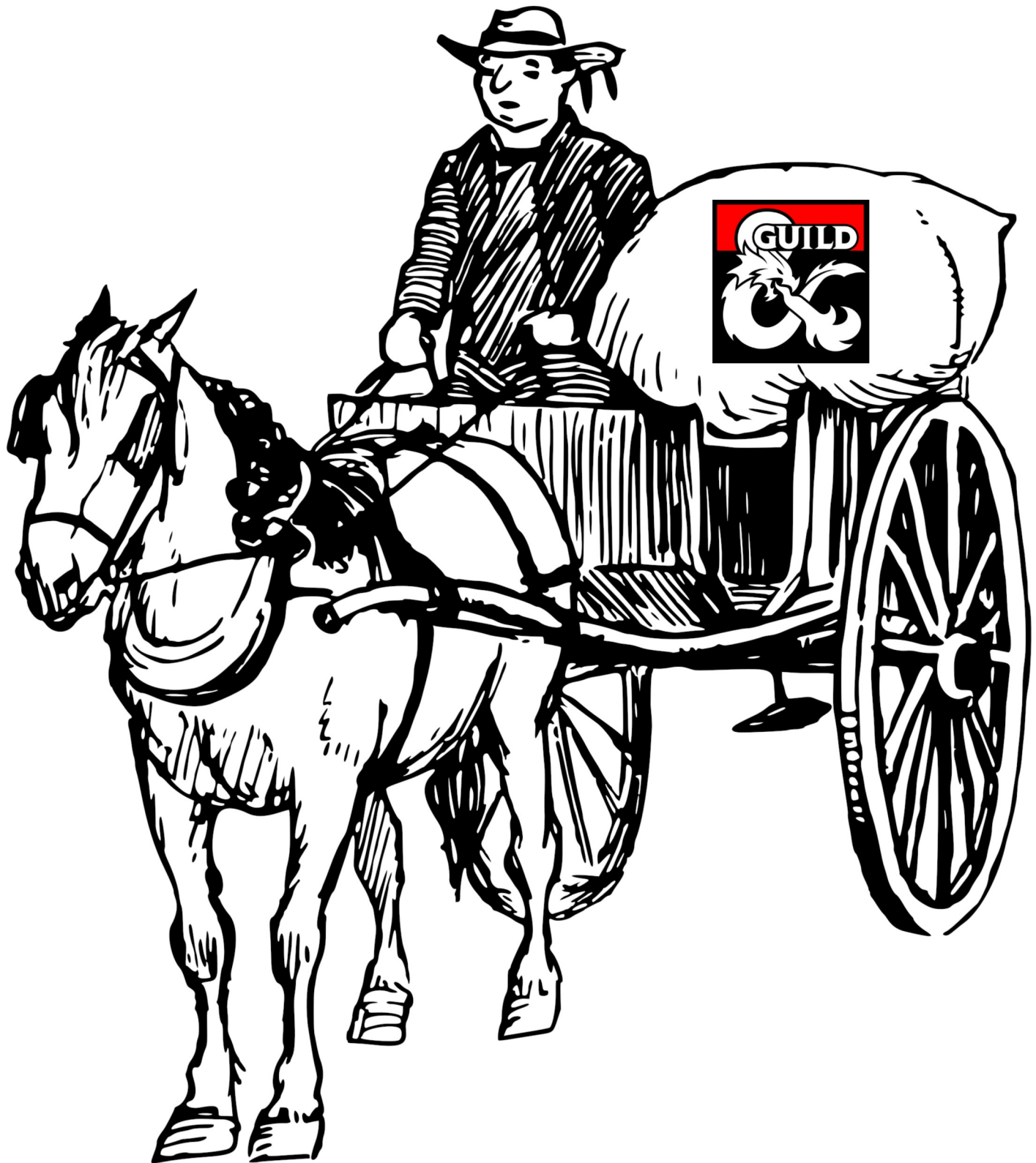


Working Stiffs

A Background Bundle for D&D 5E



WORKING STIFFS

Welcome to this Dungeon Masters Guild supplement for the 5th edition of the world's greatest roleplaying game! Within, you'll find an assortment of backgrounds for your player characters. These aren't flashy or spectacular; these are the backgrounds of everyday people whose journey into adventure turned their lives upside down.

If you have something you'd like to see me design, let me know! You can become a patron at [Patreon.com/jskellogg](https://www.patreon.com/jskellogg) to submit requests for my monthly giveaways, and you can follow me on Twitter @JacobSKellogg to catch the next bonus giveaway or design marathon.

In the meantime, I hope you like this collection of simple backgrounds. If you like it, consider supporting me by purchasing my other content and leaving reviews as well. Thanks, and happy gaming!



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ALCHEMIST

Your past is that of a scientist. Whether under the patronage of a famous scholar, as an employee of an academy, or simply experimenting on your own time, your life is — or was, until you became an adventurer — dedicated to the discovery and understanding of how the world works, especially along the blurry barrier between the natural and the magical.

Skill Proficiencies: Arcana, Nature

Tool Proficiencies: Alchemist's supplies, poisoner's kit

Equipment: Alchemist's supplies, a set of common clothes, a notebook full of formulas and theories, and a pouch containing 15 gp

FEATURE: EFFICIENT FORMULAE

Thanks to your expert knowledge of alchemy, you are quite adept at producing various concoctions. Whenever you use alchemist's supplies or a poisoner's kit to craft nonmagical items, halve the time and material cost required. At the DM's discretion, this feature may also be applied to certain magical elixirs and similar items.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

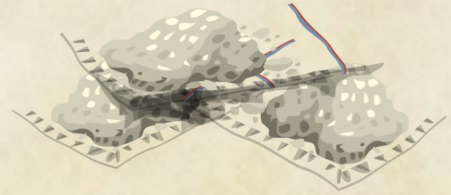
You're a data person. Although you're not immune to bias or assumption, you nevertheless live a life that's shaped by the experimental, cause-and-effect, iteration-based nature of your profession.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I often mumble to myself with analyses of something I've just seen for the first time.
- 2 I enjoy sprinkling long names of alchemical components into my speech, just to show off.
- 3 I'd just as soon spend the evening alone with a book as in a rowdy tavern.
- 4 I like to stop and take notes when I spot an unfamiliar plant or other potentially useful substance.
- 5 I'm easily bored by anything less complex than alchemy.
- 6 I try to describe ordinary situations with analogies to alchemy.
- 7 I calculate risks before I take action.
- 8 I have little interest in feelings or sentiment.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Discovery.** I'm in it for the thrill that comes with making a breakthrough. (Neutral)
- 2 **Progress.** Alchemy can help improve lives, and that's worth working toward. (Good)
- 3 **Discipline.** Life's greatest achievements are the result of dedicated, precise work. (Lawful)
- 4 **Power.** My knowledge grants me new ways to crush those who cross me. (Evil)
- 5 **Self-Improvement.** The more we understand, the better we can be. (Good)
- 6 **Surprise.** Who *wouldn't* want to know what happens when you mix two things for the first time? (Chaotic)



d6 Bond

- 1 My first tools were loaned by someone powerful. Someday, they'll come to collect on their investment.
- 2 I'm close to a revolutionary breakthrough. I'd do anything to finish what I started.
- 3 I've made terrible sacrifices. I must not let them be in vain.
- 4 I was mocked as a child for my bookishness. I'll show them. I'll show them all.
- 5 I found another alchemist's notebook, and I want to find them and ask about it.
- 6 My work is expensive. I'm only adventuring for the money.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I am impatient with the uneducated.
- 2 I cringe at the thought of mindless, manual labor.
- 3 Too many of my experiments leave me without eyebrows.
- 4 Sometimes I have ideas for how to "spice up" my drinks. Hasn't ended well yet.
- 5 I am far too ready to sniff or taste strange substances found in caves.
- 6 Sometimes I get so involved in my work that I forget to eat, sleep, or pay attention to my friends.

BREWER

Prior to taking up a life of adventure, you made a living by brewing and selling alcoholic beverages. Maybe you were supplying local taverns with the cheap ale they sell their patrons, or perhaps you specialized in artisanal craft beers that were sold directly to consumers alongside brewery tours. You might even be a moonshiner, making specialized brews at home and selling the excess privately. Whatever the case, making booze has been your life up to now, and you're bringing those skills with you as you begin your adventuring career.

Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Persuasion

Tool Proficiencies: Brewer's supplies, one gaming set

Equipment: Brewer's supplies, a set of common clothes, your favorite mug or tankard, a jug of bottle of your best brew, and a pouch containing 10 gp

FEATURE: BOOZE CONNOISSEUR

Drinking has been an element of your livelihood for years, and you have developed certain aptitudes as a result. You can judge the quality and condition of alcoholic drinks — even detecting spoilage or poison within them — with a brief examination of appearance and smell. In addition, it takes twice as much drinking for you to suffer ill effects as it would take for most people.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Like many artisans, a brewer is a creator at heart, usually driven to perfect their craft through iteration and learning. Simultaneously, a brewer's choice of craft often reflects an interest in enjoying the simple pleasures of life (as opposed to being preoccupied with utility and pragmatism) and this value is often expressed elsewhere in the brewer's life as well.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 The first thing I do when I travel someplace new is take a deep breath to examine the aroma.
- 2 I carry a notebook to jot down ideas for new brews and flavors.
- 3 Tiny bubbles make me happy.
- 4 I drink my own brews enough for work; when I'm socializing, I'll drink something else.
- 5 I secretly prefer tea.
- 6 My first drink order at a new tavern is usually "one of everything."
- 7 I have trouble sleeping if I'm not at least a little buzzed.
- 8 Wine is just pretentious beer.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Improvement.** With time and effort, we can improve ourselves just as I improve my brewing. (Good)
- 2 **Freedom.** I do what I do because it helps people loosen up and enjoy life. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Moderation.** In life, as in drinking, excess leads to ruin. (Lawful)
- 4 **Exploitation.** People are so much easier to fleece when they're sloshed. (Evil)
- 5 **Serenity.** A good drink can let you break away from the worries of the past and future, helping you to live in the moment. (Neutral)
- 6 **Camaraderie.** Even rivals can become friends over a shared drink. (Good)

d6 Bond

- 1 Someone sabotaged a large batch, ruining my business. I will find them and get my revenge.
- 2 I'd give anything to see my brews enjoyed by royalty, or even a major noble.
- 3 I try to police others' drinking, fearful that I'll be blamed if someone overdoes it.
- 4 I once got blackout drunk and woke up in an alley with blood on my shirt, and I constantly fear discovering what happened.
- 5 I always feel like the "perfect brew" has eluded me, and I'm constantly searching for it.
- 6 There's a chance I might be married, but I'm not sure.

d6 Flaw

- 1 My singing isn't any better when I'm drunk, but apparently that doesn't stop me from trying. Loudly.
- 2 I never seem to notice my "old beer" aroma that I'm told I carry with me everywhere.
- 3 Spill a vintage drink and I'll break your arm.
- 4 I am far too ready to lick an unidentified plant that I think might be useful in a brew.
- 5 My hangovers always seem bigger than they should be.
- 6 I become far too trusting and naïve when I drink.

COOK

You used to make a living preparing food professionally. You may have been a specialist — such as a baker producing enough bread to supply the locals each day — or you might have worked in a full-service kitchen making soups and entrées and side dishes alike. You might even have been a gourmet chef, creating edible artistry for wealthy customers. Food was your business, and it's still your passion, even in your new life as an adventurer.

Skill Proficiencies: Nature, Sleight of Hand

Tool Proficiencies: Cook's utensils

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Cook's utensils, a set of common clothes, a book of recipes, a few tiny bottles of your favorite spices and seasonings, and a pouch containing 15 gp

FEATURE: FOOD SAVANT

Thanks to your countless hours preparing and tasting food, you've developed an exceptional knack for examining substances by taste. You can determine whether a plant or other substance is edible with only the tiniest taste. You can likewise determine every ingredient (or other substance) present in a piece of food by taste, without ingesting enough to cause harm from a poison or other dangerous substance.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

In many ways, you are an artist. Even if you don't worry about visually stunning presentations of your food, there is still a sense in which you try to create something worthwhile where before there was nothing. Alternatively, perhaps your motivation as a cook was not the act of creation, but a desire to provide food to those who needed it.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I chew very slowly, contemplating everything I eat.
- 2 I carry a notebook to jot down ideas for new flavors.
- 3 The thought of eating raw or unprepared food makes my stomach turn.
- 4 I only drink water, and I take a sip to cleanse my palate whenever I switch from eating one dish to another.
- 5 I like to hang out in bakeries and other aromatic places just to enjoy smelling the food.
- 6 I always clean my plate; I can't stand wasting food.
- 7 Food-related figures of speech really butter my bread.
- 8 I'm not above sending back an unsatisfactory meal and demanding a replacement.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Provision.** I will never turn away someone who's hungry, even if they can't pay or don't deserve it. (Good)
- 2 **Expression.** The foods we eat carry all the wonderful variety of the peoples of the world. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Methodology.** Culinary science demonstrates how following a procedure can yield astonishing results. (Lawful)
- 4 **Exuberance.** Food is a cornerstone of every major festival, teaching us the power of celebration. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Equality.** Everyone must eat. At the most basic level, all people are the same. (Neutral)
- 6 **Unity.** Good food can bring people together across seemingly insurmountable differences. (Good)

d6 Bond

- 1 My eatery failed, and a friend took on my debt so I could start a new life. I owe them everything.
- 2 Someday I'll serve a king or queen.
- 3 By my honor, no one will go hungry while I'm around.
- 4 I've been entrusted with someone's secret family recipe, and I will see it rise to fame.
- 5 I was often hungry as a child, and I sleep better if I have a loaf of bread in my arms.
- 6 I was cheated out of winning a cook-off that would have changed my life. I will never forgive that.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I'm prone to overeating, making myself sick if nobody stops me.
- 2 Nobody gets off the hook for wasting food, even if they're rich and powerful.
- 3 I'm pretty judgy about other people's cooking.
- 4 I talk with my mouth full. All dinner long.
- 5 I'm not above spitting in an enemy's food.
- 6 That belch was a compliment to whoever cooked this, I swear!



DOCTOR

You are experienced in the practice of medicine. You may have been the medical officer in a military unit, ship's crew, or other professional group. Alternatively, perhaps you were a doctor at a renowned clinic in a large city, or even a self-taught village healer. Regardless of how your path began, you are now experienced in the healing arts, making you a valuable asset to any adventuring party.

Skill Proficiencies: Medicine, Nature

Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism Kit

Languages: One of your choice

Equipment: Herbalism kit, a set of common clothes, a book of medical notes, and a pouch containing 20 gp

FEATURE: DIAGNOSIS

Thanks to your extensive experience treating every manner of ailment, you are adept at diagnosing all sorts of illnesses. With only a brief examination, you can identify any disease, poison, or other nonmagical affliction currently affecting a creature. You understand how it works and how to neutralize or cure it.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Although there are many reasons a person becomes a doctor, they all share one thing in common: a devotion to the practice of making people better. Although there's always the possibility of corruption, for the most part doctors are in the business of helping people.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I am very particular about hygiene.
- 2 No, you don't need my help just to pull out a splinter.
- 3 I enjoy reading dry, technical manuals of medical science.
- 4 I don't always follow my own advice.
- 5 I'm still not entirely comfortable with the sight of blood.
- 6 I tend to over-explain things to patients — or even just to people standing nearby.
- 7 I sometimes forget how squeamish people can be.
- 8 I can calmly examine other people's bodies all day, but I'm quite shy about my own.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Caretaking.** I will never harm someone who is under my care. Ever. (Good)
- 2 **Power.** There's no greater power than power over life and death. Medicine is just the beginning. (Evil)
- 3 **Precision.** These great feats of healing are made possible by study, devotion, and discipline. (Lawful)
- 4 **Empowerment.** Keeping people healthy frees them to make their mark on the world. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Acceptance.** I can't save everyone, but I can help those in my reach. (Neutral)
- 6 **Resistance.** There's too much death and pain in the world. I will fight against it. (Good)

d6 Bond

- 1 I will do my utmost to help anyone within reach.
- 2 Someone died within my care before. Never again.
- 3 Okay, *technically* I didn't "pass" medical school. As long as nobody finds out, it's fine.
- 4 A dying patient once entrusted me with a dangerous secret that I want nothing to do with.
- 5 I'm on the verge of a major medical breakthrough, and I'll do anything to unlock the final secret.
- 6 I harbor a deep shame about a time I had to choose whom to save, and chose for personal gain.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I lecture people incessantly about their health.
- 2 I'm willing to perform inhumane experiments on animals for the sake of advancing my knowledge.
- 3 My bedside manner needs a lot of work.
- 4 I look down my nose at "lesser" professions.
- 5 My handwriting is basically scribbles.
- 6 I don't really listen when people talk, instead assuming that I know what they're trying to say.



FARMER

You've spent your life toiling in the fields of a farm. You might have been a hired hand on a farm to large for its owners to work by themselves, or you may have grown up on a family homestead where you scratched out a living from livestock and crops. Your beginnings may be humble, but everyone knows that some of the greatest heroes used to be farmers.

Skill Proficiencies: Animal Handling, Athletics

Tool Proficiencies: One type of gaming set, one type of musical instrument

Equipment: One gaming set of your choice, a set of common clothes, a whittling knife, and a pouch containing 5 gp

FEATURE: HARD WORKER

You're no stranger to long days of grueling work, and that experience has given you stamina and toughness that humbles softer folk. You don't risk exhaustion from a long day until two hours later than other people. Additionally, when you spend downtime either recuperating or doing physical labor similar to farm work, you gain half again as much benefit as normal.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Being a farmer has a profound impact on your life: you spent long days around the same small handful of people day after day, year after year — yet at the same time, remained relatively isolated from the rest of society, leaving the farm only occasionally (such as to sell the harvest) and only for short periods of time.

d8 Personality Trait

- 1 I like to wear shirts that show off my farming muscles.
- 2 Work smarter, not harder.
- 3 I believe in working under the sun and playing under the moon.
- 4 City manners disgust me.
- 5 I've stopped trying to wash out the scent of pigs.
- 6 I feel uneasy if I go more than a day without doing any physical work.
- 7 I miss my grandmother's pies.
- 8 It's hard to sleep without hearing crickets or frogs in the distance.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Accomplishment.** Everything's better if you worked hard to get it. (Good)
- 2 **Freedom.** There's nothing better than a simple life divorced from the arbitrary rules of society. (Chaotic)
- 3 **Discipline.** It's incredibly rewarding to stick with a hard task all season and finally see results. (Lawful)
- 4 **Provision.** There's something nice about producing stuff that everyone needs. (Good)
- 5 **Serenity.** Falling asleep by the creek on a summer's day is true peace. (Neutral)
- 6 **Rhythm.** Rising with the sun. Working in time with the seasons. There's nothing better. (Neutral)

d6 Bond

- 1 My family's farm is failing. I must take care of them.
- 2 They didn't want me to leave. I can't go back until I can prove it was worth it.
- 3 Someone simple and lovely is waiting for me to come home again.
- 4 I will carve bloody vengeance against the monsters who destroyed my farm.
- 5 I just learned of a relative who also abandoned this life. I want to learn more about them.
- 6 I never meant to leave; adventure found me. I don't know whether I can go back or not.

d6 Flaw

- 1 I'm not shy about expressing my distaste for city manners.
- 2 I look down on any work that isn't physical, no matter how important it may actually be.
- 3 I smell like manure, and I don't care.
- 4 I'm far too enamored with the conveniences and pleasures of the city.
- 5 No, it's *them* who don't understand *me*!
- 6 A friendly scuffle is basically like a greeting. Right?

WANT MORE GOODIES?



Thanks for reading! If you'd like to see more of my work, you can search the DM's Guild for "Jacob S Kellogg" or just go back to the product page where you got this document and click the "Author(s)" link on the right.

If you're interested in more than just *D&D* or if you just want to offer support for my work, become a patron at Patreon.com/jskellogg to get all kinds of gaming-related goodies.

Happy adventuring!