

Background – Cultist

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You are part of a secret order that seeks some hidden knowledge or secret about the universe, the divine, or the damned. This cult operates outside of the authority of local laws and religious authority, and being found out by these organizations would be disastrous.

Cults have a wide variety of goals, which can cover anything from personal enlightenment to trying to revive a dead god or worship a devil, which they do under extreme secrecy. Someone in a cult may not even know anyone else involved, hiding their faces with masks or hoods for safety. They do their work and communicate with secret signals and elaborate ritual.

How deep a cult's organization goes is often shrouded as well. The true leaders may not be known by initiates, and the true goal of the cult might only be revealed to an initiate after years of ritual unlearning and learning.

Often there are no entry requirements to a cult beyond an aligned ethos; the poor work rituals next to the rich, together as equals in the presence of true understanding.

Skill Proficiencies – Deception and one other from the following list: Arcana, History, Nature, or Religion.

Languages – Choose one exotic language or two standard languages.

Equipment – An initiate's pack (described below), a set of common clothes, and one cult symbol (described below).

Initiate's Pack

Contains a small chest with a false bottom, in which are hidden: robes, a scroll case, a silver dagger, a collapsible lantern (bullseye), and a book containing knowledge of your cult or its icon.

Cult Symbol

Roll 1d6, or choose from the table below:

- 1- A small bronze figurine depicting an unknown entity.
 - 2- A piece of capstone from an ancient temple long destroyed in a small velvet pouch.
 - 3- A silver coin with an open eye on one side and a closed eye on the other.
 - 4- A locket in which held within are some of the ashes of a master of the cult.
 - 5- A black candle that cannot be lit under normal circumstances.
 - 6- A tattoo hidden somewhere on your person that would reveal you to other cult members.
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Cult Icon

To determine the general nature and goals of the cult you are initiated in, roll a d8 or choose from the options below.

D8 Icon

- 1 **Ancient Deity** – Your cult seeks to understand the nature of a forgotten or dead god. They may also seek to resurrect the deity. The temples of the god are now ancient and ruined, and the true name of the deity may only be known by a select few. The cult tries to piece together lost knowledge, and emulate what they can, about how the god was worshipped.
 - 2 **Apotheosis** – Your cult seeks to know divinity and otherworldly power directly, using gathered secrets and power to ultimately become as gods themselves. The true purpose of cults such as this are often hidden from those not within the inner circle, and sometimes the initiates themselves are merely pawns of the
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power seeking leaders.

3 Fey – Your cult seeks to bring an entity from the fey realm into the world. This entity’s conception of morality, and good and evil are often alien; and thus the cult usually decries such concepts as mundane and simple. Their hidden places are often in nature, and their meetings are often at night under the stars and moon. Song and dance are common, as well as animal or person sacrifice. Wine and hedonistic pleasures are common in these cults, though so is sudden fits of violence and bloodlust.

4 Heresy – Your cult is a heresy within a religion. They worship the same deity as a more accepted religious organization, but disagree on fundamental concepts that are considered orthodox. Oftentimes these beliefs revolve around a difference in worship- for example the more mainstream organization may conventionally worship and pray to the deity, while the cult seeks contact or personal mystical understanding of the deity through meditation and ritual.

5 Infernal – Your cult worships a dark entity, a demon or devil known or unknown to the greater world. They often paint this entity as a true god spurned or betrayed, thrown down from the heavens by false gods. Cults such as these keep the true name of the being hidden from all except the top members. The cult may or may not be in direct contact with the entity. Sacrifice is very common during rituals, and kidnapping is a common way to get appropriate persons for this.

6 Mystical – Your cult is a secret society whose ultimate purpose is personal illumination. No religious doctrine is disallowed, and the organization oftentimes attempts to find the ultimate truth within all the different paths of arcane and divine theory. Members of the cult teach through ritual and parable the wisdom of thinking and meditating deeply on concepts, philosophies, and myths to discern the actual truth behind them.

7 Outsider – Your cult exalts an otherworldly entity from outside of the natural world or wishes to bring the entity into the world, an outsider that defies the laws of reality. Often

these entities are thought to be sleeping and communicate through dreams and visions, causing madness in their wake. To these cults, such madness is a blessing, and the inner circle members are generally insane to some degree. Their rituals might often involve strange dances and discordant music played on pipe, or strange chants in unknown languages.

8 Rational – Your cult is based around precepts of rationality, deeming deities as no more than powerful entities rather than true creators, no better than devils and demons. Because nobility and royalty are often considered to be, at their root, divinely selected to rule, such cults are considered dangerous by both temples and the higher classes. The cult masks discussion about the laws of reality, the nature of magic, and natural sciences behind rituals to cloak their true purpose. Oftentimes these cults speak of overthrowing the rule of authority to instate a council of enlightened individuals to rule over the “ignorant”.

Feature: Secrets Under Stone

As a cultist, if within a region where other members of your cult operate, you have access to their secret meeting places and the members of your cult will provide any information that you seek if they know it. Members of the cult, and thus the information they might know, can range from the peasantry to minor nobility, and maybe even members of the city guard. Members of cults are more often found near urban centers and are rare in completely rural areas.

A cultist might give access to amenities like food, and can shelter your party, but not for long. They will seek to hide their identity from them and will provide only a nickname.

Suggested Characteristics

A cultist often has two personal goals: learning or seeking something dealing with the icon of their cult, and keeping their activities in this matter secret. Knowledge and wisdom are seen as a means to an end.

D8 Personality Trait

- 1** I enjoy speaking in vagueries and riddles.
 - 2** I seek secrets and information with greed, hoarding them for myself.
 - 3** I distrust those in positions of authority.
 - 4** I appreciate art, music, and craftsmanship, knowing that the work of artists and craftsmen are wellsprings from the deep pool of true understanding.
 - 5** I am able to objectively weigh two different viewpoints at once, knowing that the world is more complicated than simple "good and evil".
 - 6** I am the smartest person in the room. If only others knew what I knew.
 - 7** The weight of my secrets is a like a burden that I am learning to hate.
 - 8** My easygoing and carefree nature is a well-built facade I use to hide my knowledge.
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D6 Ideal

- 1 Enlightenment.** Expanding your personal horizons allows you to glimpse the balance of the universe behind the barriers of reality. (Neutral)
 - 2 Reverence.** The only true worship is the developing of a personal relationship with your deity. (Good)
 - 3 Ritual.** Understanding comes from the structures we adhere to. (Lawful)
 - 4 Liberty.** True authority must be given freely! (Chaotic)
 - 5 Power.** Secrets and knowledge are a path to greatness, one the gods themselves once tread. (Evil)
 - 6 Illumination.** Walking the secret path will eventually lead out of the fabric of reality into the world of true understanding. (Any)
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D6 Bond

- 1** I have an ancient scroll that disproves a commonly held belief, and there are people who would kill me to keep it hidden.
 - 2** My peers in the order are my only family.
 - 3** I alone know the true name of the leader of my cult.
 - 4** I keep my insights and understandings in a small book with a lock.
 - 5** My family has been in the cult for generations, and I was initiated like my father/mother before me right at the cusp of adulthood.
 - 6** My soul belongs to the cult.
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D6 Flaw

- 1** I cannot keep up with my own lies.
 - 2** I am nervous around the uncanny and mysterious even as I am drawn to it.
 - 3** Great secrets are worth lives.
 - 4** It is easier for me to not trust anyone.
 - 5** I find it hard to keep my purposes and knowledge hidden, especially in the face of ignorance.
 - 6** I have fled my cult, and they hunt me.
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