



150 QUICK & COOL CHARACTER BACKSTORIES

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150 Quick & Cool Character Backstories

Ranger, Sorcerer, Barbarian

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50 Ranger Hooks

1. He wasn't always at home in the wild, but when his family's estate was seized by the tyrant king and his parents jailed for not paying their taxes, he and his siblings were left to fend for themselves. As the oldest, he took it upon himself to learn everything he could about hunting, trapping, and gathering so he could feed his family and live outside the king's sphere of influence. Now that he is older and more experienced, and the king older and more frail, he has his heart set on ending the tyrant's reign.
2. As the youngest of four sons, he wasn't entitled to much of his father's wealth. Instead of sticking around for a minor inheritance, he set off to find his own way in the world and joined the military, where he quickly took to the life of a scout. His father was disappointed in him for not joining the navy—the only branch of the military fit for a nobleman's son—and his father revoked what little inheritance he was entitled to. Having few other options, he now sells his services as a scout and guide to make ends meet.
3. He was raised by the dwarves of Hammerhold and trained to slay goblins on sight. He was great at his job, until one day he found himself staring in the eyes of a bugbear baby. It was a hideous creature, but somehow its innocence struck a chord in him. He tried to hide the baby away out of the reach of the Hammerholds, but his rival discovered his treachery and he was banished from his clan.
4. He was a new member of his tribe's hunting party when they were ambushed and all but wiped out by a horde of orcs. Ashamed to return to his people as the only member left alive, he disappeared into the wilderness and began plotting his revenge. One day, when he's strong enough, he'll hunt down the Razortooth Orcs and return the cruelty they showed to him.

5. When a vampire took his son, he tracked the creature to its lair and staked it through the heart. Though he managed to find his son, it was too late for the boy. He couldn't bring himself to kill his only child, but now, several years later, the kingdom is being plagued by bats and rats and several people have disappeared. Does he answer the king's call to root out the source of evil, knowing full well it may mean confronting his past?
6. His desert caravan once lost its way in a ferocious sandstorm, but through his diligence and cunning he managed to help the caravan find its way to shelter. Since then he has learned much about the perils of the arid desert, and for years now he has made his way as a guide. One day he took a job working for an unpopular sheik, and his life was changed forever....
7. He learned a lot about surviving in the wilderness while evading arrest for crimes he didn't commit. Now that his good name has been cleared, he works as a bounty hunter and tracks down criminals using the same skills he learned while on the run. But there's just one problem—once again, there's a bounty out on his own head.
8. He started out like any other footsoldier in the king's army—low bred and desperate for money. When he took the initiative to build a cleverly disguised pit trap to lure the invading orc hordes into, his commander took notice and promoted him to join the scouts. The war may be over now, but his skills as a trapper come in handy to the adventuring parties he hires himself out to.
9. Orphaned at a young age, he grew up on the streets of a major metropolis. Rather than beg and steal for his bread, he took to doing odd jobs for local merchants and learned his way around the city—both its streets and its politics. Now as an adult, he's the go-to source of information about local happenings, but he's also the go-to when there's a job that needs to be done and nobody else is willing to do it.

10. As a young lad, he worked in the stables at a wealthy merchant's home and sent most of his money home to feed his family. He developed a strong bond with the horses he tended, and one day the merchant, always fond of the youth, offered him a horse to take for his own. That was years ago, and though he no longer works for the merchant, he still has his favorite horse companion. Now he's run off to seek adventure, but he still remembers to send money home to his aging parents.
11. He hadn't intended to become the village's greatest archer, but a rivalry with the mayor's son forced his hand. The two constantly competed for the affections of a single woman, and when word got out she was promised to go on a date with the victor of the archery contest, he began practicing religiously. The girl and the mayor's son are now married, but to this day he suspects there was foul play, and he now has the skills to come back and prove it.
12. He was born the illegitimate son of an orc chieftain and a slave and was raised as a member of the tribe. When he was still young, he witnessed heinous acts and atrocities committed by his father's kin and vowed not to be a part of it. He escaped under cover of night but was unable to rescue his mother. Now that he has grown, he hopes to return and put an end to the miserable orc who sired him, and to find some trace of his mother.
13. Some say elves make the best scouts, but this halfling would disagree. He's equally comfortable hiding in the underbrush of the forest as he is the tall grasses of the fields, and that advantage has proven key on more than one occasion. When serving in the town's militia, he single-handedly brought down a fearsome giant who just couldn't manage to spot him, and he became the hero of the village because of it. Now he's off to seek more adventure, but will he be able to live up to his reputation?

14. When a band of marauding ogres stole all of the sheep from his family's farm, he vowed to extract revenge. He led his brothers and a few of the local villagers and tracked the ogres to their cave in the foothills, where he quietly laid an ambush for them. His clever traps caught the ogres off guard and the group was able to overwhelm the great brutes. After the experience, he decided to join the Wardens, an organization sworn to protect the people of the region from just such events.
15. He was raised by a group of druids but never quite took to the nature magic they practiced. Instead, he studied the animals of the land—how they behave, what they eat, and what tracks they leave when they walk. He now enjoys the thrill of a good hunt, and he's left the druids on a quest to find bigger and better game.
16. He hadn't always practiced falconry. When he was younger, he raised horses and cattle on a farm. But when he saved a young hatchling whose mother was lost to a hunter, he bonded with the bird and grew fond of the time they spent together. Over the years he learned to hunt and track with his companion, and now the two of them serve as guides to those who travel the wilderness.
17. Like many gnomes, he loved to tinker and invent things. Unlike those who took to imbuing magic in their creations, he instead preferred to craft mechanical weapons and traps, such as repeating crossbows and self-resetting bear traps. Armed with his love of gadgets and his thirst for more knowledge, he has set out into the world to find uses for ever bigger and better traps.
18. His sister's sudden disappearance raised a lot of questions, not the least of which is "who's responsible?" Though it has been years since she vanished, he has never given up searching for her. He takes the odd job as a hunter and tracker to fund his search, but still the only clue he has found was a coded message written in her handwriting. A code he has yet to crack.

19. He was the deputy of a rural outpost on the edge of the king's territory when a mysterious outlaw rode into town and challenged his superior to a duel. He suspected there was some old, bad blood between the two men, but his superior was killed before he could find out what it was. Immediately after the duel the stranger fled town, never to be seen again. Now he's torn between accepting the duties of his new promotion and beginning his hunt to look for answer.
20. He never really felt cut out to be a hunter—in fact, he prefers to not even eat meat. As one of the strongest and sturdiest young men of his tribe though, it's always his duty to provide for the rest of the group. Recently though, he took advantage of an opportunity to join an adventuring party that came by the village, and he sees this as his big ticket to leave that life behind. But will the people he now travels with be willing to ignore his natural talent for finding food and tracking quarry?
21. He has the most promising future of any falconer in his clan, but when his long-time companion was mysteriously slain it ruined his career. It took years for him to form such a close bond with another bird, and his skill at hunting atrophied during that period. To make up for lost time, he has left the clan and joined an adventuring party so he can sharpen his skills, but he vows to one day return and find out who was responsible for his years-long setback.
22. After his blood brother was killed in what appeared to be a random bandit attack, he took to drinking heavily. For months he did little but spend his time and money at the local tavern. But recently his friend's brother was also killed in a similar attack, and now he suspects foul play. He's given up booze and vowed to track down the killers at any cost.

23. Ever since he was a young boy, he loved the thrill of being lost in the woods and finding his way back home. Now it's been over 200 years, and though his adventures take him further and further afield, he still returns to his elven homeland once a year to visit his kin and participate in an annual religious festival. This year he's expected to play a major role in the celebrations, but he's found himself stranded in a remote village far from home.
24. The others always told him to practice on smaller game before hunting dragons, but he was more ambitious than most. He felled his first wyrmling when he was just 18, and now that he has a taste for dragon blood he's constantly in search of more. He's developed quite the reputation as a dragon slayer—both among his peers, and among his prey....
25. He was always smaller than the other boys in the tribe, but what he lacked in physical power he made up for in cunning and wit. During his coming of age test, he brought down a brown bear by first luring into a false sense of security and then slaying it with a few well-placed arrows. Now that he's older he no longer gets picked on for his frailty, but rather he is consulted for his knowledge and wisdom.
26. Nobody believed him when he told them it was devils who kidnapped his older brother, but he swears to this day that imps were the culprits. He has dedicated his life to demonology and to hunting down evil in all its forms. He has little faith that his brother may still be alive, but he wants to make sure nobody else has to go through the same thing.
27. He still has nightmares of that evening when his betrothed was brutally slain by a werebear. At the time he could do nothing to stop its ferocious rampage, and he still blames himself for her loss. To right his failure, he now studies and hunts lycanthropes of all kinds. No matter how many he kills though, he's still haunted by the memory of his beloved—or is that really her ghost come back to torment him?

28. Though he was raised in a church, he never felt a strong connection to the divine. He always felt he owed a debt to the priests who took him in, but he wasn't going to repay it by preaching to the masses. Instead he works for the church as a hunter of the undead. It's not his favorite job, but it sure beats leading people in prayer every week.
29. Years ago, his best friend was bitten by a huge rat and began exhibiting strange behaviors. Roughly one month later his friend mysteriously disappeared, having left no signs of his whereabouts—all that remained at his home was a set of large rat tracks. More recently, there have been whispers of an infestation of wererats, and he is beginning to suspect he knows who might be involved.
30. He was raised in a thriving metropolis, but never felt at home in the city. His regular trips into the country became longer and longer, until eventually said goodbye to his urban home and made a life for himself in the wilderness. Now he spends more time with his animal friends than with his human ones, and he's grown quite adept at surviving off the land. When he catches word that war is brewing in the kingdom, does he return to the city and fight for his old friends, or does he leave them to their own fate?
31. His kind don't normally frequent sailing ships, but his keen eyes, weather savvy, and ability to pick off sailors on rival ships at 100 yards have all proven invaluable to his captain. Though he's leagues from home and stranded on a ship in the open waters, his falcon companion keeps him company when he's stationed high in the crow's nest with no person to talk to. He longs to leave this rig and return home, but would his family and friends accept him return with open arms after all the things he's done?
32. Bounty hunter or assassin? Where this man is concerned, the line is blurred. He often takes jobs looking for men who are wanted dead or alive, and he usually brings them back dead. Who cares if there wasn't a struggle? At least this way he's saves the rest of the legal system some time and trouble.

33. Trained by the king's army to be an expert at guerilla warfare, he spent several years running secret missions for the crown. One day he became privy to information that called his king's motives into question, and he was forced to make a decision between loyalty to the crown and loyalty to his own beliefs. He now teaches guerilla tactics to an underground rebel force.
34. City dwarves never get any respect. That's why he set out on his own for the undermountain, in search of lost remnants from his clan's ancient past. As a city slicker he wasn't cut out for spelunking and was lost in the caverns for months. Forced to learn to adapt, he has finally emerged from the depths with survival experience and a few ancestral weapons.
35. As a plainsman, he was raised with horses. He learned to ride, train, and care for them before he even came of age. Now that he's an adult, he joins hunting and raiding parties with other highly skilled mounted warriors. Certainly there must be more to life than these plains, though?
36. His tribe has survived in the harsh northern frost lands for centuries. Though most of his fellow tribesmen become tough barbarians, a rare few such as he have been called to be skilled hunters, gatherers, and trappers. His brothers in arms may be able to wade into battle with a mammoth and bring it back for food, but his ability to constantly provide for the tribe by regularly gathering game from traps is what has really sustained his people all this time. Now he's feeling the call to adventure, but can his tribesmen survive without the services he provides?
37. As a simple farm hand, he didn't have enough money to feed his pregnant wife and three children. Not knowing what else to do, he decided to put his skills as a horseman to work for him as a caravan driver. One night the caravan was attacked by orcs and only a few were lucky enough to survive the raid. Not wanting to relive those events, he learned to fight and rose to the ranks of caravan guard. It's dangerous work, but at least he can send good money back home.

38. Thanks to his family's generations-long feud with the Blackmoor family, he learned how to hide, stalk, and fight starting at a young age. He is now grown and responsible for teaching the new generation the same skills, but his heart isn't really in it. Wouldn't it be better to just make a truce? Why are the families even fighting, anyway? Perhaps he'd be better off striking out on his own.
39. Thanks to his family's generations-long feud with the Falconne family, he learned how to hide, stalk, and fight starting at a young age. Now he's older and it's his turn to teach the new generation the same skills. He doesn't remember why the two families are fighting, but if he doesn't raise the young ones to be able to defend themselves, then there's no telling what tragedies may befall them.
40. Nobody else believes him, but he insists he was once the prince of a far-off kingdom. That would explain why the horse he rides with is superior to every other, but it doesn't explain how he came to be such a good tracker or why he appears to be penniless. He'd be happy to offer up an explanation, if only he could come up with a good excuse....
41. Death left its scar on his soul when he was nearly killed by a wraith several years ago. The encounter left him weak for months, and in some ways he has never truly healed. Since that experience, he has studied the undead and their foul power over the living, and with his new lease on life he has devoted himself to ridding the world of their icy grip.
42. When a pack of marauding kobolds ravaged his village, they left everything in ruins. Enraged by the attack and the losses he and his kinsfolk suffered, he tracked the kobolds to their lair and vowed to kill every last one of their kind. As he silently slew each one of them, he came upon a place where women and kobold children resided in great numbers. To this day he feels a twinge of guilt for what he did, but there hasn't been a kobold raid in these parts for years now.

43. The love of his life was a beautiful dryad, but when a wizard cast a spell on her and trapped her within her tree he was heartbroken. He vowed to find the wizard and force him to release her, but the only clues as to the wizard's identity are a torn bit of robe with a strange pattern and bat guano from a species native to a land over 3,000 miles away. He has joined an adventuring party to help fund his search, but he never stops looking for signs of the wizard.
44. Born to a tribe of woodland halflings, he was raised to hunt, gather, and live off the land. When he discovered a motherless brown bear cub alone in the forest, he brought it in and raised it as his own. Now the two are fully grown together, and they've left the tribe in search of new amusements and adventure.
45. Few understand the hazards of the frozen Southlands better than him. His tribe has inhabited the land for hundreds of years, and he was raised to survive in the icy plains he calls home. His tribe doesn't get many visitors from the outside world, so when a group of travellers came looking for a rare plant which only grows in the nearby hills, he hired on as a guide to show them the way.
46. When alone on a hunting trip one day, he clumsily stumbled into a snare trap set to capture prey. After he woke from unconsciousness he was able to cut himself free, but he broke his leg in the process. Despite his injuries, he managed to make his way back to his village where he spent several weeks recuperating. The experience left him wiser for the wear, but his leg has bothered him slightly ever since.
47. From a young age, he learned to identify every edible plant in his jungle home—and every poisonous one, too. He's an expert at using the jungle's rich natural resources to his advantage, and even when he leaves his homeland he is sure to bring a healthy supply of toxins and alchemically prepared plants to aid him in his adventures.

48. He got his start as an adventurer by doing odd jobs for shop owners, such as killing rats in the cellar or delivering small packages around town. He began to wonder if there was more to adventuring when one day he was hired to lead a group of tourists on a nature hike. Though many of the tourists lost their lives in an ensuing orc raid, he took up arms and defended who he could. After leading the survivors back to safety, he joined the Forest Wardens and vowed to prevent such attacks in the future.
49. What fate may have befallen his identical twin, who is said to have been promised to a devil even before their mother conceived? The devil fulfilled its promise and the kingdom was delivered from certain defeat, but his brother was taken the moment the boys were born. He has spent his life searching for his twin's whereabouts, and he'll travel to the Hells if necessary to get his answers. If only his father, King Ulrick, had left any clues before he passed away....
50. He has travelled far and wide in search of Stormfeather, the legendary bow said to have been used by the god of wind. He isn't sure why he feels the pull to find it—perhaps he's the next Chosen, or perhaps he's just excited by the fame and glory that are sure to come with holding such a prestigious relic. Either way, he hopes he will be a worthy archer by the time he discovers its whereabouts, and he hopes he has the courage to retrieve it.

50 Sorcerer Hooks

1. She was born during a solar eclipse while the planets were aligned. Her childhood had been full of lucky coincidences and narrow escapes, but she never suspected she was special. During her teenage years, her ability to control the arcane with a mere thought began to manifest itself, and by 17 she was casting more powerful spells than even those wizards who'd spent all their time studying. There's no doubt she's magically gifted, but is she mature enough to wield such awesome power?
2. When the tyrant king ordered the death of all so-called witches, her mother paid a band of passing adventurers to smuggle her out of the kingdom. That was over a decade ago, and now that she is old enough she desires to return home and look for any signs of her mother. But does the tyrant king still rule the land? And what may have become of her mother, assuming she's even still alive?
3. When she was attacked by bandits on the forest road, she was killed. Those she was travelling with fled into the forest for their own safety and left the fallen for dead, but they hadn't ever imagined one of them would get back up. While dead, she made a deal with some entity — an angel, or a devil in disguise? — and was given a new lease on life. Imagine the look on her fellow travellers' faces when she returns, alive and well. And imagine the fear in those bandits' eyes when she returns with her new magical powers to get her revenge.
4. What foul pact must have been forged for her to have been born? The product of a dwarf and some foul creature from the depths of the earth, she was born to be a person with phenomenal magical power. Sadly, her mother was taken from her at birth and she would never know her true origins, but one day her powers will manifest. When they do, will the world be ready for them?

5. Her mother was granted great magical power from a genie. She spent years performing great deeds and undertaking many adventures before settling down to raise a family. When she gave birth to a daughter, she had no idea the power in her blood would be passed to her little one. Now the character is older and her magic is starting to manifest. Can she live up to her mother's reputation as a world-class sorceress?
6. For years, he studied to become a wizard. He went to school, read his spellbooks, and even donned robes and a pointy hat. None of that seemed to matter, and eventually he dropped out of the academy—to the dismay of his family, a long line of wizards. It wasn't until he left home, a disgrace to his lineage, that his innate magical powers began to express themselves. Now he's becoming a powerful sorcerer, but can he return home to show his family his new skills or will they shun him for not learning to cast spells the old-fashioned way?
7. He was the sole survivor of a shipwreck that left him stranded on an island for years. His only company was a faerie creature who helped him unlock the magic within his blood. Now he's returned home to the open arms of his loving family, but all is not as it seems. What he doesn't know is that his father was responsible for the shipwreck and that he was never meant to come back alive.
8. He never knew his father, who was said to be a mysterious person even before his likewise mysterious disappearance. When he was a teenager he began receiving anonymous letters from a far-off land, and he began to wonder who they were from. The letters make outrageous claims that he is the son of a dragon, but that couldn't possibly be true, could it? Who was behind these letters, and why is he the one receiving them?
9. At a young age, he was accused of being responsible for burning down the village stables. Later, he was accused of burning down the tailor's shop. More recently, he was run out of town when the tavern was mysteriously burnt to the ground, and the other villagers had enough. He may have been present at each of those places when the fires broke out, but he couldn't possibly be the one responsible, could he?

10. Halflings aren't typically known for being great magicians, but that's what made him all the more special. He never studied magic, but somehow he had a natural aptitude for it. The more jealous folks in his village accused him of making a pact with a devil, but unbeknownst to him he's actually the descendant of a wood spirit.
11. She always wanted to be a paladin, to uphold the virtues of good and justice. She wasn't quite cut out for the life though, and she left the holy order still a novice. She did, however, unlock the celestial blood flowing in her veins and learned to tap the latent magical properties it gave her. Now she upholds the virtues of good and justice in her own way.
12. Framed for a crime she didn't commit, she was sentenced to death. Though it broke his heart, the sentencing officer was her lover, who was forced to uphold the law regardless. Through some stroke of luck, her latent magical powers manifested on the eve of her execution, and she successfully broke free from the dungeon. With a new lease on life, does she flee the scene or does she stick around and try to find out who framed her?
13. She was the daughter of a noble family, but when her sorcerous powers manifested during her teenage years, her family disowned her. She understands the stigma that sorcerers are the offspring of demons, but wouldn't that make them demon kin also? Perhaps there's some deeper secret they're not willing to discuss.
14. Though the elves of her tribe admire wizards for their patience and studious nature, they've shunned her for being a natural arcane adept. Outcast from her society, she has left the forest to make her own way in the world. With no friends to turn to, she got involved with a band of adventurers and hasn't looked back since.

15. The people in her village have always been superstitious. When she noticed she was able to manipulate arcane forces with her will, she was careful not to manifest her powers around others. But one day she was forced to make a tough decision: let her brother drown in the river, or levitate him to safety in front of a crowd of onlookers....
16. He was a street urchin who fell into some bad company in his youth. He was able to escape his life of crime when his magical abilities grew strong enough for him to join an adventuring party, but now his old buddies have come knocking for his help with one last heist. They know he's a sorcerer and need his talents, and they're not the type to take no for an answer.
17. When the royal wizard failed the king, he was publicly executed. Seeking a new royal arcanist, the king hired this character as a replacement. As a sorcerer though, his knowledge of the arcane arts was less studied and more innate, and that isn't a fact that has been sitting well with the king of late. With rumors of the king seeking yet another wizard, this character decided to make himself scarce before meeting his own gruesome fate.
18. He owes his life to his best friend, who saved him from an attack by a rampaging owlbear. The two friends began adventuring together, and now they've saved each other's lives more times than they've bothered to keep track. Now his friend has gone missing, and while he's sure his friend is alive, he doesn't know where to begin searching for him. Though his life debt has been paid many times over, he's hell bent on finding and rescuing his longtime companion.
19. He was once a young apprentice to a witchdoctor in his tribe, but he found that he was better at witching than doctoring. After being banished for losing one too many patients, he wandered alone in the wilderness for months. Eventually his path crossed with a party of adventurers who were in need of someone with his more arcane talents, and he's been travelling with them ever since.

20. “Once a thief, always a thief.” That’s what he was told when he was caught pilfering bread to feed his family. Whether it’s a truism or just a self-fulfilling prophecy, he fell into a life of crime. Even after his magical talents represented themselves, he didn’t stop stealing—he just got better at it. Now he’s gone into hiding because he stole from the wrong person.
21. She always knew she was different than the other half-orcs in her tribe. Sure, she could get angry and squish things with the best of them, but she could genuinely feel her rage boiling in her blood. Lately she has learned how to magically increase her natural martial talents, and she’s even more formidable than ever.
22. Her parents were famous gnomish bards, and while she inherited their magical knack she most certainly did not inherit their musical talent. Though it disappointed them to not have her join the troupe, she went off to wizarding school to learn how to improve upon her magic skills. Unfortunately she wasn’t very studious either, but she did come to the realization that magic was in her blood, not in a book. Now she practices her prestidigious powers on her own, and she’s becoming more adept by the day.
23. Her parents never told her she was adopted. Most of her youth was spent like any other child in town, and her existence before now was fairly mundane. After her parents died in a freak accident, she discovered a letter they had written to her seemingly only days before their deaths. It spoke of how she was left on their doorstep as a baby with nothing to indicate where she came from. Perhaps that strange birthmark holds some deeper insight into her life?
24. Only one dwarf in a century is born with innate magical powers, and she happens to be the lucky one to hold that honor. It is speculated that her magic comes from a bloodline of earth elementals, which would certainly explain her connection to stone and metal. Most of the members of her clan are excited to live amongst the new earth sorceress, but others seem to be jealous of her power and prestige.

25. She spent years at a monastery contemplating her life and the meaning of true inner power. She watched the other monks grow into highly skilled individuals, and though she picked up a few tips on physical fitness and martial prowess, she felt something was missing. One day during a long pilgrimage she discovered the truth about herself—her inner power came from a celestial bloodline, and she was able to awaken the magical power therein.
26. He sold his soul for power and was granted the ability to cast powerful spells. That was years ago and he has since seen the error of his ways. Now he uses his power for the good of mankind, but he still fears the day when the devil will come to claim him. Will he be strong enough to fight back, or will he be damned to the nine hells for all eternity?
27. He sold his soul for power and was granted the ability to cast powerful spells. Since then, he's grown madder and madder as the power has consumed him, and now there's little left of the man he used to be. Can he reclaim what may be left of his humanity, or will he simply succumb to the forces of hell?
28. The rest of his tribe favored brute force over magic, but he was always drawn to the arcane. He didn't know why it spoke to him so clearly, but he grew to be a powerful shaman under the protection of his father, the chief. When his father was killed by a rival tribe, his protection ended. To avoid being ostracized, he left his village and never looked back.
29. Sorcery was commonplace amongst his people. Rumors abound that half the village was descended from dragons, the other half from elemental beings. In a town where magic users were everywhere it was hard to stand out, so he gathered his belongings and left in search of mundane lands where his power might be appreciated.

30. He isn't sure how he got there, but one day he awoke aboard a pirate ship with little more than a loin cloth and some fuzzy memories of his past. He was destined to be sold into slavery, but when he began displaying magical talent he was given a choice: stay aboard as ship's sorcerer or be sold for an incredible price on the black market.
31. She was raised to be a seer, but she never displayed the power of divination that so many of her sisters did. Instead, she showed promise as an evoker—a job normally reserved for the men of her culture. Though she's a disappointment to her mother, who doesn't approve of her honing her destructive talents, she's proven on more than one occasion to be an asset to the town.
32. She was raised with stories about faeries and the fey realms, but it wasn't until she reached adulthood that she discovered her great grandmother was actually a dryad. That may explain why she has begun developing magical powers and a deeply rooted desire to visit the forest where her ancestors lived. She's not sure what she'll find when she gets there, but it's a pilgrimage she simply must take.
33. She had always been fond of the moon and has long been a night owl, until recently she hadn't known why. With her mother's dying breath, she learned she was the child of a lycanthrope, and though the disease didn't run in her blood, it did give her some amount of innate power. That must explain why her spells always seem to manifest with more power after the sun goes down, and are more potent still when the moon is full.
34. What dark power could be capable of granting a lich the power to produce an heir? As the daughter of the great Lich Queen Shelandra, she's always felt as if she was torn between the worlds of the living and the dead. Dark magic runs in her blood, but she isn't sure if she should follow in her mother's footsteps as the queen of evil, or fight her instincts and put an end to her mother's terrible reign.

35. Life in the frozen northlands has always been harsh, but a rare few are capable of bolstering their defenses against the bitter cold. As a fire sorceress, she's a rare gem amongst her people who depend on her for warmth in during winter. Lately though, she's become tired of the constant demand on her time and energy and has been looking for a way out.
36. Like other young nobles, he was schooled in the art of dueling. He never really excelled at it, but he was always able to hold his own in a fight. When he discovered he had magical potential though, he really began to shine. With magic in his step, he's confident he can take opponents more skilled than himself. Now he's on the hunt for foes more challenging than snobby rich kids.
37. When he was younger he had aspirations of becoming a world-class archer, but a hunting accident left his left hand mangled and unusable. Now he's begun practicing magic and takes a special liking for spells he can sling at his enemies. If he can't shoot a bow, perhaps an acid arrow will do.
38. He comes from a city hidden high in the clouds, outside the reach of most people. When the city was assaulted by cloud giants, he was one of only a handful to escape. He'd like to get revenge on the murderous villains who decimated his home, but until such a day as he can gather the forces to do so, he's biding his time and practicing the magic of his ancestors.
39. His father expected him to join the ranks of the Hell Knights, but he was never cut out for hand-to-hand combat. Instead, he joined a group of demonic summoners who bend conjured creatures to their will. One day he lost control of one of his charges and it wreaked havoc among his people, and he was excommunicated from his order.
40. As the descendant of a silver dragon, he was always expected to lead a good and virtuous life. Despite his draconic ancestry, he doesn't feel like he owes it to anyone to live any way other than the one he chooses. He's been cut off from his family's wealth, but at least he's living the life he always dreamed—and amassing a horde of his own while he's at it.

41. To avoid being punished for witchcraft, she fled her village. Just when she thought she was safe, she was attacked by an inquisitor of the church who had been tracking her for months. She successfully defended herself, but now she's wanted by the church for both witchcraft and murder.
42. Since she was little, she has had recurring nightmares of being incinerated from the inside. After finally seeking the guidance of a wise woman, she was told she had the blood of a fire elemental in her, and she was destined to unlock great power. Could the old crone be telling the truth? Does she even want to go down the path that leads to her awakening something frightful within herself?
43. She had always been drawn to the arcane, but until recently she hadn't been very good at controlling her magical talents. After spending a month in solitary contemplation, she finally managed to tap the power within herself. Now she's capable of slinging spells with the best of them.
44. Every time she casts a spell, something unexpected seems to happen. Sometimes the spell is devastatingly powerful, at other times it seems to fizzle before having any effect. Stranger still is when her fireballs turn to acid, or when her pupils turn purple after casting a defensive spell.
45. She's almost certain she has an air elemental spirit somewhere in her family tree, for she has long been fascinated with the forces of wind. She's always had a knack for manipulating the weather and controlling the flow of air around her, and now she's learning to create strong gales from the most subtle breezes. Now if only she could find practical application for these gifts, that would be something.
46. Most of the other spellcasters in his tribe cast spells by drawing magical runes, but somehow he's able to eschew the need for these symbols of power and manipulate magic without them. He's proud of his gift, but some of the other men of his tribe are jealous of his innate power. To avoid serious conflict, he has chosen to leave his village and make his own way in the world.

47. Centuries ago, a witch cursed his family's bloodline. Though the power of the curse has since diminished, it still impacts his life in subtle ways. Partners leave him over simple arguments, animals shun his affection, and even his adventuring companions have trouble getting along with him at times. Many of his ancestors have attempted to break the curse, but to this day none have succeeded.
48. He was raised to use his gifts for the good of mankind, but when his father was hanged for helping the wrong person he reevaluated his viewpoints. Now he's jaded and doesn't care who gets hurt by his use of magic to get what he wants. His powers are his, after all, and why should he save someone's life if they don't ask for it?
49. While other assassins were training to be as agile and stealthy as possible, he was practicing the ability to simply make himself invisible and inaudible. Some say he isn't as skilled an assassin for employing magic in his trade, but one thing's for certain: he gets the job done every time. Well, except that one time....
50. Given that the blood of angels runs in his veins, most of his friends and family were baffled by his decision not to become a cleric. The truth is, he was never cut out for a life of religious contemplation. Instead he chose to become an adventurer and make his own way in the world. Though he still occasionally feels the pull of his celestial heritage, he's much happier being free from its constraints.

50 Barbarian Hooks

1. He didn't always have such anger management issues. One day he was kicked off a horse and he struck his head hard on the rocky ground. It must have done some permanent damage, because now he has serious problems controlling his temper.
2. His father always wanted him to become a tailor and take over the family business. He was well on his way to fulfilling that dream when he was caught sewing someone's shirt to their trousers out of spite. When that nobleman told him "You'll never work in this town again!" he apparently meant it. Now he's making his way as a sword for hire in any town but the one he grew up in.
3. As a young lad growing up in the mines, he spent many long days hauling earth and stone. It was great for his physique, but it left him with little in the way of education. Now he's a bit too old to continue chipping away at the undermountain, but he's still perfectly capable of swinging a pickaxe.
4. Born into slavery, he was destined for a life of illiteracy and menial labor. One day, a band of freedom fighters rescued him and his fellows from the clutches of their master, and he was quick to grab a club and help everyone make their escape. To this day he still isn't educated, but he's getting better and better at using that club.
5. He used to boast that no man could drink him under the table until one day when a female dwarf did just that. He awoke the next morning with the dwarf by his side, and they've been inseparable ever since. He still maintains no man could drink him under the table, but he doesn't get into drinking contests with women anymore.

6. She met the love of her life during a drinking contest, which she handily won. Since then they've been inseparable, and she continues to teach him a thing or two about holding liquor. Meanwhile he's been teaching her how to swing a warhammer with deadly precision. Triple win!
7. The other elves laughed at her when she started carrying around that greataxe, but she sure showed them. She had killed about half of the ones who mocked her, but the others managed to escape before it was their turn. She isn't welcome in elven society anymore, but something tells her she didn't really fit in anyway.
8. Her tribe was happy to raise women who fought alongside men, especially since it often made their enemies hesitate during battle. She's grown accustomed to using deception as well as strength to make her way in the world, even now that she's left her tribe to wander the globe.
9. Nobody expects a halfling to be a ferocious warrior, much less a female halfling. But she's as scrappy as anyone can be, and she enjoys the attention it brings her sometimes. Even when she attracts the wrong kind of attention she doesn't get too concerned; she's always proven she can handle herself in a fight, and she's earned a reputation for it.
10. Her lover died trying to defend her from bandits. Though she had never held a weapon in her life, she plucked the sword from his fallen hand. In a fit of rage like none she had experienced, she slew each and every last robber where they stood. To this day she carries his sword as a memento, but now she's more skilled at using it.
11. She was just another down-on-her-luck street urchin until she found a sword with strange carvings on its handle. It glowed faintly at night and seemed to bring her great fortune whenever she carried it. It was great fortune, at least, until its supposed previous owner came to claim it. Now she's constantly hiding or on the run, but she can't seem to shake the feeling that the sword shouldn't be returned to him.

12. She was married off to a low-ranking nobleman at the age of 15. She didn't care much for him, and he never showed much care for her or the promises he made to her family. As the years went by, she became more bitter until one night she battered him unconscious and fled the manor. Grabbing what she could, she made her way into the darkness, vowing never to return.
13. A priest found her on the doorstep to their temple when she was but an infant. She was raised in the church, but never took to book learning or praying. Instead, she constantly got into fights with the other children and was eventually excommunicated for her insubordinate behavior.
14. Life in the dark underforest of the jungle was difficult, but it made the land's inhabitants that much more hearty. She learned a lot about how to survive in difficult situations, and she became an expert at using a variety of weapons and hunting techniques. Though she has since left her jungle home, she still employs her life training while travelling with adventurers.
15. Her parents were an unlikely union of an orc woman and a human man who genuinely loved each other. Though she was raised to be accepting of all people, she couldn't help that orcish blood ran in her veins. Sure, she's accepting and even open to the ways of others, but she still won't hesitate to kill a man for insulting her.
16. His tribe was well-known for raising horse lords—masters of mounted combat. By the age of 6 he had already tamed his first wild horse, and by 16 he was a brave warrior who rode alongside his clansman into many battles. Now he's developed a bit of wanderlust, and though one day he promises to return to his people, he wants to see what the world has to offer before settling down.

17. He never put much stock in magic and always thought of it as a weak man's way of interacting with the world. One day his brother-in-arms was slain by an errant fireball, and he vowed to get revenge on the wizard who cast that spell. The last time he got close, the wizard teleported away like only a coward would. The next time he has a chance to get his hands around the caster's neck, he'll make sure it's the last.
18. He's a worshiper of the god of combat and physical prowess. Though he's a devout follower, he doesn't have the patience to study holy texts or pray for miracles. Instead, he worships by doing. He's most at home when brawling in the arena or in a skirmish on the battlefield.
19. He was sold into slavery as a teenager. For years, he served his masters under threat of pain. One day he'd had enough and he beat his handler to death with his bare hands. Recognizing it wasn't safe to stick around, he fled the manor and disappeared into the wilderness. To this day he looks over his shoulder for fear of his master coming to claim him, but he's now strong enough that it may not be an issue.
20. At the age of six, he was caught stealing bread to feed his family. At 13, he went to jail for pickpocketing. At 17 he was put behind bars for robbing a local merchant. Recognizing that he makes a lousy thief, he decided to pick up an axe and join the army instead. Then he got kicked out of the military for bad behavior.
21. She doesn't care much for authority figures. That probably has something to do with the fact that her lover was taken from her for a crime he didn't commit. She now avoids major cities and their corrupt politics as best she can, preferring to spend time spelunking in dungeons with adventuring companions.

22. When she was young, she almost died to an illness that left her weak. Determined not to continue her existence as a frail shell of a person, she worked hard to increase her size, strength, and overall fortitude. She's now bigger and stronger than ever, but that may have been to the detriment of her scholastic studies. She probably can't even spell scholastic.
23. Her mother died giving birth and she was raised by her father, who was more likely to drink his problems away than discuss them with anyone. She was forced to learn to fend for herself, and she did so by bullying people for their money. When she was old enough to get into serious trouble for such behavior, she decided to become an adventurer instead. At least then she could kill things for their treasure and it'd be seen as an honest career.
24. She awoke one morning in a tavern with a throbbing headache and covered in someone else's blood. She doesn't remember what happened the night before. It felt like she was drugged, but she may have just gotten drunk and the poor soul laying nearby was on the wrong end of her temper. Either way, she wasn't in a position to sort it out at the time, and now she's constantly trying to stay one step ahead of the bounty hunters who are after her.
25. After a major battle, she was forced to put many of her friends to rest in a mass grave. Now a vile necromancer has moved into the area, and he's digging up the past. As grizzly a job as it is, she's now forced to lay the same people to rest once more. As soon as this zombie horde is dealt with, she's vowed to take the necromancer next.
26. His tribe worships the spirits of their ancestors, who in turn provide strength and guidance when it's necessary. He's happy to receive help from his great uncle, a bear shaman of some renown who grants him immense power in battle, but his great-great grandfather was a prankster who constantly hides his gear at inopportune moments.

27. His tribe are the descendants of frost giants. Even though they've lost much of their stature and power, they're still quite big for their race and definitely possess great strength. Sometimes it's nice being the biggest and the toughest, but it's hard to fit into civilized society when the need calls for it.
28. He was one of the duke's personal bodyguards until an assassin managed to slip by him and slay his charge. Shamed out of performing honest work, he joined an adventuring party because nobody else would have him. He still has an instinct to protect those he serves with, but he often worries he'll fail his new companions, too.
29. He spent several years at a monastery learning to improve his body and mind. Unfortunately, he always struggled with the mind bit. Though he's become an expert at martial arts, he's never been able to master his temper and has since left the monastery in search of another way that doesn't require so much meditation.
30. Some say the birthmark on his cheek is a sign that he is cursed, but he never put much stock in superstitions. Sure, his mother died giving birth, his father committed suicide, his best friend died in the river at a young age, and his last girlfriend was slain by bandits, but how does that make him cursed? If anything, he just attracts unlucky people.
31. He was raised on oral traditions and was primed to be the tribe's next skald, but fate had other plans. When half of his people were wiped out by a marauding dragon, he decided to take up arms and hunt the beasts instead. He still remembers his roots, and loves to tell heroic tales of his peoples' past, but he isn't content to sit around telling stories when there are dragons to slay.

32. As a youth, he somehow managed to kill an ogre who was ravaging his village. It was by accident, but it earned him the title of “ogre slayer” which he’s been forced to live up to. Now he’s older, bigger, and stronger, but he’s not necessarily any more brave. He still fights for his village, but he does so to avoid humiliation rather than to prove his worth.
33. He was practically born with an axe in his hands. His father was a woodcutter, and his earliest memory is of chopping trees for the winter. When the tyrant king’s tax collectors came and threatened to take everything from his family, he picked up his axe and defended his home. A week later his father was found dead with a note from the king to pay up. That was when he vowed to get revenge and put an end to the king’s reign.
34. While the other warriors at the academy were practicing with swords and shields, he was honing his skills with the heavy flail—after all, what good were shields when your weapon could reach around them? He didn’t join the phalanx after training and instead opted to become a shock trooper. His father wouldn’t be proud, but dad did always like his older brother best.
35. In his early years as a warrior for his tribe, he earned the nickname “thunder voice” for his incredible battle cries. His ability to be heard over the din of battle is unparalleled, and he’s adept at instilling fear in all of his enemies. Nobody is really sure how he does it, but rumors abound that he may in fact be the descendant of a mighty storm giant, a blue dragon, or some equally powerful creature.
36. She was always better at solving problems with her fists than with her words, which is probably what got her into this mess in the first place. But how was she supposed to know that jerk at the tavern was one of the duke’s men? It’s not like he told her that before she pummeled him unconscious. Now she’s forced to flee the duchy to avoid the duke’s wrath, and all because she caught some guy cheating.

37. Life was tough in the wastes. There were two ways to ensure survival: with your wits or with your weapons. She wasn't very well-educated, so she generally opted for the latter. Even though she's made her way out of the Desolate Lands, she still only knows one way to live. Perhaps that's why the adventuring life suits her so well.
38. When she gets angry, she can feel the electric charge in the air. She isn't sure what causes it, but she has learned to harness it and channel it through her rage. Unfortunately it took a heated argument and an accident with her former lover to figure it all out, but she's now intent on making sure only her enemies feel the true power of her wrath.
39. Her mother was a cruel parent. Whenever she stepped out of line even in the slightest, she'd be beaten with a branch and sent to bed without supper. It would have broken some children, but instead she just grew more resentful over time. When she was big enough, she grabbed the branch and returned the cruel treatment before fleeing her home, never to look back.
40. She always wanted to become a druid like her twin. She admired their connection with nature and with the animal kingdom. Yet she didn't have the patience to meditate and truly connect with the earth. Instead she learned what was necessary to survive in the wild, which usually meant learning how to kill the things that wanted to eat you.
41. He was always at his best after nightfall. Whether it was affinity for the moon or just his keen night vision, he preferred to be active after dusk. That's made it difficult to be part of an adventuring party, who typically travel during the day, but they're always happy to let him stand watch while they sleep.

42. When he was young, his father was killed in a hunting accident. It became his duty to take care of his ailing mother, so he never had time to study or learn a trade. After she passed, he was left uneducated and in charge of several siblings. Eventually they all grew and went their separate ways, and now the only way he knows how to make a living is by selling his services as a brute.
43. His great fortitude protected him from the disease which nearly wiped out his people. The dying wish of the village's shaman was for him to locate the source of the illness, and he was told it lay somewhere in the valley to the east. Vowing to find its source, he grabbed his weapons and headed out of town.
44. As the son of a warrior king, he was expected to be strong, brave, and fierce. He was told to go into the world and not come back to claim his rightful place as head of the tribe until he had acquired great power and proof he'd accomplished some heroic deed. He left in search of a quest, but there's no telling what he might find when he gets out into the wider world.
45. Gnomes generally value intelligence, ingenuity, and insightfulness. Perhaps that's why he never fit in with his people. He was never as bright as the others, and his methods of solving problems by way of brute force were rather unorthodox. It did lead one of his fellows to invent fantastic defensive gear, but that isn't really what gnomes wish to be known for. Perhaps it's better that he left his people after that last incident.
46. Someone once accused her of being a witch. She pummeled that person until they changed their mind. It's true, strange things tend to happen when she's around, but that doesn't mean she's putting hexes on people. She's more likely to swing a sword than sling a spell, and she prefers it that way.

47. She used to work as a bear wrestler in a travelling performance troupe, but she gradually became fed up with wrestling domesticated creatures. Sure, it put on a good show for the public, but she knew it wasn't really as impressive as it looked at first glance. She decided to leave the show when she met a group of adventurers, and she's been wrestling wild bears and other beasts ever since.
48. She used to live comfortably in the wilderness until the nearby city began expanding into her territory. In a few short years they had managed to clear enough forest to make it uncomfortable to continue living there. Perhaps it's better to move away than get stuck living near the city.
49. Her parents were both adventurers and she was trained to use weapons from an early age. The adventuring life didn't leave much time for a proper education, but as her parents taught her, you can be quite prosperous by looting tombs and slaying dragons. It's a shame they didn't come back from their last trip to that ancient wyrm's lair, though.
50. She was on the verge of a nervous breakdown when she met a travelling priest who helped her through her emotions. He taught her to channel her rage to help her grow stronger, rather than let the guilt of past failures consume her. Her introduction to the tenets of the god of wrath and vengeance was all she needed to turn her life around. Now she can stop pitying herself for letting the baron kill her lover, and she can go do something about it.

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