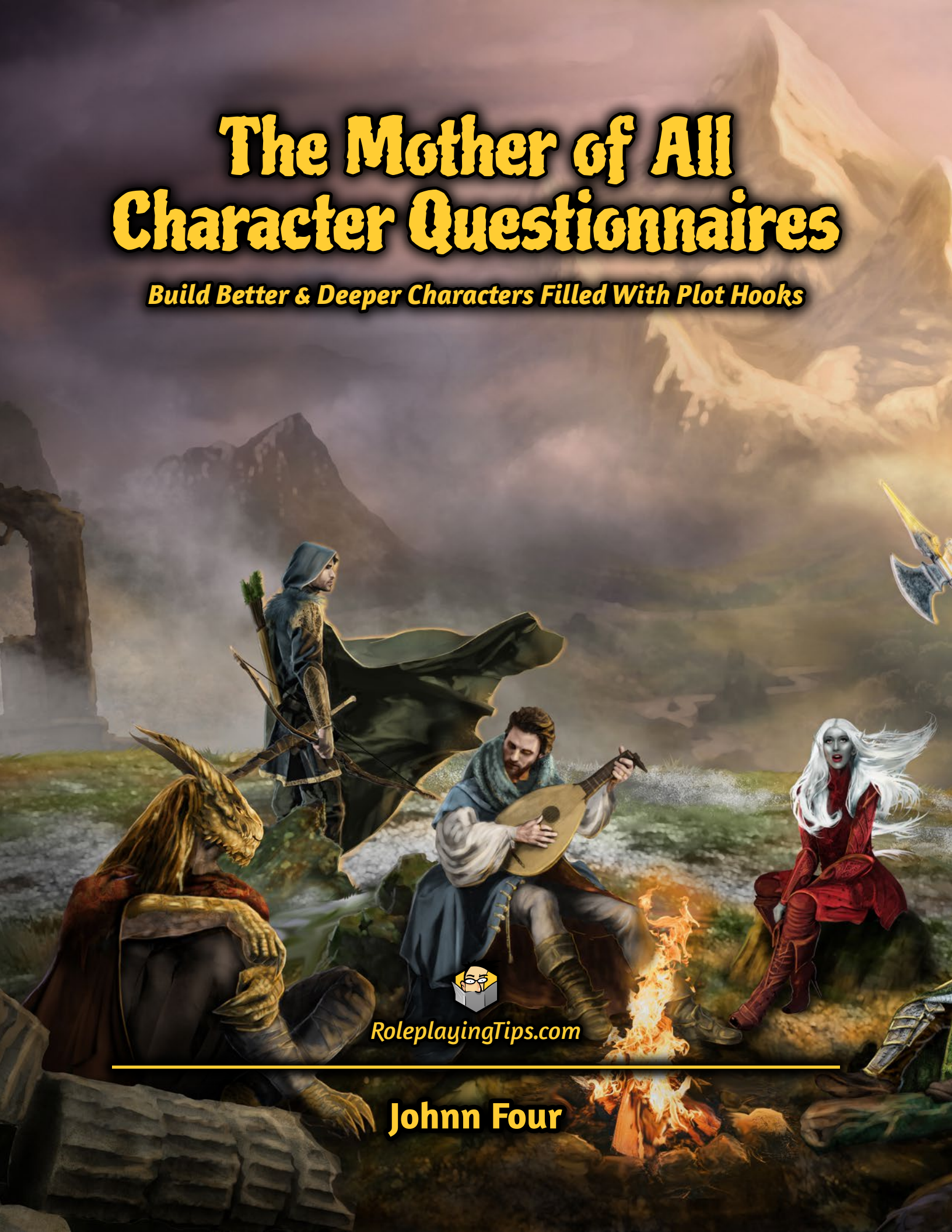


The Mother of All Character Questionnaires

Build Better & Deeper Characters Filled With Plot Hooks



RoleplayingTips.com

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THE MOTHER OF ALL CHARACTER QUESTIONNAIRES

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This list of character background questions makes for an awesome D&D character questionnaire or survey. Mine player answers for plot hooks, encounter ideas, and even entire adventure seeds for your RPG campaigns.

The character questionnaire can be changed without much effort for different genres and types of details, as well. So feel free to exclude or modify survey questions and create a character survey that suits your group.

Character depth comes from player introspection. Prod your players to put a little thought into their player characters and character traits. This will pay you a lot of dividends as your campaigns progress.

You can use your character questionnaire's answers to design around character drives, roleplay off character details, and engage players beyond mere numbers.

For brevity, I cut out most follow-up explanation type RPG character questions, such as "Why", "how come", and so on. Feel free to attach a "why" question after any item in the questionnaire to generate more details from your players.

Introductory Character Questions

1. Give a two or three-word description of yourself. (Describe your concept.)
2. Do you have any nicknames, street names, titles, nom de plume?
3. What is your full birth name?
4. Where do you live?
5. Why do you live there?
6. What is your citizenship status?
7. What is your most obvious blessing or strength?
8. What do you perceive as your greatest strength?
9. What is your most obvious flaw or weakness?
10. What do you perceive as your greatest weakness?
11. Was there any event or cause of these weaknesses?

Character Physical Traits

1. How old are you?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your species/race?
4. How tall are you?
5. How much do you weigh?
6. What is your general body type, frame, bone structure, and poise?
7. What is your skin colour?
8. What is your hair colour?
9. What is your hair style?
10. Do you have any facial hair?
11. What is your eye colour?
12. Does it change?
13. How attractive are you?
14. What is your most distinguishing feature?
15. Do you have any scars, tattoos, or birthmarks?
16. If so, how did you acquire them?
17. What do these distinguishing marks look like?
18. Do they have any special significance?
19. Where are they located?

20. What is your handedness (left/right)?
21. Do you resemble some currently known person?
22. What is your hand size/description?
23. Do you wear a uniform?
24. What kind of clothing do you wear?
25. What is your clothing's style or level of sophistication?
26. What size are you for various pieces of clothing?
27. Do you wear makeup?
28. Do you wear glasses/contacts?
29. What sort of vocal tone do you have?
30. Do you get sick?
31. Maybe you catch the flu twice a year and that's it?
32. Or maybe you have a weak immune system and catch anything that goes around?

Character's History

1. Where is your homeland?
2. What are its people like?
3. Are you aware of its history?
4. Are you patriotic or a social outcast?
5. What are your opinion of home?
6. Where is your home town?
7. What is your home town's name?
8. What was the area like and how did it affect you?
9. Did you witness any historical events?
10. If so, how did that event impact you?
11. Is your real reason for becoming an adventurer different from what you tell others?
12. If so, how might such secrets be revealed?
13. How far would you go to keep such secrets from being revealed? What would you do if the truth became known?
14. What do you fear would occur if the truth became known?
15. Do you have any particularly high or low ability scores?
16. If so, were these scores a result of you past?
17. How have these scores affected your life so far?

18. Did you affect you in your chosen profession?
19. What about your race, growing up were you in the majority or a minority?
20. How were you treated by other nearby races?
21. Were you persecuted for your race?
22. Did this impact your outlook in any way?
23. Did it affect your personality?
24. How do you feel about other races?
25. Do you have any justification from past experiences for holding such views?
26. Were there any traumatic experiences in your early years (death of a family member, abandonment, orphaned at an early age, etc.)?
27. Briefly describe a defining moment in your childhood and how it influenced your life.
28. What was childhood like for you?
29. Was it calm and peaceful or turbulent and traumatic?
30. Did you have any childhood friends?
31. If so, who and where are they now?
32. Are you still close to them or have you grown apart?
33. What stupid things did you do when you were younger?
34. Which toys from your childhood have you kept?
35. Why? What do they mean to you?
36. If you didn't keep any, why not?
37. What did you do to them all?
38. Do you have any deep, dark secrets in the past that may come back to haunt you?
39. What conflicts might arise from your past?
40. Are you who you claim to be?
41. Do you have any sort of criminal record?
42. How do you view the heroes/legends of your country?

PC's Family

1. Who were your parents?
2. Were you raised by them?
3. If not, then why didn't they and who did raise you?
4. What is your father's full name?
5. What is your mother's full name?

6. What did your parents and/or foster parents do for a living?
7. What was their standing in the community?
8. Did your family stay in one area or move around a lot?
9. How did you get along with their parents?
10. How would your parents describe you? Answer this in the voice of your mother, then in your father's.
11. Do you have any siblings?
12. If so how many and what were their names?
13. What was your birth position in the family (i.e. last born, first child, etc.)?
14. How did you get along with each of their siblings?
15. What was your family life like?
16. List all current knowledge of family locations, spouses, children, birth dates, schooling and any important incidents that only you and they might remember.
17. Are any or all of your family still alive?
18. If so, where are they now?
19. Do you stay in touch with them or have you become estranged?
20. Draw out your family tree, including living and dead relatives.
21. Do you love or hate one member of the family in particular?
22. Is any member of the family special to you in any way (perhaps, as a confidant, mentor, or arch-rival)?
23. Are there any black (or white) sheep in the family (including you)?
24. If so, who are they and how did they "gain" the position?
25. If this person is not you, then how do you feel about them?
26. Do you have a notorious or celebrated ancestor?
27. If so, what did this person do to become famous or infamous?
28. What do people assume about you once your ancestry is revealed? Do you try to live up to the reputation of their ancestor, try to live it down, or ignore it?
29. Have you begun your own family?
30. If not, do you ever want to have a family of your own someday?
31. If so, with who or what type of person?
32. What type of person would be your ideal mate?
33. What would you be willing to do to protect such a person?
34. Is there anything you wouldn't do to protect such a person and if so what?
35. Would anything change your mind on this issue and if so, what?

Relationships With Other Characters & NPCs

1. Do you have any close friends?
2. If so, who and what are they like?
3. What is the history of their relationship(s) with you?
4. Do you currently have a best friend whom you would protect with your reputation or your life?
5. If so, who are they and what caused you to feel so close to them? What would have to happen for you to end this relationship?
6. Do you have any bitter enemies?
7. If so, who are they, what are they like, and what is the history of their feud with you?
8. Have you defeated them before?
9. How might these enemies seek to discomfit you in the future?
10. What valuable or important contacts do you have?
11. How did you come to know them?
12. Which person(s) or group(s) are you most loyal to?
13. List any past serious relationships that you have had, and give a brief overview of the relationship(s).
14. How do you think others generally perceive you?
15. If someone crossed your path, what would you do?
16. Who is your most trusted ally?
17. Who do you trust, in general?
18. Who do you despise and why?
19. Name seven things you hate in others.
20. Is your image consistent?
21. Do people see you in similar ways?
22. Do you deliberately present yourself differently in different situations, and how?
23. For what would you die for?
24. For whom would you go to extremes for?
25. Who does you turn to when you're in trouble?
26. What is the worst thing someone has done to you?
27. What are your general reaction to an attractive member of the opposite sex who lets you know they are available?
28. How do you get along with others in the same field and/or work environment?

29. How can you be blackmailed, beaten, and tricked (by PCs or NPCs)?
30. Have you lost any loves?
31. How did you handle the situation (short & long term)?
32. Who would miss you, should you go missing?
33. Who might protect you?
34. Who might be convinced to sell you out?
35. How close are you to your friends?
36. What do they know about you?
37. What do they not know about you?
38. What do you know and not know about them?
39. Do you live with anyone (housemates, roommates, relatives, friends, near-strangers, family friend, spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend, lover)?
40. Are you a member of any special interest groups?
41. What is your level of involvement?
42. What is your current status with local law enforcement?
43. Do you have a record of cooperation or non-cooperation with authorities?
44. Do you have a file with local, national or international law enforcement?

Character Personality and Beliefs

1. Do you, or did you, have any role models?
2. Do you have any heroes or idols, either contemporary or from legend?
3. If so, have you ever met them?
4. Did you ever become disillusioned with former heroes or idols? If so, why and what were the circumstances?
5. When did you decide to become an adventurer?
6. Why have you chosen to risk your life as a career?
7. What do you expect to get out of being an adventurer (satisfaction, glory, money, redemption, etc.)? What, if anything, would make them stop adventuring (death of a loved one, marriage, mutilation, money, position, old age, etc.)?
8. Do you have any dreams or ambitions?
9. If not, why?
10. How does adventuring fit into this dream, or does it at all?
11. What are your short term goals (what would you like to be doing within a year)?

12. What are your long term goals (what would you like to be doing twenty years from now)?
13. If these goals seem at odds with each other or with your dreams, how do you reconcile the differences?
14. How do you seek to fulfill these dreams, goals, & ambitions?
15. Do you have any great rational or irrational fears or phobias? If so, what are the origins of or reasons behind them?
16. What, if anything, would it take for you to be able to overcome this?
17. How do you react when this fear manifests itself?
18. Are you willing to discuss, or even admit to, the situation?
19. What are your attitudes regarding material wealth?
20. Are you miserly with your share of the wealth, or do you spend it freely?
21. Are you greedy or generous?
22. Do you see wealth as a mark of success or as a means to an end?
23. How do you generally treat others?
24. Do you trust easily (perhaps too easily) or not?
25. Are you introverted (shy and withdrawn) or extroverted (outgoing)?
26. Are you a humble soul or blusteringly proud?
27. Do you act differently than you feel (concealing your true thoughts)?
28. What habits would you find most annoying in friends?
29. Is there any race, creed, alignment, religion, class, profession, political viewpoint, or the like against which you is strongly prejudiced, and why?
30. How do others typically react to you?
31. Why, in your opinion, do they act that way?
32. What are your most annoying habits?
33. What is your favourite food?
34. What is your favourite drink?
35. What is your favourite treat (desert)?
36. Do you favour a particular cuisine?
37. Do you savor the tastes when eating or “wolf down” your food?
38. Do you like food mild or heavily spiced?
39. Are there any specific foodstuffs that you find disgusting or refuse to eat?
40. Are you allergic to any food?
41. What are your favourite colour(s)?
42. Is there any colour that you dislike?

- 43.** Do you have a favourite (or hated) song, type of music, or instrument?
- 44.** What is your favourite bard song?
- 45.** If you have a favourite scent, what is it?
- 46.** What is your favourite type of animal? Why do you like that creature?
- 47.** Do you have an animal totem or affinity, and if so for what?
- 48.** Is there a certain type of animal that you hate or fear?
- 49.** Are you allergic to any kinds of animals?
- 50.** Do you have any allergies?
- 51.** Is there anything that enrages you?
- 52.** Is there anything which embarrasses you?
- 53.** How do you react to being teased about it?
- 54.** Do you enjoy “roughing it”, or do you prefer your creature comforts?
- 55.** Do you believe in the gods or not?
- 56.** Do you have a patron Deity?
- 57.** Are you devout or impious?
- 58.** Do you actively worship and proselytize or do you simply pay lip service?
- 59.** What lengths would you go to defend your faith?
- 60.** Was your faith influenced or molded by anyone special?
- 61.** Do you belong to the orthodox church, or a fringe element thereof (and is the group accepted, frowned upon, or considered heretics)?
- 62.** How has this impacted your faith and life?
- 63.** Is your church an accepted religion where you grew up or did it have to conduct its services in secret?
- 64.** How did this affect your faith and life?
- 65.** Have you ever been persecuted for your faith?
- 66.** If so, when and how did you handle it?
- 67.** Can you kill?
- 68.** When did you decide (or learn) that they could?
- 69.** What happened and how did you handle it?
- 70.** When do you consider it okay to kill (under what circumstances)?
- 71.** When do you consider it wrong to kill (under what circumstances)?
- 72.** What would you do if someone else attempted to (or successfully did) kill under their “wrong” circumstances,
- 73.** what would be your reaction?
- 74.** What if it were your enemy?

75. What if it were your friend?
76. What if it were an innocent?
77. What if the opponent were not in control of their own actions (i.e.-under duress, charmed, dominated, possessed, etc.)?
78. What would you do if someone shot at (attacked) you?
79. What would you do if something were stolen from you?
80. What would you do if you were badly insulted publicly?
81. What would you do if a good friend or relative were killed by means other than natural death?
82. What is the one task you would absolutely refuse to do?
83. What do you consider to be the worst crime someone could commit and why?
84. How do you feel about government (rulers) in general?
85. Why do you feel that way?
86. Do you support the current government of your homeland?
87. If so, how far are you willing to go to defend the government? If not, do you actively oppose it?
88. Do you belong to an anti-government organization?
89. If so, describe the group and it's aims.
90. What form of government do you believe is the best (democracy, monarchy, anarchy, aristocratic rule, oligarchy, matriarchy) and why?
91. Have you ever been persecuted for their political stance?
92. If so, describe the occurrence and how it affected you?
93. Are you a member of any non-religious group, cause, order, or organization?
94. If so describe it, its goals, and membership.
95. How loyal are you to this group and why?
96. How did you become a member?
97. If you are a former member, did you leave voluntarily or involuntarily and why?
98. Was it under good (amicable) conditions or bad?
99. Are you being sought or hunted by the organization?
100. If so, by whom and with what intent (to murder you, to force your return through blackmail or coercion, to spy on you and make sure they do not reveal any of the groups secrets)?
101. Do you have any unusual habits or dominant personality traits that are evident to others?

102. If so, describe them and how you acquired them, as well as when they might be more noticeable and what causes them?
103. How do you react if made fun of for any of these things?
104. Do you have any unusual or nervous mannerisms, such as when talking, thinking, afraid, under stress, or when embarrassed?
105. If so, are there any reasons behind them from your past?
106. Do you have an unusual gait or accent?
107. If so, where did you acquire them?
108. Are there any circumstances where they become more (or less) evident?
109. How do you feel and react if made fun of for any of these things?
110. What is your favourite colour?
111. What place would you most like to visit?
112. What annoys you the most?
113. What (if any) are your favourite forms of art?
114. What is your most treasured possession?
115. What things could he/ she not live without?
116. Do you have a good luck charm?
117. If your life were to end in 24 hours, what 5 things would you do in those remaining hours?
118. Do you have a black and white view of reality, or can you see shades of grey?
119. Do you prefer to tear down or build up?
120. Are you deliberate or spontaneous?
121. Do you prefer the town or the country?
122. If made to decide, would you rather be deaf or blind? Why?
123. How do you feel about magic, myth, and the supernatural?
124. Do you remember your dreams?
125. Describe a typical dream you might have.
126. Describe your worst nightmares.

Player Character Career and Training

1. Where and how were you educated?
2. Who trained you in your class or job?
3. What was your relationship with your teacher(s)/mentor(s)?
4. How did you happen across this teacher or mentor?

5. Was your mentor kind, stern, cruel, indifferent?
6. Is this person or institution still in existence?
7. Were you forced into your profession by parents or peers?
8. Did circumstances dictate your choice of profession?
9. Were you a prize student or did you just barely pass?
10. Look at your skills. How did you acquire them (especially the unusual ones)?
11. Have you ever done anything else for a living?
12. How do you function in combat (maneuvers, weaknesses)?
13. How would you best be defeated?
14. Have you ever received any awards or honours?
15. What have you done that was considered “outstanding” in your occupation by others in your field?
16. What are your long-term goals in work?
17. Describe any traumatic experiences in your present occupation that has affected you deeply in some way.
18. How do your relatives and friends view your present occupation?
19. Is there anything that you don't currently know how to do that you wish you could?
20. Are you envious of others who can do such things in a good-natured way or are they sullen and morose about it?

Lifestyle and Hobbies

1. What is your normal daily routine?
2. How do you feel and react when this routine is interrupted for some reason?
3. What are your hobbies when they are not adventuring or training?
4. What would you do if you had insomnia and had to find something to do to amuse yourself?
5. What do you do for relaxation? What things do they do for enjoyment? What interests do you have?
6. How do you normally dress, when not in your adventuring gear?
7. Do you like to dress up or down to relax?
8. Do you have a look or style? If so, describe it.
9. What do you normally wear in bed at home?
10. What do you normally wear in bed while adventuring?

11. Do you wear any identifiable jewelry?
12. Where do you normally put your weapons, magic items, or other valuables when you are sleeping?
13. What morning or evening routines do you normally have?
14. Do these change when you are adventuring?
15. What pastime (that you participate in regularly) gives you the most enjoyment?
16. What pastime (that you participate in regularly) gives you the least enjoyment?
17. Do you read the newspaper?
18. If so, which sections and how often?
19. What is his/ her routine?
20. Travel: How do you get around locally?
21. What is your idea of a good evening's entertainment?
22. Do you get seasick, airsick, motion sick (auto or animal)?
23. Do you like riding animals?
24. Any fears in traveling?
25. What sorts of general belongings or equipment do you take when traveling?
26. What are your hangout places?
27. Do you go to a bar after work?
28. Do you play pool?
29. Do you go dancing? Who goes with you?
30. What do you read? Scientific textbooks, historical novels, myths and legends, maps, cookbooks, romances, news magazines, science fiction, fantasy, horror, the newspaper, short stories?
31. What music do you like?
32. Do you have a favourite artist, band or bard?
33. Will you listen to or sing the same songs over and over, or does it drive you nuts when people do that?
34. How do you exercise? Work out at the gym, walks in the morning, run marathons, play sports, couch potato?
35. Where do you live?
36. Do you rent or own?
37. Apartment, house or castle?
38. How close are the neighbors?
39. Is it a good neighborhood?
40. What colour is the house?

41. Which floor are you on?
42. Do you have a lawn?
43. What about a flower garden?
44. Does your house have an attic or basement?
45. What does your furniture look like?
46. Do you buy antiques?
47. What are your walls covered with? Wallpaper, art, photos?
48. What sorts of curtains do you have? Frilly lacy ones, Venetian blinds, pull-down shades?
49. Do you keep your house clean?
50. Is it dusty?
51. Is the bathtub moldy or coated in rust?
52. Do you clean it herself?
53. What do your desk or workspace look like? Small and cramped, huge and expansive, covered in drifts of books and papers, neatly ordered and clean?
54. Can you find what you're looking for when you need it?
55. What colour are your sheets?
56. Satin or cotton?
57. Patterned with flowers, or covered with pictures of toy robots?
58. What sorts of food do you eat?
59. Do you cook your own dinners?
60. Are you a good cook, a gourmet, or a terrible cook?
61. Do you eat out?
62. Are you on a diet?
63. Where do you vacation, and how often?
64. Do you have any pets?
65. Do you keep a calendar or address book?
66. Where do you keep it?
67. Did you leave a Will?
68. What does it say?

Miscellaneous Character Questions

1. What would you like to be remembered for after your death?
2. What kind of threat do you present to public?
3. If your features were to be destroyed beyond recognition, is there any other way of identifying your body?
4. How much is a pint of mead?
5. As a player, if you could, what advice would you give you? Speak as if he/she were sitting right here in front of you. Use proper tone so they might heed your advice...

CREDITS

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