

Before we play

A few questions about your character. Not a form to complete - a way to find the things that will matter once the game starts.

You do not need to know your whole backstory before the first session. It is usually better if you do not.

Treat this as a handful of questions that help you find out who your character is, before the first decisions land on the table. Answer in one line or write a page. If you do not know something yet, leave the space empty.

The most interesting things usually turn up during play.

1 Who are you today?

Try to describe your character in two or three sentences.

Do not start with a birthplace, a height or a list of skills. Think about what somebody would notice after a few minutes of conversation, and what actually sets this person apart from everyone else in the room.

A former city guard who believes everyone deserves a second chance. He once gave one to somebody who absolutely did not deserve it.

My character:

2 What do you actually want?

Not the reward for the first job, and not what the party is supposed to do this session.

Think of something that matters to your character even when nobody is watching. Getting the family house back. Finding somebody. Repaying a debt. Earning respect. Never depending on anyone again. Finally being left alone.

A good goal does not have to be grand. It has to matter to this person.

What I want most:

3 What usually gets you into trouble?

Do not go looking for a "character flaw" just because the sheet seems to expect one.

Think of something that leads you into bad decisions for a perfectly good reason. Maybe you trust people too easily. Maybe you cannot let things go. Maybe you always side with whoever looks weaker, even when you do not know the whole story. Maybe you are simply convinced you know better.

Best of all if it can be seen during play.

I have a problem with:

4 Who matters to you?

One person is enough.

It can be family, an old friend, a teacher, a rival, somebody you owe, or somebody you never managed to say the important thing to.

You do not need their whole history. What matters more is why the relationship still has a hold on your character.

That person is:

They matter to me because:

5 What did you leave behind?

Setting out usually means something stayed somewhere else.

A home. A job. A family. A person. A debt. A promise. A problem that was never supposed to come back.

Maybe you are running from something you would rather not look at again. Or maybe you know that one day you will have to go back.

What I left behind:

6 What do you always carry?

We are not asking about the most expensive item or the best weapon.

Think of the thing your character would not sell, even if somebody offered an absurd amount of money for it.

An old key. A letter. A medallion. A broken watch. A knife that belonged to your father. A stone from a house that no longer stands. Something that looks like junk to everybody except you.

I always carry:

I keep it because:

7 What do you believe until somebody tests it?

This does not have to be about religion.

You can believe that everyone deserves a second chance. That family comes before the law. That people never really change. That money solves most problems. That a promise is kept whatever it costs.

Then think about the situation that would make you doubt it for the first time.

I believe that:

That is hardest to believe when:

8 Is there something the others do not know about you?

It can be a secret, but it does not have to be.

You might be hiding an old job, a debt, where you come from, a relationship, a failure, or something ordinary that never came up.

If nothing comes to mind, leave the space empty. A secret invented under pressure usually gives you less than one that appears on its own a few sessions in.

The others do not know that:

One connection to another character

You do not have to start the campaign as a group of strangers who happened to sit down at the same table.

Pick one question together with another player. A single shared history is plenty.

- One of you once saved the other. What happened?
- You owe them something. What for?
- You both know the same person and disagree completely about them. Who is it?
- You worked or travelled together once. Why did you stop?
- They know something about you the others do not.
- You do not entirely trust them. What started the doubt?

Our connection:

A question from the Game Master

Leave this space for whoever is running the game. A good question ties your character to this particular campaign.

It might sound like:

Why did you agree to come to Alpendorf, when you had a good reason to stay home?

or:

What happened the last time you were in this city that made you swear never to return?

GM question:

My answer:

Anything else?

If something important did not fit any of the questions, write it here.

It can be one sentence, a name, a symbol, a short scene, a memory or an idea you want to come back to.

Do not fill the space just because it is there.

Also worth knowing:

Leave part of the story to the sessions.