your life. You gain a tremendous bonus to beauty (+6 to Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information and Perform vs. males). But let's face it, you are a bit ditzy, clueless, and while your body is in perfect shape, you know almost nothing about self-defense, having had no shortage men falling over themselves to protect you. You suffer a -2 to Intelligence, Wisdom, and -1 to all attack rolls.

Suppressed Orcish Looks

- Race/Gender: Calibans only
- Description: You do not really look very much like a Caliban, but your ability to blend in has made you privy to all manner of hidden bigotry, and you are very bitter. Your Outcast rating is only 3 (you are still not pretty), but you have a -4 to diplomacy and gather information checks when interacting with racist people, and your temper with racism is very short.

Tomboy

- Race/Gender: Female only
- Description: As a little girl, you were always playing games with the boys. As a woman, you can hold your own against any man, and you have avoided the stereotypical female role in society. This background negates the gender effect by increasing Strength (+2) while decreasing Dexterity and Charisma (-2).

Tough Hide

- Race/Gender: Calibans only
- Description: You were born with thick, brutish skin. Although you resist damage more than the average bloke (+2 Constitution), you are much less flexible than most (-2 Dexterity).