THE PLAGUE DOCTOR

A NEW DARK FANTASY BACKGROUND

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When there are no available clerics, in those lonely and forgotten vales where the passing of a miracle-maker is a tale for generations, and when the outbreak of plague pretends its toll, then plague doctors rise and spread, offering a mundane but nevertheless effective cure to the afflicted.

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PLAGUE DOCTOR

Miracles exist, but not for everybody: the gods grant their healing magic to few, precious individuals, and so in times of need their divine blessings are not enough to halt the spread of plagues and infections. Plague doctors originated in times of dire need, when the spreading of a vicious pox proved too sudden and wide to be halted by spells: there were simply too few magic healers to heal everyone. So, from practice and theory alike, a new profession was born, a profession that you practiced before entering the career of an adventurer.

Part academic, part folk healer, part medicine man, you roamed the land to offer you assistance during plague outbreaks, seeing quite your share of death and suffering even before your adventurer days. And, during your service as a plague doctor, you acquired many skills that will be very useful in your new career. For clerics and priests run out of spells, but your science will not be stopped by any hindrance, and many a companion will soon be thanking you for your well-timed aid.

Skill proficiencies: Medicine, plus one from Investigation and Perception
Tool Proficiencies: Herbalism kit, poisoner's kit
Equipment: a healer's kit, a herbalist kit, a set of protective clothes (designed to avoid contagion, they are waxed or made of leather and often associated with a pair of gloves and a very peculiar mask), a sample associated with a rare illness you intend to study, and a belt pouch containing 10 gp

Feature: Respected Healer

In every hamlet, town or city there is always someone that needs a good doctor. You can make a living by offering your services to the afflicted, be it by the soup offered by the farmer whose daughter had chicken pox, or the banquet offered in your honor by the rich merchant whose disease you cured.

You know every major pox, illness and disease, but bear in mind that some supernatural or long forgotten plagues will require every inch of your time in order to be kept at bay. However, were you to discover a nonmagical cure against the more vicious plagues, your name will became truly immortal.



Suggested Characteristics

Plague doctors lead their life in strict contact with death itself; they must come to term with the demise of those they couldn't save. How this shaped the characteristics of the single plague doctor largely depends on his own ideals and personality.

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Personality Trait

d8	Personality Trait
1	My profession taught me to be very detached, from patients and companions alike.
2	Life is a fickle light, we must enjoy it till it lasts.
3	People think of me as a jinx, and perhaps they are right: with no plague, there would be no doctor.
4	I take note of the physical health of everybody; they'll thank me later for this.
5	I prefer not to attract too much attention, unless my work is needed.
6	I'm always eager to help.
7	Nothing is more satisfying than the gratitude of my patients.
8	I simply love black humor, even if nobody else knows when I am joking and when I am referring to something that happened for real.

Ideal

d6	Ideal
1	**Greed.** I don't give a damn about them and their suffering: all that matters is the money they pay me with, and the power I hold over their life. (Evil)
2	**Selflessness.** If a doctor is needed, I offer my help with no regard for my own health: I swore an oath to my patients, not to myself. (Good)
3	**Delusion.** Death is the only true enemy, an enemy that I will defeat once and for all. (Any)
4	**Cruelty.** The progress of medicine requires some sacrifices: what is the excruciating pain and suffering of a few patients of mine in front of a huge breakthrough in curing every plague?(Evil)
5	**Fraternity.** When facing a plague, all mortals are alike; we should remember this fact even when our lives are safe. (Good)
6	**Resignation.** Every man must die; I can only delay the inevitable. (Any)

Bond

d6	Bond
1	I'm haunted by the memory of a little patient I was unable to save.
2	Once somebody asked me to assist an infamous criminal. I fear I have not heard the last of him.
3	I have a sort of rivalry with a colleague, dating back to our apprentice days.
4	Some years ago I saved a hamlet from a quite vicious infection; the inhabitants consider me a hero.
5	I fell in love with a patient of mine. Even if this is not very professional, I long for the chance to see my beloved again.
6	I fear I have discovered a new plague, and sadly I have yet to find a way to cure it.

Flaw

d6	Flaw
1	I fear contagion, any contagion, like death itself.
2	First I get paid, then I offer my help.
3	I cannot suffer uncleanness, when I have to touch something dirty I feel the urge to wash my hands, even in a dungeon.
4	Clerics, gods and their miracles have just to shut up: where was healing magic when my patients got ill?
5	I can't refuse a call for help, no matter the situation.
6	I tend to speak quite too often about the most disgusting details of my profession.



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